

Farm Woodland News



**Farm
Advisory
Service**

*The newsletter for participants in Farm Woodlands Schemes • Issue Number 39 **Spring 2023***

Maximising the benefits of
riparian woodland

How trees help to reduce flooding

Valuing the role of woodlands in
reducing flooding

Forestry on a low-carb diet

Views sought on Scotland's
forestry grants

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Environmental Impact Assessment
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**Final
print issue.**

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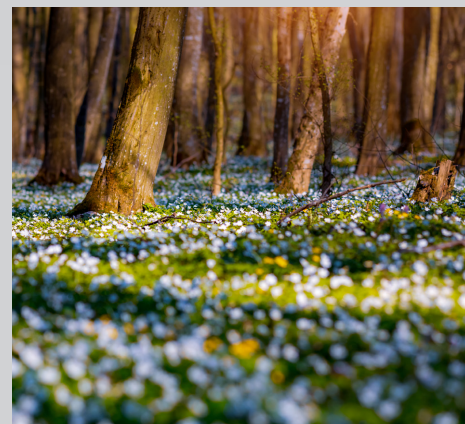
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Editorial

Welcome to Farm Woodland News. With so much in the news about the increasing frequency and severity of weather events as a result of climate change we thought it was pertinent to highlight the value of woodlands and trees in flood mitigation. And as you will find out, the value of such measures is not just limited to their physical impact; the financial value of ecosystem services and their role in delivering public goods are increasingly being recognised.

Related to the climate change theme, we have an article on how the forestry industry is decarbonising itself – no mean feat but good progress is being made.

As usual we have updates on the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS), with the additional news that views are being sought for the development of the future successor of the FGS. The deadline is 17 May 2023, make sure to respond so you can influence the design of the future grant scheme to make it work for you.



We share news of a new tool developed by the Sylva Foundation to help you with Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) determinations for woodland creation projects. So often perceived as complicated and with potential to grow arms and legs, the myForest EIA functionality brings guidance and reassurance in understanding where an EIA determination is needed.

*Malcolm Young and Leona Baillie,
SAC Consulting*

Farm Woodland News is going digital – this is the final print edition.

The new look, online-only issues will come out four times a year to bring you more frequent updates and topical content.

Issue 40 will only be available online. To make sure you receive future editions by email, head to the FAS website to [subscribe to Farm Woodland News](https://www.fas.scot/crops-soils/farm-woodlands/farm-woodlands-news/).

You can also use a smartphone camera to scan the QR code below and tap on the link to visit the email sign-up page. Or enter the following address in your internet browser:

www.fas.scot/crops-soils/farm-woodlands/farm-woodlands-news/



Maximising the benefits of riparian woodlands

Improving support for planting trees around rivers and streams

Dr Linsey Mason-McLean

*Land Use and Environment Policy Advisor,
Scottish Forestry*

Well-designed forests and woodlands, and the creation of riparian woodland, can play an important role in water management, including flood mitigation and improving water quality, as well as providing other environmental benefits such as improving biodiversity in watercourses.

The 2022 – 2023 Programme for Government set out a commitment to improve support for tree planting around rivers and streams in areas which provide multiple benefits, such as improvements to:

- **river shading to reduce thermal stress for Wild Atlantic salmon and other river organisms**
- **diffuse pollution**
- **water body condition and pressures (in relation to River Basin Management Planning)**
- **flood risk**
- **watercourse biodiversity.**

Scottish Forestry is identifying and mapping target areas to help direct grant support for riparian woodland planting to locations with the greatest multiple benefits.

These maps of riparian woodland target areas are due for completion in spring 2023. They are being developed with input from stakeholders including: Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), Nature.Scot, Marine Scotland, The James Hutton Institute and the Riverwoods Partnership Initiative.

Forest Research are currently working on a *UK Forestry Standard Practice Guide: Creating and Managing Riparian Woodlands*. The guidance will assist in the planning and design of riparian woodlands and management approaches to improve habitat and protect water resources.

The maps, enhanced grant support and guidance will facilitate opportunities to plant more riparian woodlands and encourage greater delivery of environmental outcomes.

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New guidance for using trees to combat flooding

Land managers across Scotland are being urged to take note of new forestry guidance on using trees as natural defences to minimise the risks of flooding. *UK Forestry Standard Practice Guide: Designing and managing forests and woodlands to reduce flood risk* gives practical advice to landowners, managers and authorities involved in flood risk management, on how best to use and manage trees to reduce flooding.

The guidance outlines key considerations for

flood risk during planning and design, including:

- **site location and conditions**
- **the scale of planting**
- **design of the forest or woodland**
- **timescales of effectiveness in relation to tree age and water usage.**

The guide also provides advice on operations including cultivation, drainage, and road construction and harvesting, as all these factors can have negative effects on flooding if not managed properly. Employing effective management practices during these processes can slow, intercept and reduce runoff to minimise the impact on flood risk.

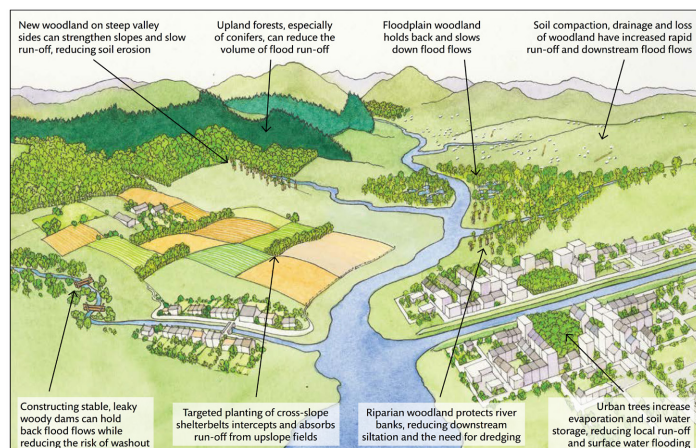
How trees help to reduce flooding

Trees and woodlands can act as a form of natural flood management (NFM), from woodlands throughout a catchment area, to trees along the banks of watercourses.

- **Trees evaporate more water than any other type of vegetation. Moisture is released back into the atmosphere.**
- **The large surface area of a woodland canopy intercepts rainwater. All the leaves and branches collect water droplets, slowing down how**

fast they reach the ground.

- **Roots help water to infiltrate deep into the soil, meaning less runs off the surface.**
- **Trees and woody plants on floodplains help to slow water flow, reducing flood peaks. Deadwood also helps to slow the flow.**
- **Trees along watercourses help to stabilise banks, reducing erosion and siltation. Reduced siltation in turn maximises the capacity of the watercourse to contain water.**



Natural flood management uses woodland and trees to slow the flow as part of a whole catchment approach to managing flood risk.

© Crown Copyright. Reproduced with the permission of the Forestry Publishing Group from UKFS Practice Guide *Designing and managing forests and woodlands to reduce flood risk*.



Valuing the role of woodlands in reducing flooding

Pat Snowdon

Head of Economics and Woodland Carbon Code, Scottish Forestry

New ground-breaking research has put an economic value on the contribution of Scotland's woodlands in helping to prevent flooding. This new study builds on firm scientific evidence on how woodlands use water and slow down run-off and takes a step forward by showing what this might be worth in economic terms.

The study estimates that woodlands in Scotland are worth almost £100 million a year to communities in areas at risk from flooding. With the prospect of wetter winters due to the effects of climate change, and more intense rainfall in summer, the ability of trees to reduce flood risk is becoming increasingly important.

Putting a monetary value on this gives farmers and land managers further tangible evidence of the benefits of woodlands on their land. It also helps flooding authorities, environmental agencies and others consider how woodlands can be an important part of their efforts to tackle the impacts of climate change. Pat Snowdon, Head of Economics and Woodland

Carbon Code at Scottish Forestry, who commissioned the new study, said:

"Climate change is bringing many global challenges. Our weather patterns are changing and we can expect wetter winters and more intense rain in summer. This brings the very unwelcome risk of more flooding.

"Woodlands have long been associated with an ability to reduce flooding. The latest models allow researchers to quantify how woodlands create a "sponge" effect, reducing rapid run-off that causes flooding.

"This research provides new data that fills a major evidence gap on the economic value of woodlands."

The GB-wide research was jointly funded by Scottish Forestry, the Forestry Commission and the Welsh Government. It was carried out by an interdisciplinary team at Forest Research, led by Dr. Tom Nisbet, with assistance from the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. ■

Forestry on a low-carb diet

Roland Stiven

Forest Sector Development Advisor, Scottish Forestry

The role of forests in helping Scotland meet our Net Zero targets is one of the main drivers of forestry policy. Scotland's forests are a large store of carbon and there are government targets to further expand our forest area through new planting.

Involving farmers in this endeavour is key to creating a forest resource that is sensibly integrated into our productive landscapes and our rural economy. Woodland on farms can provide income from timber, local biomass energy, shelter for wildlife, crops and livestock, as well as biodiversity and carbon gains.

A recent Forest Research report on *Quantifying The Sustainable Forestry Carbon Cycle*ⁱ shows that all types of woodland creation in the UK will sequester similar amounts of carbon in the long term, although conifer forests tend to absorb more in the short term. While the forests we plant for timber are harvested after about 30 years, both the timber they produce and the next rotation of planted forest will continue to store carbon and add considerably to reducing our net emissions.

One way to help decarbonise our economy is to help develop markets that store home-grown timber in long lived products – like houses. If we can build homes that are more 'timber rich' we will not only store carbon but also displace concrete, brick and steel – all of which require

lots of fossil fuel energy to produce. However, like much of our economy the forest and timber supply chain is still very dependent on diesel to power the tractors, diggers, harvesting machines, lorries, loaders and some of the nursery and sawmilling equipment. Like agriculture, forestry is feeling its way regarding how to do this in practice. There will be scope for learning from both sectors.

Last summer the Timber Transport Forum produced a *Road Haulage Decarbonisation Overview Report*ⁱⁱ setting out the possible pathways to decarbonisation. *Carbon Exchange*ⁱⁱⁱ has produced a more detailed report, on the challenges of addressing the estimated 45,000 mobile machines in Scottish agriculture.

We can fairly readily switch diesel engines to using biofuels, such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), or biogas and the new battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell technologies are becoming technologically feasible even for heavier machinery.

Prototype electric harvesting machines are already appearing in the trade shows and Scottish Forestry is working with the sector to pilot a couple of electric timber lorries next year. As more of the electricity in our grid is produced from renewable sources the gains from shifting to electricity will become even

greater. Making sure we have high power charging infrastructure in place is something we all need to start looking at. Even on industrial estates it is not always straightforward to secure sufficient power for a 150kW lorry charger.

Haulage from coastal forests is moving to shipping, which not only takes lorries off the roads but also tends to be more energy efficient (for now). Scottish Forestry supports the Timberlink shipping service that moves timber from Argyll across the Firth of Clyde to Ayrshire where there is a concentration of processors.

Many of our sawmills, boardmills and paper mills now use recycled timber, forest residues and offcuts to provide heat and electricity

in their processes. Timber inevitably has to move around – our large forest resources will always be some way from the large centres of demand.

However there remains scope to shorten supply chains – to process wood and add value locally and to supply our own markets with local timber wherever possible. Growing productive woodlands at appropriate scale in the farming landscape will help make this more possible. ■

ⁱQuantifying the sustainable forestry carbon cycle (forestresearch.gov.uk)

ⁱⁱDecarbonisation-of-Timber-Haulage-Report-2022.pdf (timbertransportforum.org.uk)

ⁱⁱⁱDecarbonisation of mobile agricultural machinery in Scotland – an evidence review (climatexchange.org.uk)

Views sought on Scotland's forestry grants

A public consultation to help shape future forestry grant support in Scotland has opened.

The consultation aims to seek views on how the current Forestry Grant Scheme can be invigorated and better integrated with other sources of funding, strengthening Net Zero, biodiversity, economic and community wealth-building priorities.

Since the scheme started in 2015 it has supported 5,930 projects, creating around 69,000 hectares of new woodland, an area equivalent to the size of East Lothian.

Around half of the current woodland grant applications are for small scale projects, mostly from farmers who are integrating trees into their businesses.

Environment Minister Mairi McAllan is keen to hear from a wide range of stakeholders through the consultation, including farmers who are interested in planting trees.

During a recent visit to Andrew Adamson's farm

at Netherurd, near West Linton, she heard how grants for creating and managing woodland could work better for the agricultural sector.

Ms McAllan said:

"Our forests and woodlands provide multiple benefits for the people, environment and economy of Scotland. It is our aim to grow a mix of new woodlands and ensure we get the right trees in the right place and for the right reason.

"It is important that both large and smaller scale projects thrive and continue to contribute to our woodland expansion plans.

"Farmers, crofters and community woodland owners are all very important in achieving our woodland creation targets. I was very pleased to find out more about Mr Adamson's tree planting and how it is benefiting his livestock and farming business.

"I would encourage all those with an active interest in creating and managing woodlands to feedback their views on future forestry

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grant support through the consultation.”

Mr Adamson is one of the hosts in the farmer-led Integrating Trees Network. He has been planting trees for many years and said “My message to farmers is that tree planting can really provide many benefits to your farm but you have to know exactly what you want from it.

“It was very useful to meet the Minister and discuss what is needed by farmers and land owners.”

Scottish Forestry is keen to get the views from farmers, crofters, forestry companies, communities, local authorities and a range of other environmental organisations during the consultation period.

The consultation will seek views through a wide range of questions including:

- How can the grants evolve to better tackle the climate emergency?
- How can future grant support address

- biodiversity loss, including the regeneration and expansion of native woodlands?
- What measures would help reduce the barriers for farmers and crofters wanting to integrate trees into their business?
 - How can the forest regulatory and grant processes evolve to provide greater opportunities for communities to be involved in the development of forestry proposals?
 - How could the current funding package be improved to stimulate woodland expansion and better management across a wide range of woodland types, including native and productive woodlands?

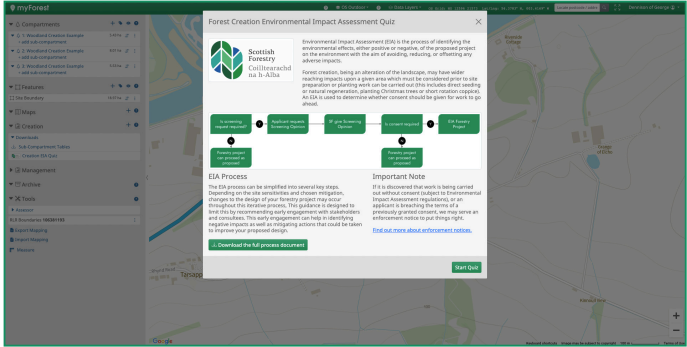
To tackle the twin crises of climate change and nature loss, the Scottish Government is increasing its woodland creation targets year on year, rising to 18,000 ha of new woodland each year by 2024/5. The public consultation runs for 12 weeks with all views being sought by 17th May 2023. ■

Environmental Impact Assessment tool launched in myForest

myForest is a free-to-use, focused GIS platform for forest creation and management, and a flagship project of the Sylva Foundation. myForest brings the latest technology to the forestry sector, for owners of small forests, community forest groups, environmental charities, and forest management companies. myForest provides comprehensive online mapping, digital tools and the latest resources not only to sustainably manage forests, but to provide unique support for the creation of new forests around Britain. To find out more about myForest, read the introductory article in Issue 37 of Farm Woodland News or visit myforest.sylva.org.uk.

Building upon the success of a two-year woodland creation pilot, in partnership with Scottish Forestry, Sylva Foundation is excited to announce the launch of new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) functionality aimed at providing additional support for landowners and agents through the integration of the Scottish Forestry EIA process into the online platform.

Having created a myForest account, users are able to rapidly assess whether their woodland creation project requires an EIA through the integrated “Creation EIA Quiz” (shown below). This quiz provides users with an overview of the EIA process, additional information, and a simple two-part quiz to determine whether they need to complete a Screening Opinion Request Form and Issue Log.

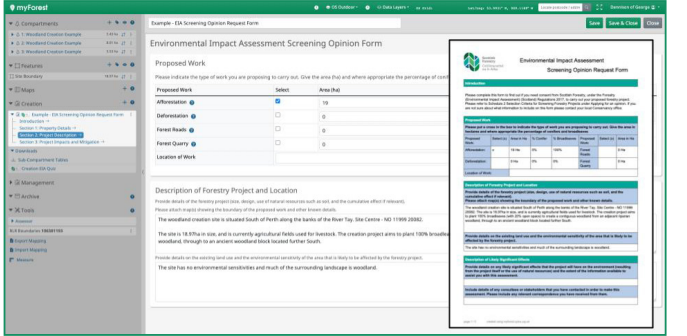


A screenshot taken of the myForest platform showcasing the integrated EIA quiz now available to users in Scotland.

Determining whether your site is below required thresholds for the EIA process can be challenging and complicated. Through the support provided within the EIA quiz, and myForest generally, you can easily and confidently complete the assessment. Depending on your results, myForest will provide guidance on the next steps you need to take along your woodland creation journey.

Sites above a certain threshold will require consent from Scottish Forestry. Should you need to complete a Screening Opinion Request Form and Issue Log as part of the EIA process, myForest is able to support your application through the newly integrated template

documents found freely available within the platform. Aiming to demystify the EIA process, each template document is divided into manageable components. Each of these components is supported through additional guidance, web-links, and help icons where appropriate. This will enable you to fully understand what information is required, and where to find it (as shown below). Once you have completed each form, you can download the document as a pdf. These documents are then ready to be submitted to Scottish Forestry, along with any maps you may have produced in myForest as supporting material.



A screenshot taken of the myForest platform showcasing the integrated Screening Opinion Request Form (SORF) required by Scottish Forestry as part of the EIA process. On the right, the downloadable SORF pdf is highlighted as a direct output generated by information inputted by a myForest user.

In addition to launching the EIA functionality, Sylva Foundation has released supporting guidance providing multimedia formats to aid users through each step of the process. It is hoped that this will reduce the barriers faced by those wishing to create

new woodland, while simultaneously improving the quality of applications received by Scottish Forestry. This detailed guidance can be found on the myForest website alongside an ever growing compendium of resources. ■

Forestry Grant Scheme update



Increased Forestry Grant Scheme rates in the crofting counties to support the planting of new native woodlands

Small native woodlands deliver many benefits for biodiversity, the landscape, and provide shelter for livestock and buildings. Costs of planting and protecting these woods are often high. This woodland creation option and target area recognise this.

The enhanced rates, first announced in April 2022, promote new small native woodlands that are up to three hectares in size. All crofters throughout the crofting counties are eligible to apply.

When announcing the funding, Environment Minister, Mairi McAllan said:

“The Scottish Government has ambitious woodland creation targets, rising to 18,000ha each year by 2024/5. These targets have been set so that we can tackle climate change and reverse the decline of nature.

“We need everyone to participate in woodland creation. Both large and small projects are all very important in achieving our goals.

“These enhanced grant rates for the crofting counties should help ensure crofters, who are faced with challenging conditions for growing trees, can reap the many benefits of planting native woodlands.

“I am particularly pleased that this move includes the Northern and Western Isles, Argyll Islands and Arran, where I know there is increasing interest in woodland creation.”

The new rates for native woodland planting in the crofting counties will see rates rise by £840 per hectare to £7,560 per hectare over a five-year period.

Welcoming the increase in grant funding, Iona Hyde from Woodland Trust Scotland and project manager of the Croft Woodlands Project added:

“The increasing costs of materials and labour particularly affect small schemes in the more

remote areas of the crofting counties, where woodland creation often brings the most benefits.

“This additional assistance will help to encourage more small-scale planting, bringing benefits to crofters and crofting communities such as shelter for livestock, crops and buildings; sustainable sources of firewood; shelter and food for wildlife and improved amenity.”

The Croft Woodlands Project offers free advice and support for crofters and smallholders wishing to plant trees.

Welcoming the increase in grant funding, chief executive of the Scottish Crofting Federation, Patrick Krause, said:

“Crofters have long been involved in the creation of woodlands, but it is getting more costly to do this at a time when appropriate tree planting is more important than ever.

“It is very encouraging that Scottish Forestry have recognised this by increasing its Forestry Grant Scheme rates in the crofting counties to help. We urge all crofters to consider the benefits of a small native woodland on the croft. Many small woodlands make a lot of woodland!”

The new target area is available for the Native Broadleaves in the Northern and Western Isles woodland creation option and can be viewed here <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-creation/>.

Scottish Forestry also has a Small Woodland Loan Scheme which allows applicants to get a loan for up to half of the initial capital grant associated with establishing a new woodland.

Small woodlands qualify as Ecological Focus Areas

Small areas of woodland classed as Ecological Focus Areas on farms can attract funding supporting sustainable agriculture. Small

woodlands approved under the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP) since 2015, can be utilised as Ecological Focus Areas to support farmers’ Greening payments.

Scottish Government and Scottish Forestry officials worked with stakeholders including NFUS on how changes to legislation could be introduced. Hopefully this will encourage farmers, crofters and land managers to increase tree planting, providing environmental benefits including tackling climate change and nature loss.

Forestry in Scotland is a real success story and this legislative change will mean that tree planting in small areas becomes an attractive option for farmers and crofters.

This move continues the strong progress towards achieving tree planting targets by working closely with farmers, forest industries and landowners of all sizes and encourages stakeholders to explore the multiple benefits of integrating trees into their farm business.

Funding for a specialist adviser to help with woodland creation

Scottish farmers and crofters can apply for up to £1,000 funding through the Farm Advisory Service (FAS) to enlist the help of a specialist adviser to help with woodland creation. The adviser will work with the land manager to add value to underproductive land by reviewing farm-specific opportunities and financial incentives available to create or manage woodland. This includes identifying the most suitable grants and assistance packages that farmers and crofters can use to optimise the use and value of their land.

To apply or for more information, call **0300 323 0161** or email advice@fas.scot

This is a fantastic opportunity for land managers across Scotland who are interested in woodland creation. Through the funding, farmers can receive professional advice and discuss the farm’s objectives around creating new woodlands. ■

Quick Guide to Woodland Creation Grants



**Farm
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The Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS) supports the creation of new woodland that will provide economic, environmental and social benefits. Payment rates for five of the nine grant support options for woodland creation are shown in the table below. Higher rates of payment are available for eligible schemes within the following locations: Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN); Cairngorms National Park Woodland Expansion Target Area; Highland Native Woodland Target Area; Woodlands for Water Target Areas; and preferred and potential areas of local authority Forest and Woodland Strategies.

Woodland Creation option	Total payment rate per hectare <i>for initial planting and annual maintenance for 5 years</i>	
	Standard areas	Target areas
Conifer*	£2960	£3330
Diverse Conifer*	£3840	£4320
Native Scots Pine	£3200	£3600
Native Broadleaves	£3200	£3600
Native Broadleaves in Northern and Western Isles	£6720	£7560

Central Scotland Green Network additional capital payment contribution

Within the CSGN Contribution Area additional funding is available to Woodland Creation schemes.

Core Area	£2500/ha
Outer Core Area	£1500/ha
Fringe Area	£750/ha
CSGN contribution capped at 40ha in Core Area and Fringe Area, and at 65ha in Outer Core Area.	

National Advice Hub
T: 0300 323 0161
E: advice@fas.scot
W: www.fas.scot

If you need more advice on farm woodlands or any other topic, the Farm Advisory Service has a range of support and help available:

Advice line

For free telephone advice on a wide variety of topics including cross compliance, water framework directive requirements, climate change and other technical issues call us on **0300 323 0161** or email advice@fas.scot. The advice line operates between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Online

Our website contains articles, videos and much more at **www.fas.scot**

Capital Items Payment Rates

In addition to the initial planting grant there is support for capital items that may be required to successfully establish new woodland.

Deer fencing	£7.60/m
Stock fencing	£4.40/m
Rabbit-proofing of fence	£1.60/m
Tree shelters (1.2 to 1.8m)	£2.00 each
Gorse removal	£720/net ha
Bracken control	£225/ha

**If ploughing is used, reduced payment rates for initial planting apply to reflect the cost saving from this cultivation method.*