

Glastir Woodland and Restoration schemes open to bids

The schemes which provide financial support for new planting and restoration of woodland will be open to bids from the 1st April.

Glastir is the Welsh Government's flagship sustainable land management scheme, and has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government. It pays for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services aimed at:

- combating climate change
- improving water management
- maintaining and enhancing biodiversity

The Glastir Woodland Creation Scheme was set up to increase the area of new woodlands in Wales by offering financial assistance for new tree planting. It can also contribute to the First Minister's commitment to create a new National Forest for Wales.

The Glastir Woodland Restoration Scheme enables woodlands infected by *Phytophthora ramorum* and stands of larch, to be replanted to help slow down the spread of the disease. When a woodland is clear-felled, the scheme provides an opportunity to diversify tree species to increase resilience to climate change and damage from pests and diseases.

Together, they have delivered 1,081 hectares of new planting and 813 hectares of restocking, with hundreds more awaiting approval.

Lesley Griffiths said:

"The Glastir schemes provide support for a range of proposals which will improve the management of our natural resources and will contribute to the well-being of our rural communities.

"Forestry is not just good for our environment and well-being. It is also good for our economy. Well-managed woodlands can provide a continuous, sustainable supply of timber which is why we want to encourage better management of our existing woodlands across Wales.

"Disease has been an unprecedented challenge on the public estate but Natural Resources Wales has responded well. Where trees have had to be felled we are replanting with more resilient species in order to develop healthier and more varied woodlands. These will

provide a greater variety of trees to produce high quality Welsh wood and forests as well as reducing their vulnerability to disease in the future.”

Yesterday the Minister made an Oral Statement in the Senedd outlining the Welsh Government’s plans to address the challenges the environment faces and the work underway to support forestry in Wales.

Well-managed woodlands can provide a continuous, sustainable supply of timber which is why we want to encourage better management of our existing woodlands across Wales. We have already committed £5 million of RDP funding towards our very popular Timber Business Investment Scheme and we have committed a further £2 million towards a 4th round of funding which we opened for expressions of interest on 1 February. The scheme provides capital funding for improvements which add value to forests for woodland management activities, timber harvesting and timber processing.

The Welsh Government is committed to accelerating woodland creation and our refreshed Strategy gives guidance on the kinds of trees and woodlands we need in Wales and clear direction to woodland managers.

Lesley Griffiths added:

“By working with others, our aim is to optimise the multiple environmental, economic, social and cultural benefits the woodland estate provides.

“Woodlands can make an important contribution to public goods such as carbon sequestration and woodland biodiversity. We are also exploring ideas for integrating woodlands and forestry into resilient farm businesses. This can tie in with the creation of a national forest.”