

News story: State of the art greenhouse unveiled in Cheshire

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has today opened a £5 million cutting-edge glasshouse at Delamere Nursery in Cheshire.

The state-of-the-art growing facility covers a hectare and is set to boost timber production, with its tight environmental controls creating better growing conditions for the four million seedlings it will house.

It boasts computerised environmental controls, rainwater harvesting from the glasshouse roof into a 15 million-litre capacity lagoon and a boom irrigation system, which allows accurate watering and can apply fertiliser and chemicals.

The glasshouse will play a vital role in the maintenance and expansion of the Public Forest Estate throughout the UK, with the seedlings helping timber production and improving biosecurity.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said at the opening:

It is wonderful to be here to officially open this impressive new structure which will help ensure our forests are stocked with trees in a more sustainable and productive fashion.

The forests and woodlands that these trees will go on to be a part of are vital for providing timber, protecting wildlife, and helping us improve our environment for the next generation.

Simon Hodgson, Forestry Commission England, Chief Executive said:

I'm delighted our minister, Thérèse Coffey, officially opened our new forestry glasshouse today. This significant investment demonstrates how committed we are to the nation's forests.

The largest glasshouse dedicated to forest trees in the UK means that Forestry Commission England will be able to plant around five million of the very best trees every year in the nation's forests for timber, recreation and wildlife as well as supplying trees to Scotland and Wales. We are increasing the diversity of tree species we plant so the nation's forests are resilient; protecting them from pests, diseases and the effects of a changing climate.

I would like to thank everyone involved for their hard work in making this project a reality.

The glasshouse was completed in December 2017, with the first seeds sown in March 2018. It is anticipated that it will be fully stocked with a mix of species and ages by 2020.

News story: Tees Valley has 'key role' in new economy

Treasury Minister Robert Jenrick today (31 August 2018) visited the Tees Valley to see how innovative local businesses in the area are helping drive the new economy.

The Exchequer Secretary was in the region as part of a UK-wide tour. He met with Tees Valley mayor, Ben Houchen, to hear how the local area is benefitting from its landmark devolution deal, which included new powers over transport, skills and business support, and £450 million of extra government support.

The Minister was hosted at the South Tees Development Corporation and discussions included how £123 million of funding, announced by Chancellor Philip Hammond in the 2017 Budget, would keep the former SSI steelworks site safe and pave the way to crucial regeneration.

He also visited the Centre for Process Innovation, which this month received £109 million of government funding. The centre is leading the way in designing new manufacturing methods to take prototypes to products on the market across a range of cutting-edge industries including pharmaceuticals, aeroplane and automobile engines and electronics.

The government is supporting enterprise and innovation across the country so all areas can enjoy the benefits of economic growth. There are currently 55,000 more people in employment in the North East than in 2010 and 18,800 more businesses. The area recently received an extra £59 million from the government's new transforming cities fund – to improve transport links and better connect people to jobs.

Speaking on the visit, Mr Jenrick said:

We are investing in improving connectivity, strengthening skills, supporting enterprise and innovation, and promoting trade – building an economy that works for everyone, and making Tees Valley an even better place to live and work.

This area has a key role to play in the new economy and by working closely with local leaders we will ensure the Northern Powerhouse

continues to boost growth and productivity across the country.

Notice: WF11 8SQ, Ferrybridge MFE 2 Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish surrenders that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the partial surrender notice, decision document and site condition report evaluation template for:

- Operator name: Ferrybridge MFE 2 Limited
 - Installation name: Ferrybridge Multifuel 2
 - Permit number: EPR/XP3833DK/S002
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News story: Petrol station merger raises competition concerns in local areas

Both companies run petrol stations across the UK, supplying fuel, food and convenience services.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that competition provided by other major petrol retailers and supermarkets will ensure that the merger would not result in higher prices for motorists across the country as a whole.

However, after conducting an initial (Phase 1) investigation into the takeover, the CMA has identified concerns at 29 locations in the UK where MFG and MRH are close competitors, and where the takeover could result in prices rising for local motorists.

MFG now has until 7 September to address the CMA's competition concerns. If it is unable to do so, the merger will be referred for an in-depth (Phase 2) investigation.

More information can be found on the [MFG / MRH case page](#).

Press release: Drought planning continues after hot summer puts pressure on environment

The National Drought Group has urged people to use water wisely following a meeting to discuss pressure on water resources and the environment following this summer's heat wave.

The environment has suffered due to the driest May to July across England since 1921. The Environment Agency (EA) responded to a 330% increase in significant drought-related incidents as teams acted to protect wildlife and rescue fish struggling due to low river flows.

Numerous species, habitats, birds, trees and aquatic life have been affected by the hot, dry summer and high demand for water. EA hydrologists recorded 'exceptionally low' river flows for 5 weeks in a row, reservoir stocks for England as a whole were at historic lows for the end of July and soils were the driest on record in the North West.

The EA's Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan, chaired the National Drought Group meeting and received updates from water companies, discussed ways to protect the environment and sustain support for farmers and businesses. Water companies were asked to outline progress against agreed action plans to maintain water supplies while protecting the environment. They reported that there are no current plans to bring in Temporary Use Bans (hosepipe bans) although water restrictions remain a possibility if rainfall in September is low.

The EA has taken a range of actions to respond to the impacts of dry weather including:

- Supporting farmers by allowing more flexibility with water abstraction in order to safeguard food production and animal welfare.
- Operating water transfers to help maintain river flows.
- Increased monitoring and inspection of businesses abstracting water to ensure they are not taking more water than they need.
- Issuing 4 drought permits to United Utilities at locations in Cumbria, should they be needed later in the year.
- Not cleaning EA fleet vehicles and office windows to avoid unnecessary water usage.

Although August has seen dry periods interrupted by bouts of wet weather, the Met Office 3 month outlook for September to November forecasts that above average temperatures and slightly lower than average rainfall are likely.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency said:

Over the last few months of prolonged dry weather the Environment Agency, the water companies and many others have been working hard together to reduce the risk of water restrictions and balance the needs of the public, businesses and the environment.

Despite the recent rain, we will need to continue to collaborate closely as we move into autumn. All of us have a role to play in helping to protect the environment and maintain supplies. We encourage everyone to use water wisely.