

Green Diamonds

30 November 2012 Last Updated on 23 January 2013 Peter Fischer

It was recently confirmed by 'The Big Tree Plant' that Surrey Tree Warden Network had been successful in winning funding of close to £10,000 to carry out planting over the next three planting seasons in a number of boroughs and parishes in Surrey. Some of this funding was for the STWN's **Green Diamonds** project to plant trees to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The first plants have just been delivered and will be planted over the next two or three weeks.

If you are a member in those areas who have won funding then you are likely to already know about when the planting sessions are being held. If you are not, but are interested in being involved, listed below are those boroughs/parishes that will be carrying planting. All would welcome additional pairs of willing hands. One or two other parishes have also won funding as part of this combined bid but will not be carrying out planting until next season.

Congratulations are due to STWN committee member Jane Plant for co-ordinating and submitting the bid and placing the plant orders in what proved to be a complicated process.

Location	Organisers	Contact details
Bookham:	Lawrence Hole & Frances Fancourt	01372 452769 01372 454000
Nutfield:	Liz Ramsay & the Allens	maggie.geoffallen@which.net
Merton:	Jane Plant	janeplant@pj464.co.uk 07773 406105 (for sites in both Morden and Mitcham, Surrey)
Spelthorne:	Peter Routley Dave Woods	thepeterroutley@yahoo.co.uk (woodland planting) dj.woods@talktalk.net 01932 786806 (street and park trees)
Warlingham:	Simon Bold	07939 403414
Witley:	Peter Herring	pjherring1@tiscali.co.uk

Independent Panel on Forestry - Final Report

05 July 2012 Last Updated on 29 October 2012 Peter Fischer

PRESS RELEASE: 4h July 2012

Report recommends 'triple bottom line' valuation of England's woodlands - delivering benefits for people, nature and the green economy

The Independent Panel on Forestry, set up to advise the Government on the future of England's forests and woodlands, has today (4 July 2012) published its final report to Government. (The final report is available to view online by following this link: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/reports>)

The report calls for the benefits of England's woods and forests to be re-valued for all the services they provide. These include not only areas for recreation, but also clean air, clean water, habitats for wildlife, locking up carbon, shading in cities - even helping in flood reduction. Wood is the raw material for timber frame buildings, furniture, flooring, fuel, and of course paper. The report highlights the 'triple bottom line' that forestry delivers and calls for a revival of a woodland culture that appreciates how important trees are for people, for nature and the economy.

The public forest estate is the single largest provider of outdoor leisure and recreation in England. And it is also the single largest timber producer, as well as being a vital habitat for wildlife. Research shows that these elements are producing annual returns on investment estimated at £400 million.

With over 80% of England's woods and forests being outside of the public forest estate, they call for more of these woods and forests to be sustainably managed to create a substantial impact.

Speaking on behalf of the Panel members, The Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, said:

"The Panel's work over the last year has shown that our woodlands, managed sustainably, can offer solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing society today. We have consulted widely, visited woods and forests around the country and read over 42,000 submissions.

There is untapped potential within England's woodlands to create jobs, to sustain skills and livelihoods, to improve the health and wellbeing of people and to provide better and more connected places for nature.

Most importantly, the public forest estate needs to be free from the electoral cycle, for trees have long lifecycles - decisions taken now are looking to a future that is 50, or even 100, years down the line. And the bodies managing the public forest estate and advising woodland owners need to evolve and be free to become much more entrepreneurial. We recommend the expansion of woodland cover from 10% to 15% by 2060."

The recommendations focus on maximising the social, environmental and business benefits of English woodland, so that the forestry industry will be on a more secure footing in the future. To achieve this they propose that the public forest estate should be defined in law as land held in trust for the nation so that it will always remain as a national asset.

Bishop James added:

“Government investment is now needed to kick start these changes which will repay itself many times over in terms of public benefit”.

DEFRA has issued the following additional information to supplement the press release.

- Caroline Spelman, Defra Secretary of State, announced that an Independent Panel to provide advice on the future of forestry, would be created on 17 February 2011.
- The 42,000 responses to the Independent Panel on Forestry’s ‘Call for Views’ covered the different aspects of forestry and showed how much people value trees, woodlands and the public forest estate.
- The Panel, whose members cover the full range of interests in forestry, were unanimous in their recommendations.
- The report highlights that Government funding for the 250,000 hectare English public forest estate is around £20m in 2012/13 - equivalent to just 90p per household or 38p per person per year. In comparison, £160 million was spent to make a 9km stretch of the A453 into a dual carriageway
- The Charter, that would hold the public forest estate in trust for the nation so that it will always remain in public ownership, would need to be created in legislation. It would specify the public benefit mission and statutory duties, and would be renewed every 10 years. It would be delivered through a group of Guardians, or Trustees, who would be accountable to Parliament.
- A separate, expanded Forest Services organisation would work with private landowners to help them manage their woods, increase timber production, and generate the woodland culture. It would be the regulator of the Forestry sector and provide expertise on issues such as tree pests and diseases.
- The Panel’s report also calls for actions leading to:
 - more people being able to enjoy access to woodlands;
 - the creation of a coherent and resilient ecological network at a landscape scale, and;
 - the strengthening of wood supply chains, and promotion of the use of wood more widely across society and economy.

For more information about the Independent Panel on Forestry including the terms of reference, the Progress Report published in December 2011, and the Final Report, visit their website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/>

Independent Panel on Forestry want to hear from you

23 June 2011 Last Updated on 04 July 2012 Peter Fischer

As readers will be aware, the **Independent Panel on Forestry** was established on 17 March 2011 by the Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman, to advise government on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England and on the role of the Forestry Commission in implementing policy.

The Panel wants to draw on the widest possible range of views, interest and expertise. **Everyone** interested in forests and woods is invited to share their views and join in a public conversation. It is important that as many people as possible provide an individual considered response.

The Panel has provided a [PDF](#) with more details on how to participate and you can find out more about the Panel and it's work at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/rural/forestry/panel/>

To participate you are asked to provide personal thoughts on these broad questions:

- what do forests and woodlands mean to you?
- what is your vision for the future of England's forests and woods?
- what do you feel to be the benefits of forests and woods to – (a) you personally, (b) society as a whole, (c) the natural environment and (d) the economy?
- the panel would like suggestions of practical solutions and good practice that can be replicated more widely
- what do you see as the priorities and challenges for policy on England's forests and woods?

You can provide your answers direct to the panel either by email or post to the addresses below:

E-mail: forestrypanel@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Secretariat to the Independent Panel on Forestry
Defra
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Alternatively you can reply through either the **Woodland Trust's** website or that of the **International Tree Foundation** via the links below. By responding via either of these websites it allows these organisations to gauge and monitor the number of responses being made.

http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/campaigning/our-campaigns/panel/Pages/forestrypanel.aspx?WT.mc_id=panel

<http://internationaltreefoundation.org/current-affairs/the-future-of-englands-forests-have-your-say/>

Don't forget that you only have until 31 July 2011 to respond , so please do so as soon as possible!

Woodland Trust on Independent Forestry Advisory Panel

08 April 2011 Peter Fischer

The Woodland Trust has wasted no time in setting out its aims in relation to its membership of the Independent Forestry Advisory Panel.

It has prepared a **six point test** by which the success of the panel and the government should be measured. These are:

- The panel should build on the numerous reviews on aspects of forestry policy undertaken over the past 10 years and not attempt to reinvent the wheel;
- The panel should be bold and decisive in its recommendations and set an agenda for change, not one based on the status quo;
- The panel should focus particularly its attention on the areas where public passions and concerns were raised during the recently abandoned public consultation, such as access and the protection and restoration of ancient woods;
- Government should provide an in-depth response to the panel's recommendations, indicating specifically which ones it will adopt and the reasons for those it rejects;
- Government should not use the panel as a reason to delay current commitments to action (e.g. Woodland Carbon Task Force);
- Other government departments such as DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) must buy into the recommendations and Defra will need to be seen to be working to achieve this.

It has also prepared a 'Manifesto for Forests' setting out its vision for the future of England's forests and woodlands which it will presumably be pushing for at meetings of the advisory panel.

The manifesto proposes:

A Bolder Vision for Forests

Now the shouting has calmed down, what do England's forests need?

The big wins:

- New protection for ancient woodland (it's astounding only 15% is covered by designations and there is no absolute legal protection for our rainforests when so many people care so much!)

- Government commitment to restore all planted ancient woods in their ownership (all 35,000ha)
- A commitment to woodland creation and a target of 15,000ha per annum in the Natural Environment White Paper (it's also astounding planting was 29,000ha in 1989, 17,000ha in 2000 and 5000ha in 2010!!)
- Put tree planting on schools' curriculum to give every child the chance to plant a tree

and more specifically:

- Government needs to introduce transparent annually reported figure for forest loss
- Government should not abandon PPS9 and should review permitted development rights
- There should be a requirement on planning authorities to report on all planning applications affecting ancient woodland and Trees of Special Interest (TSIs)
- Make the Forestry Commission a statutory consultee on all planning applications affecting ancient woodland
- Increase the fines for illegal felling, adjust the limit for felling licenses to 5m3 pa and prosecute illegal woodland and tree fellers!!
- Forestry Commission grants improved further to help private woodland owners restore planted ancient woods
- Government to fund a new community woodland advice service
- Funds taken from planning gain (section 106 agreements & new credits system) to create new community woods to ensure every home has a wood within walking distance
- Get everyone visiting woods, for healthy recreation and spiritual refreshment.

Membership of Forestry Advisory Panel announced

08 April 2011 Last Updated on 08 April 2011 Peter Fischer

The make up of the independent forestry advisory panel was announced on 17 March 2011. This is the panel that the government announced would be set up to advise on future forestry policy in the aftermath of the decision in February to scrap the public consultation on government proposals for the future of Forestry Commission forests and woodlands.

Membership of the panel is as follows:

Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool (Chair);

Shireen Chambers (Institute of Chartered Foresters Executive Director);

Mike Clarke (RSPB Chief Executive);

Tom Franklin (Ramblers Association Chief Executive);

Stuart Goodall (ConFor Chief Executive);

Stephanie Hilborne (Wildlife Trusts Chief Executive);

Sue Holden (Woodland Trust Chief Executive);

Alan Knight (Founder, Single Planet living ltd);

Dame Fiona Reynolds (National Trust Director General);

Sir Harry Studholme (Forestry Commissioner);

John Varley (Estates Director, Clinton Devon Estates);

William Worsley (Country Land and Business Association President).

The terms of reference for the panel and biographies of the panel members may be accessed by clicking on the links below.

- [Terms of reference and list of panel members](#) (PDF 20 KB)
- [Panel members' biographies](#) (PDF 20 KB)

The full text of the Defra press release announcing the panel membership may be accessed by clicking on the link below.

- Press release: [Forestry advisory panel membership announced](#)

Since the panel was announced an initial meeting of the panel was held on 31 March 2011 after which the Chair of the Panel, The Right Reverend Bishop James Jones, made the following announcement:

“The huge groundswell of interest in this issue shows how much people value their forests and woods. The Panel intends to produce a first report in the autumn, with final recommendations on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England in spring 2012. The Panel is pleased that Caroline Spelman, the Secretary of State for Environment, has confirmed that no future sales will be made from the Public Forest Estate before the Panel makes its recommendations. The Panel will be going out and about on visits, and listening to and taking evidence from community and special interest groups.”

Government re-think on Public Forest Estate sell off

08 April 2011 Last Updated on 08 April 2011 Peter Fischer

As was widely reported in the national media, within three weeks of announcing plans for a consultation on selling off much of the Public Forest Estate, the government made a dramatic u-turn and decided to call off the consultation. It appears that public pressure through the website petitions of organisations such as 38 Degrees and the Woodland Trust, together with

early responses to the public consultation, made the Government realise that the proposals put forward for consultation were out of touch with the public view on the protection of and access to the woodlands and forests of England.

On 17 February 2011 Defra put out a press release announcing that the consultation would be halted and that instead an independent panel of experts would be appointed to report to government on a future policy for the country's forests.

Defra's press release is set out in full below:

The future of forestry in England

published: 17 February 2011

The consultation on the future management of the Public Forest Estate has been halted and all forestry clauses in the Public Bodies Bill will be removed, Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman confirmed today.

Mrs Spelman also announced that an independent panel of experts will examine forestry policy in England and report back to her in the autumn.

Speaking in the House of Commons the Environment Secretary said:

“I would first like to say that I take full responsibility for the situation that brings me before the House today.

“Let me make it clear that we have always placed the highest priority on preserving access and protecting our forests. But the forestry clauses in the Public Bodies Bill, published well before we launched the consultation, gave the wrong impression as to the Government’s intentions.

“That is why I am today announcing three steps which will allow for more measured and rational debate about the future direction of forestry policy.

“First, I have taken a decision to end the consultation on the future of the Public Forest Estate and I take full responsibility for that. I am doing so because it is quite clear from the early responses to the consultation that the public and many MPs are not happy with the proposals we set out.

“Second, the Government will support the removal of the forestry clauses from the Public Bodies Bill, currently at committee stage in the House of Lords.

“And thirdly I would like to announce that I am establishing an independent Panel to consider forestry policy in England. It will report to me with its findings this autumn. The Panel will advise me on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England, on the role of the Forestry Commission, and on the role of the Public Forest Estate. The Panel will include representatives of key environmental and access organisations alongside representatives of the forestry industry. I will shortly publish its membership and terms of reference.

“If there is one clear message from this experience, it is that people cherish their forests and woodlands and the benefits they bring. My first priority throughout this period of debate has

been securing a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests. On many occasions in the House last autumn, Ministers gave assurances that our aim in all of this has been to do more to maintain and enhance the public benefits delivered by forestry – from recreational access to wildlife protection; from tackling climate change to sustaining a wide range of small businesses. That is why my ambition to provide a better future for our forests is undiminished.

“We have already heard positive suggestions about how we can do this – for heritage forests and all other woodlands. We have spoken to the RSPB, the National Trust, the Woodland Trust, the Wildlife Trusts, the Ramblers and other groups. The Forestry Commission has itself acknowledged that change is needed and will of course be fully engaged in this process going forward, as I know they have many ideas to contribute.

“We have also been listening to MPs on all sides of the House many of whom have set up their own initiatives with local groups. We want to support them in this.

“Finally, I am sorry, we got this one wrong, but we have listened to people’s concerns. I would like to thank colleagues for their support through what has been a difficult time. I now want to move forward in step with the public. I hope that the measures I have announced today, signalling a fresh approach, demonstrate my intention to do the right thing for our forests and woodlands.”

Notes

The membership of the independent panel to look into forestry policy in England will be announced soon.

The Review will report to the Secretary of State in the autumn of 2011.

end of press release