

Grant Support For Croft Woodland Creation: A Comparison



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Tree planting and hedgerows can offer a multitude of benefits for farms and the rural environment including additional income, shelter for crops, buildings and livestock, as well as the potential produce that tree crops can provide such as firewood, fruit and fodder. But what support is out there to help Crofters to plant trees, and which option is best for your project?

Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS)

The main source of grant funding for woodland creation within Scotland at present, the Forestry Grant Scheme (FGS), offers funding for a wide variety of woodland creation options including commercial conifer plantations, productive hardwoods such as oak or beech stands, and also native woodland options such as Native Scots Pine, Upland Birch, or other Native Broadleaved Models.

Funding can be provided for Capital Items such as bracken or gorse clearance prior to planting, new deer or stock fencing and associated gates, in addition to the main funding for woodland creation which is paid as a larger lump sum following planting completion, and then five years of smaller payments to fund ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the woodland. Grant rates are shown below in table 1.

Woodland Creation option	Payment rates in standard areas			Payment rates in target areas		
	Initial planting payment (£/ha)	Annual maintenance payment (£/ha)	Total Payment for 5 years (£/ha)	Initial Planting payment (£/ha)	Annual maintenance payment (£/ha)	Total Payment for 5 years (£/ha)
Conifer *	1920	208	2960	2160	234	3330
Diverse conifer *	2160	336	3840	2430	378	4320
Broadleaves*	2880	528	5520	3240	594	6210
Native Scots Pine	1840	272	3200	2070	306	3600
Native Upland Birch	1840	128	2480	2070	144	2790
Native Broadleaves	1840	272	3200	2070	306	3600
Native Low-density Broadleaves	560	96	1040	630	108	1170
Small or Farm Woodland *	2400	400	4400	2700	450	4950
Native Broadleaves in Northern and Western Isles	3600	624	6720	n/a	n/a	n/a



* Where ploughing is the agreed method of ground preparation, the Initial planting payment rate is reduced by £240/ha for the Conifer option, £270/ha for the Diverse conifer option, £360/ha for the Broadleaved option and £300/ha for the Small or farm woodland option

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Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme (CAGS)

Specifically designed for supporting Crofters across Scotland, the Crofting Agricultural Grants Scheme (CAGS) offers a huge range of support options to crofters looking to aid and develop agricultural production on crofts. This scheme targets investments which help reduce production costs, and funding can support operations such as erection of agricultural buildings, drainage improvements, electrical supply works, and of particular relevance to this publication—the planting of shelterbelts and provision of fences, hedges, and gates.

Whilst the Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme is not specifically a woodland creation grant, it can be used to deliver woodland creation where this serves the objective of improving agricultural production on a croft. Both livestock and crop production can benefit from shelterbelts if designed and planted correctly, and a well laid out shelterbelt network can greatly improve a croft's production. Support rates vary depending on the area which the croft falls into (Less Favoured Areas/Non-Less Favoured Areas), and improved rates of support exist for those that meet the Young Farmer criteria. It must be noted though that CAGS specifies tree planting must not be for commercial forestry, and that funding is only paid as a proportion of approved costs— more detail in table 2 below.

Definition of a Young Farmer for a CAGS application:

- Must be under 41 years of age on the date you submit your application—you will need to supply proof such as driving licence, passport or birth certificate.
- Must be set up as the head of the business you are making the application for, during the 5 years before application submission, and be able to supply evidence of this.
- Must have adequate skills and competence— eg certificate of education or a vocational qualification relating to your activities on your croft, or a statement from an appropriate source to confirm your equivalent experience.

Table 2

Applicant	Less Favoured Areas (LFAs)	Non-Less Favoured Areas (non-LFAs)
Individual (Young Farmer)	80%	60%
Individual (Other Farmers)	60%	40%
Common Grazings (Young Farmer)	90%	80%
Common Grazings (Other Farmers)	80%	60%



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Croft Woodland Project (CWP) - MoreWoods

Croft Woodland Project (CWP) MoreWoods is a tree planting scheme specifically for the Crofting Counties, aimed at encouraging the creation of smaller woodlands on crofts. A more flexible option than the Forestry Grant Scheme, the CWP MoreWoods scheme allows crofters to seek support for planting on a much smaller scale than the FGS grants currently allow— at present, a minimum area of 0.1 Ha or 300 trees is the smallest size for which the CWP MoreWoods scheme would support.

There is no maximum area for a CWP MoreWoods application, but for areas larger than 3 hectares, it is generally more cost-effective to progress an application via the Forestry Grant Scheme.

The MoreWoods scheme typically supplies trees (from local provenances where possible), guards (tubex tree shelters), and stakes, paying a standard support rate of 60% of costs and invoicing the landowner for the remaining 40% of costs.

The CWP MoreWoods scheme does not provide assistance with site preparation, fencing, or subsequent maintenance of trees planted via this scheme, and as such better suits crofters looking to carry much of this tree establishment work out themselves.



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	Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme	Forestry Grant Scheme	CWP MoreWoods
Who Can Apply	Tenant of registered croft, official sub tenant, owner/occupier, short term lease holder. NOT eligible if more than 20 miles from croft. Must be a croft holding, approved by crofting commission	Registered with BRN, must own and occupy the land, or have a secure tenancy with Landlord Declaration Form (written consent for entering into a tree planting agreement).	Crofters and smallholders throughout the crofting counties.
Eligible Works	Tree planting (shelterbelts, non-commercial woodland), Hedging.	Tree Planting	Tree planting
Criteria	<p>Must be a Croft Tenant or Owner.</p> <p>Must be a trading Agricultural Business</p> <p>Item must meet one or several of scheme objectives: Preserve and improve the natural environment, hygiene conditions and animal welfare standards, or promote the diversification of farm activities, or improve quality, reduce production costs, improve and redeploy production.</p>	<p>Must be suitable under local authority woodland strategy.</p> <p>Must comply with UK Forestry Standard</p> <p>Must be suitable species, and not deep peat (more than 50cm).</p> <p>Must meet one of the approved FGS options with site-suitable species.</p> <p>Each Model different, but Native Broadleaves= 0.25Ha minimum size, minimum width 15m, and minimum stocking density 1,600 stems/ha. Commercial Conifer or Productive Broadleaves= minimum width 15m, and minimum size 2 Ha, stocking density between 2,500 and 3,100 stems per hectare dependant on species choice/FGS model</p>	<p>minimum area 0.1ha or 300 trees for very small, high quality or island schemes. Other sites ≥0.25 ha preferred. Stocking density up to 3,500 trees per hectare</p>
Supported Activities	Appendix A: Category 9- Planting of shelterbelts and the provision of fences, hedges, walls, gates or stock grids. Much more opportunity under CAGS for other supported activities, including agricultural buildings, drainage works, provision of electrical equipment, etc.	Tree planting, supported options for capital items such as deer fencing/stock fencing/gates. Bracken control and gorse removal can also be supported by additional grant funding when this forms part of an approved woodland creation.	Woodland creation
Hedge Planting Supported?	Yes.	No.	Separate Scheme- Woodland Trusts' MoreHedges scheme

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	Crofting Agricultural Grant Scheme	Forestry Grant Scheme	CWP MoreWoods
Restrictions	The establishment of an effective hedge or shelterbelt for the protection of livestock or crops, or essential ancillaries such as protective fencing and ditching, is eligible. The establishment of windbreaks for horticultural business is similarly eligible. Ineligible items include commercial forestry. Shelterbelts and hedges must be designed to fulfil the required agricultural purpose. CAGS must not be used with other publicly funded grant schemes for all or part of the same work	<p>Must meet Local Authority Woodland Strategy.</p> <p>Must not be an existing planning requirement</p> <p>· Must be appropriate species for soil/ conditions (more info found via the Forest Research Decision Support Tool)</p> <p>Must not be deep peat (50cm deep).</p> <p>Must abide by relevant regulations regarding protected species/designations (Badgers, Otters, SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, Historic Environment and more). Environmental Impact and Landscape Impact will also need to be considered.</p>	Schemes bigger than 3ha generally more cost-effective to use SRDP FGS scheme. CWP MoreWoods doesn't pay for ground preparation, fencing, or aftercare/maintenance.
Smallest Eligible Scheme	No apparent limit/size requirement apart from cost-must serve required agricultural purpose though	0.25 Ha for native broadleaves, 2Ha for productive broadleaves/conifers/diverse conifers. At least 15 metres wide	0.1ha/300 tree minimum size
Biggest Scheme	No size threshold, but limit of funding to £25,000 per 2 year period for individual applicants.	Rates lower after 300 Ha exceeded for Native Scots Pine or Native Upland Birch Models, no size limit at present	3ha advised limit
Fixed Rate or Actual Cost?	80% approved costs in LFAs, 60% in non-LFAs for young farmers. 60% LFAs and 40% non-LFAs for other farmers.	fixed rate grants such as fencing/capital expenses, and for Woodland creation (per-hectare based plus 5 years of annual maintenance payments) for applications that meet required criteria	Standard rate of support is 60% (supply of trees, guards (tubex), and stakes, and applicant is invoiced 40% of the costs.)
Limit on Funding?	For individuals, up to £25,000 in a rolling 2 year period. For Group applications, £125,000 in rolling 2 year period (e.g. common Grazings)	No. Funding rates drop at larger scheme sizes though above 300 Ha for Native Scots Pine and Native Upland Birch model	No set limit on costs, but above 3ha, FGS is more cost-effective
Quotes required?	Yes- at least 2 quotes needed for up to £10k of works, over £10k requires 3 quotes.	No	No

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