



Forestry England

The Forestry England Woodland Partnership

Working with local authorities to create
new woodlands across England

The Forestry England Woodland Partnership – creating new woodlands that work for us all

The Forestry England Woodland Partnership will create new woodlands using long-term leases with guaranteed rental income for the landowner. We're keen to work with local authorities who want to establish woodland and support nature recovery across their region, as well as provide more high-quality green space.

The partnership offers a rent to local authority landowners in exchange for making land available for woodland creation. Forestry England will be responsible for designing, planting and managing every woodland, all of them open to the public.

Creating new woodlands through this partnership can help support your commitment to delivering net zero, provide access to green space for your communities and the opportunity for biodiversity offsetting for new developments. Forestry England are looking for sites of at least 50 hectares suitable for woodland creation for leases of 60 years or more. This land might be within your existing asset portfolio, or you may consider acquiring land specifically to partner with us.



We'll manage your woodland as part of the nation's forests.

Partnership with Forestry England



An expert partner

As England's largest land manager with 1,500 woods and forests in our care, Forestry England has the expertise and resources to design, plant and manage woodlands which can be resilient to a changing climate. We will provide the staff, knowledge and forestry machinery needed to turn your land from its current use into thriving, established woodland and carry the costs of this work.

A guaranteed rental income without financial investment

You will receive a guaranteed annual rent throughout the lease, which will run for between 60 and 120 years. We will negotiate with you to agree a rental value which reflects the quality of the land and your own requirement for the carbon credits.



The benefits for nature and the local community



Thriving habitats for wildlife

Each woodland will contribute to nature recovery across the wider landscape. We'll protect and improve existing habitats on the sites we select and create new habitats to provide crucial corridors and stepping-stones for wildlife through the landscape.



Ecosystem services for your land and the wider landscape

Woodlands provide a wide range of ecosystem services and if you have commitments to deliver net zero on carbon emissions or provide biodiversity offsetting units to enable new development, we can help.



Public access for health and wellbeing

These woodlands will be places for people of all ages to enjoy and explore. We will incorporate public access into every woodland, providing health and wellbeing opportunities for communities and helping you provide local, accessible green space.



Woodlands will help nature recover across landscapes.

From application to thriving woodland: the steps involved



Application

Submitting a Forestry England Woodland Partnership application is free, and you are under no obligation to proceed.



Selection

If we select your site for negotiation, you'll find out quickly, usually within a few weeks of applying.



Site visits

We'll arrange site visits to carry out surveys and develop a design which we'll discuss with you.



Option and lease agreements

As our woodland design ideas develop, we'll negotiate the commercial terms of the lease with you and ask you to enter an option agreement, allowing us to invest in planning the woodland. Designing the woodland is the longest part of the process as we need to do detailed surveys to understand the important features on each site. When completed, we'll apply for consent to create these woodlands from the Forestry Commission before signing the lease.



Woodland creation

After securing the lease agreement and approval to plant, we will start all the work needed to create the woodland. As well as planting, we might use natural colonisation techniques if this is appropriate. We will also include species trials and seed orchards in some of these woodlands to help support resilient woodlands in the future.



There will be opportunities for community engagement and volunteering for tree planting and managing the woodland.

Phases of growth

In the first few years following the planting and protection of trees you'll see regular visits from Forestry England teams as we care for the growing woodland. We'll replace trees that have died, and protect them by controlling weeds, deer and grey squirrels. We'll maintain any footpaths and talk to the communities visiting these spaces. We'll also do regular habitat surveys to make sure each woodland is delivering the benefits we want.

We'll share information with you about the benefits the woodland is creating so you're clear about how it contributes to your goals.

How to apply

You can apply through the Forestry England website and we will ask you about the site including its current use, any special designations, and when it is available for ground preparation and tree planting – forestryengland.uk/woodland-creation

Get in touch

To find out more and discuss whether your land is suitable, contact Forestry England's Woodland Creation Team: woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk



New woodlands will have public access, providing health and wellbeing benefits to communities. © Colin Hawkins

The partnership in practice – your questions answered

What kind of woodland will be planted?

We'll create detailed plans for every woodland and plant a mix of tree species. Most of these will be broadleaved trees, chosen to be resilient to climate change and pests and diseases. The woodlands we create will provide habitats where wildlife can thrive, as well as inspiring places for local people to enjoy. We'll consult with you as our partner as well as other local stakeholders, but we'll design and manage each woodland as part of the nation's forests.

How much will I get paid in rent?

The rent will vary for site to site and depend on the payments for ecosystem services which you want to generate and retain as a local authority.

How is this scheme funded?

The Forestry England Woodland Partnership is funded by the government's Nature for Climate Fund to support an increase in tree planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025.

Can I get income from selling timber from my woodland?

No, the income you receive will be your annual rent from leasing us your land for woodland creation. We actively manage all our forests, including those with public access and high numbers of visitors, to harvest timber and promote healthy woodland growth. Any income we generate from selling timber will be reinvested into the work we do caring for the nation's forests.

How will each woodland be looked after?

It will be our responsibility to manage each woodland using expert woodland management practices. All our woodlands are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard. We were the first state forest service to gain Forestry Stewardship Council® (FSC®) accreditation and our timber is certified under Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Part of this management includes controlling deer and grey squirrels to ensure thriving woodlands and healthy mammal populations.

Can I get income from selling carbon credits or offset my own emissions?

This will be part of the negotiation if the agreed scheme meets required standards. As a minimum, we would like all our new sites to be validated by the Woodland Carbon Code.

Can I apply with a smaller area than 50 hectares?

We ask for 50ha as a minimum because we're used to operating at scale and have the expertise, machinery, planting and management techniques to be efficient with large areas of land. This is best for nature too as we follow accepted principals that coherent and resilient ecological networks should be 'bigger, better and more joined up'. There are other schemes which support smaller scale woodland creation. You can find out more about these here: www.gov.uk/guidance/create-woodland-overview

What will happen at the end of the lease?

We are asking for leases of between 60 and 120 years and hope there will be opportunities to renew some of the leases at the end of the term. Although it's impossible to say what rules might govern woodland management so far in the future, we'd expect you to retain the woodland when our lease ends. You will have been consulted on woodland design for the duration of the lease. When our lease ends you will take over the stewardship of high-quality, well managed woodlands.

City of York Council choose Forestry England as preferred delivery partner for York Community Woodland



City of York Council are working in partnership with Forestry England to create York Community Woodland.
© City of York Council

"York's Community Woodland is a flagship project in our plan to tackle the impacts of climate change. The 80-hectare woodland will provide green jobs, natural habitats for wildlife and freely accessible space for residents and visitors to enjoy. Forestry England have readily embraced the council's vision for the woodland and provide unmatched experience and expertise in its creation and management. Leasing the site to Forestry England ensures the capacity and skills needed for the project are secured for the long-term future of the woodland and significantly lowers any project risks for the council."

Councillor Paula Widdowson,
Executive Member for
Environment and Climate Change,
City of York Council



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www.forestryengland.uk