

Forestry Commission takes further action on new tree disease

Woodland managers, landowners, tree nurseries and the forest industry are being urged to remain vigilant after the Forestry Commission (FC) introduced extended demarcated areas in Devon, Cornwall and Cumbria to combat the spread of the tree pathogen *Phytophthora pluvialis*.

The UK Chief Plant Health Officer has confirmed further findings of the disease in woodlands in the affected areas, following routine Forestry Commission plant health surveillance activities.

Phytophthora pluvialis is a fungus-like pathogen known to affect a variety of tree species, including western hemlock, Douglas fir, tanoak and several pine species (in particular radiata pine). It is reported to cause needle cast (where needles turn brown and fall off), shoot dieback, and lesions on the stem, branches, and roots.

Although *Phytophthora pluvialis* has been detected on mature western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees at these sites, it is as yet unknown if the pathogen is the direct cause of the observed symptoms. Investigations are ongoing to determine whether other factors are at play.

Forestry Commission, Forest Research and the Animal and Plant Health Agency are rapidly conducting further surveillance and diagnostic analysis to understand more about the pathogen and ensure that any required control measures are swiftly undertaken to stop its spread. This includes extensive ground and aerial surveillance as part of a UK-wide survey, and comprehensive research and modelling to explore factors such as climatic and potential species susceptibility and to help inform the management response.

Nicola Spence, the UK Chief Plant Health Officer, said:

We are continuing to take swift and robust action against the findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis*, as part of our well-established biosecurity protocol used for tree pests and diseases.

I urge all sectors to support efforts to tackle this pathogen by checking the health of western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees. [Key symptoms](#) to look for are lesions on the stem, branch or roots. Any sightings should be reported to the Forestry Commission via its [TreeAlert online portal](#).

Extensions to the demarcated areas help prevent the accidental movement of the pathogen. Additional restrictions requiring pre-notification of felling of susceptible material within the demarcated were introduced in December 2021 and continue to apply to all demarcated areas.

The [two Notices will come into force](#) on Thursday 27 January, reflecting these changes.

Learn more about [tree pests and diseases, and how to identify them](#).

Landowners are asked to [report any suspect trees via TreeAlert](#).

Culture Secretary: Aquatics Centre of Birmingham Commonwealth Games will leave 'a legacy for generations'

- Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries visits Sandwell Aquatics Centre alongside Paralympic swimming champion Ellie Simmonds
- With six months to go to Birmingham 2022 this is a major milestone in the road to the Commonwealth Games
- The world-class facilities will level up access to sport in the West Midlands and will leave a lasting legacy for the region beyond the Games

Today, the Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries visited the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, a major new sports facility which is being built to host the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games this summer.

Alongside Paralympic swimming champion Ellie Simmonds, the Culture Secretary applauded a major milestone in the delivery of the state-of-the-art facility. Combined, the competition swimming pool and dive pool have now been filled with 1.2 million gallons of water.

Between 29 July and 8 August, the venue will play host to hundreds of athletes and thousands of spectators across diving, swimming and para swimming competitions. With 66 medal events in total set to be held at the facility, it will be the stage for more medal moments than any other Birmingham 2022 venue.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Nadine Dorries said:

My ambition is to make sure that every child in the UK, whether they grow up in Sunderland or Smethwick, has access to excellent sports facilities. This world-class aquatics centre will help do just that. Not only will it showcase the talents of some of the greatest swimmers and divers on the planet but its legacy will be its use by people in the West Midlands for generations after the Games.

Sandwell is a clear example of why the UK bids for major events and

why we are so good at hosting them. Events like Birmingham 2022 can be a catalyst for levelling up access to sport and culture.

Birmingham 2022 will be the first ever major multi-sport event to feature more medals for women than for men and will have the biggest ever para sport programme at a Commonwealth Games.

Sandwell Aquatics Centre – which is being funded by DCMS, Sandwell Council, Sport England and other local partners – is set to be completed in spring, and will be open to the public next year.

Located four miles west of Birmingham, the centre will be a clear example of the lasting legacy the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will leave. According to PHE data, the estimated percentage of physically active adults in the Sandwell region is lower than the England average.

With long-term community health in mind, the site will feature the West Midlands' first 10m diving platform, as well as a 50m pool, brand new exercise facilities, a football pitch and a women-only gym.

Birmingham 2022 board member and five-time Paralympic champion, Ellie Simmonds, who visited the venue on Thursday, said:

It's amazing to visit the Sandwell Aquatics Centre and to see the fantastic progress that has been made. Not only will this be an incredible venue for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games but it will also be a wonderful facility for local people to use for years to come.

Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, leader of Sandwell Council, said:

As always it is fantastic to be visiting the Sandwell Aquatics Centre to see how much further we have come to completing the venue.

It's incredible to see the swimming pools filled and you can now visualise how the venue look during the 10 days when we will be hosting the swimming and diving events for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Sandwell residents can now really get a sense of what the venue has to offer when it will be open to the public as a leisure centre for all to use. I look forward to seeing the final touches being added to the venue in the coming months in readiness for the Games this summer.

The centre will improve access to swimming and diving for local residents, schools and clubs, and there is a long-term partnership in place with the

University of Wolverhampton to maximise opportunities for local staff and students.

The government continues to support the elite, grassroots and leisure sectors with an unprecedented £1 billion to ensure sport remains accessible for all throughout the pandemic. Since launching Sporting Future in 2015, Sport England has allocated over £1.5 billion to nearly 5,000 organisations within the UK.

Notes to editors

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city featuring thousands of world-class athletes and over a million spectators. Home to more than 187 nationalities, Birmingham 2022 will be a home Games for every nation.

Birmingham and the West Midlands region is benefitting from a £778 million investment to stage the 2022 Commonwealth Games, including £594 million of funding from central government.

Through increased investment, exciting infrastructure projects and inspiring sporting and cultural programmes, the Games will be at the heart of the region's economic recovery in the aftermath of coronavirus. Projects include:

- The Birmingham 2022 Festival which will engage 2.5 million people in the UK;
- A £24m Business and Tourism Programme is promoting the region to the Commonwealth as a great place to visit and invest in,
- The Games is creating new jobs and skills opportunities with 30,000 Games-time roles and 13,000 volunteering positions.

With an estimated global television audience of 1.5 billion people, the Games will showcase Birmingham, the West Midlands and the entire country as an amazing place to live, work, study, visit and do business.

PM address to Africa Investment Conference: 20 January 2022

Welcome to the Africa Investment Conference.

A wonderful moment to be able to focus on the amazing opportunities in a spectacular continent, with vast resources and over a billion people.

By 2050, Africa's population is set to double to 2.5 billion and the mother

continent of humanity will be home to a quarter of the world's population.

As that day approaches, Africa is transforming its fortunes by means of trade and investment and I want Britain to be with you every step of the journey.

We're already one of Africa's biggest commercial partners – we've signed nine free trade agreements with our African friends, and in this financial year alone our embassies and high commissions helped British companies to invest £2.5 billion in Africa.

But I am determined to do much more. Our shared task must be to ensure that Africa prospers from the green industrial revolution, that will rescue humanity from catastrophic climate change.

The UK is already the biggest investor for instance in renewable energy in South Africa.

Now we want to work alongside our African partners to build new and high-quality infrastructure according to the highest standards of transparency and environmental protection, which is why we've launched the Clean Green Initiative.

We want to support African countries that are already suffering the effects of climate change, and one export guarantee from the British Government will allow 87 emergency bridges made in Gloucestershire to be used to strengthen flood defences in Ghana.

We want to be Africa's partner of choice and if we get this right, then free trade and investment will be the most formidable tools in our hands to generate economic growth and allow Africa to thrive.

Thank you.

[Foreign Secretary Statement: Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership with Australia](#)

News story

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has agreed a new Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership with Australia's Foreign Minister.



Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss has agreed a new Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership with Australia's Foreign Minister, Marise Payne, to strengthen global technology supply chains, ensure the UK's positive technology vision and tackle malign actors who disrupt cyber-space.

The new agreement includes provisions to build greater resilience to ransomware amongst Indo-Pacific nations and sharpen legal sanctions against cyber attackers. It will also deepen practical co-operation on ensuring technology standards reflect our shared values.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

As champions of freedom and democracy, the UK and Australia are hard-headed in defending our values and challenging unfair practices and malign acts.

In the battlegrounds of the future, cutting edge technologies will be crucial in the fight against malign cyber actors who threaten our peace and security.

That's why today, the UK and Australia have agreed a new cyber and technology partnership to ensure that liberal democracies shape the technology rules of tomorrow.

Signed by Truss in Sydney during her visit to Australia, the agreement will also support development of a network of liberty that will deter cyber-attacks before they happen and call out malign actors who perpetrate the acts.

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Africa Investment Conference: Clean Growth

I'm sorry not to be able to be with you live today, I'm actually in east Africa: in a part of the continent that is leading the way to embrace renewable energy.

Yet despite Africa's abundance of renewable energy sources – solar, wind, hydro and geothermal – most countries, businesses and communities still rely on fossil fuels.

Given the need for all countries to transition to clean growth, this presents an era-defining opportunity for the private sector.

The UK Government is working with African countries to support their pursuit of clean, sustainable, and resilient development.

At COP26, alongside France, Germany, the US and EU, we signed a ground-breaking \$8.5 billion deal with South Africa, to support the country's transition from coal. It is expected to prevent up to 1.5 Gigatonnes of emissions over the next 20 years.

And also at COP, the UK led a group of 12 international donors to collectively pledge at least \$1.5 billion to maintain and protect the Congo Basin's forests and peatlands. We plan to build on this in the coming years, with further finance and investment from a variety of public and private sources.

We have given an additional £126m to the Transforming Energy Access initiative, which aims to leverage more than £1.3bn to provide 25 million people with access to clean energy by 2026.

We are also investing in other strands of Africa's transition to clean growth.

For example in November, I signed a landmark Green Growth agreement with the Zambian Minister for Foreign Affairs, which aims to attract billions in sustainable investment and boost trade.

And through our revamped development investment company – British International Investment – we will invest £3 billion into climate finance in Africa and South Asia over the next five years, making it one of the largest climate finance investors in Africa.

British International Investment is helping to support a green revolution, for example by restoring 10,000 hectares of forest in Ghana with the scope to plant up to 25,000 trees a day.

BII is also backing pioneering 3D printing, that will help build low-carbon housing and schools, which will reduce the carbon footprint of new homes in

Malawi and Kenya by up to 70 per cent.

Our funding is an investment in our collective future. And it is a huge opportunity for UK and African businesses.

In 2020, at the UK-Africa Investment Summit, we committed to build a new business support service to expand trade with African countries.

And today I'm proud to say that the service is up and running, and ready to help UK and African businesses connect and identify trade and investment opportunities.

It is called the Growth Gateway – a digital portal that offers support on trade, finance, and investment, backed by a team of trade and investment specialists, including experts from Boston Consulting Group and PA Consulting.

Growth Gateway provides you with all the information you need in one place. With a team of 20 experts, who have worked extensively on trade and investment in Africa, together they have over 190 years of hands-on experience and are available to answer any questions. They are taking part in today's conference, and I encourage you to ask what they can do to support your business.

Comparatively, African countries have made a tiny contribution to climate change. However, we can only overcome climate change – and only unleash the huge economic potential of African nations – when all governments and businesses work shoulder to shoulder, for the good of us all.

Thank you.