Creating a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests

Dr Peter Bonfield, OBE, FREng
Chairman
Foreword

When I met Dr Bonfield in January 2013, I welcomed Grown in Britain’s aims to increase demand for British wood, increase investment into our woodlands and increase awareness of the benefits woodlands deliver for people.

I congratulate Dr Bonfield on his report. Already, as a result of the Grown in Britain movement, more businesses are pledging to buy more British wood. A new range of British grown and manufactured ash furniture is to be released as part of Grown in Britain Week. The economic engine that should be driving forestry is being re-invigorated, this early success shows that it can be done.

Grown in Britain is not only about markets and business though. It is about a wood culture. Community and conservation groups are working as part of Grown in Britain to increase the value we all place on our woodlands and forests. This is helping to make woodland creation and management a more attractive, local investment for those companies keen to put something back into the environment on which their businesses depend.

In his report, Dr Bonfield sets out the actions taken to put forestry on a firmer economic footing. These actions will help government, businesses and communities protect, improve and expand our woodland resource. There is still much for us to tackle together to bring more woodland into active management and utilise the large volume of timber in overstocked English woodlands. So, this report does not mark the end of Grown in Britain. Instead, it should be regarded as a show case of the first steps towards a resilient forestry sector. I urge the many businesses and organisations involved in Grown in Britain to make it the long term success it promises to be.

The Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
1. Introduction

Britain’s woodlands and forests are among our most precious and valuable resources, providing benefits to people, the environment and to our economy, but if we are to ensure they will continue to thrive and develop into the future, we must develop and maximise their potential. Delivery of this potential rests on the link between woodland management and development and commercial timber production.

That link has provided the focus for this report, entitled *Grown in Britain*. It was inspired by the recommendations of the Independent Panel on Forestry report published in July 2012.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, welcomed the recommendation of a Wood Industry Action Plan in February 2013 as a private sector initiative led through Confor that would work in close partnership with government. Dr Peter Bonfield OBE FREng was asked to Chair the initiative and to report in autumn 2013. This report summarises the main outcomes of this work and outlines some suggested next steps which will capitalise and build on the momentum and achievements of the last six months.

*Grown in Britain* was commissioned as an action plan to establish an enduring and robust framework for a sustainable future for the UK’s woodlands and forests. It focused on:

1.1 Generating more demand for the wide array of quality products generated from productive woodlands, and in so doing strengthening considerably the economic engine that underpins the sector.

1.2 Establishing a mechanism to allow businesses more readily to exercise their corporate responsibility through funding woodland projects in the UK and thereby to demonstrate to customers and shareholders the carbon, societal, and other ecosystem service benefits achieved. There is great willingness on the part of companies to do this and the framework will significantly increase the amount of funding available to support UK woodland projects.

1.3 Creating a stronger wood culture in our society: making it the norm that we use, buy and enjoy wood products, managing woods to achieve this; more people active in our woodlands with improved mental and physical wellbeing, and a sense of community inspired by woodlands.
2. Approach

This initiative has brought together many diverse people, businesses and organisations who have all worked co-operatively in new ways to achieve a common, higher and shared goal. A small team of eight dedicated people from Confor, the private sector, Forestry Commission and Defra was appointed to support the initiative and to deliver. It is not possible in this brief work to convey the enormous energy and activities that have gone into the outcomes reported later. The very many people, businesses and organisations who have contributed so much and so generously to our work are listed in the Acknowledgements on page 15. Grown in Britain has brought under one umbrella our largest sawmills and our Greenwood workers, mountain bikers and ramblers, our charcoal producers and our major contractors, our community forests, wildlife trusts and those concerned with the nation’s health and wellbeing.

Two key elements of the approach that have underpinned the successes of Grown in Britain are:

— Openness and inclusivity. Everyone and every organisation with an interest in supporting Grown in Britain has been welcomed into delivering against its objective, so that many people and organisations with positive energy towards making progress against these goals have been harnessed. The name Grown in Britain, and its strapline, ‘creating a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests’ are transparent, clear, open, accessible and give a sense of purpose that businesses, government, organisations, the public and campaign group networks can identify with. This has been enhanced through the highly effective use of promotional branding and social media.

— Personal and organisational responsibility and empowerment. An action plan has been central, engaging with and helping individuals and organisations to focus on what they can do to deliver for the Grown in Britain cause, encouraging and empowering them to deliver. This is a liberating and innovative approach in fostering shared ownership to make change happen.
3. Achievements

*Grown in Britain* has achieved significant outcomes in a relatively short timeframe, and these are summarised below. It should be noted that many other achievements support those listed, but for reasons of brevity they have not been included in this report.

**Key outcomes include:**

**Increasing demand**

3.1 **A strong and enduring demand established for products from woodlands and forests.** Long term commitment has been established from over 30 UK companies in the retail, DIY, builder’s merchants, building contractors and building sectors to preferentially procure products from UK woodlands and forests. The total buying power of these companies is in excess of £50bn per annum and if realised would overcome the long term problem of lack of demand for product. This has provided already, and will into the future, an enduring and stronger economic engine to support planting and forest management.

3.2 **Procurement statement established.** A simple and clear procurement statement has been established and embedded in the procurement policies of these companies which provides for a preference for *Grown in Britain* wood products.

A web based method of reporting performance has been established so that consistent measurement of the use of wood products derived from the UK woodlands is made.

3.3 **Wood and forest industries buy-in and response.** The supply side from the wood and forest industries has been engaged and is now working to meet the increased demand.

3.4 **Better connections in government.** The Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) priorities of innovation, enterprise, access to finance and export markets are relevant to all sectors of the economy including the forestry and timber sector. BIS support and policy in these areas will help Defra grow the rural economy.
3.5 Ensured that woodlands managed to the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) can meet the government timber procurement policy. About 85% of UK-grown timber is independently certified and automatically meets timber procurement criteria. For the important remainder, management based on the UKFS can provide the necessary evidence of sustainability. *Grown in Britain* has worked with government to ensure that timber and timber products from UK woods managed to UKFS standards will continue to have access to the market, meeting government procurement standards. This is particularly important for smaller woods in the UK where the costs of independent certification can present a barrier to management.

3.6 Identifiable UK forestry assurance logo. A logo and brand representing *Grown in Britain* has been trademarked and is being trialled in a number of projects across the UK for hardwoods, softwoods, fuel wood and seed stocks. The *Grown in Britain* logo is a simple and clear mark that tells consumers that the products have been grown in Britain from trusted sources.

3.7 Large scale trials. During *Grown in Britain Week*, 14 to 20 October 2013, coinciding with the publication of this report, major retailers will be selling products under the *Grown in Britain* logo as part of the trials. It is expected that the use of the logo will become widespread over the next 12 months and will become the familiar identifier for clients, the supply chain and the public.
Corporate responsibility funding

3.8 A UK framework for investing in nature. As part of *Grown in Britain Week*, the Secretary of State for the Environment has set out a vision for a high level framework under which businesses can be confident about investing in nature and our valuable habitats. This will enable businesses to report the benefits from their support of projects that deliver on carbon, improve the natural environment and benefit people. Crucially this is within a UK context, enabling companies to invest locally, close to their customer base, and be confident in reporting the positive impacts they are having through their Corporate Responsibility (CR) activities. This has not been an explicit option previously and has the potential to unlock considerable new funds for UK projects that enhance our natural environment.

3.9 Woodland CR Reporting enabled. As part of *Grown in Britain Week* the Secretary of State for the Environment has also set out how businesses can report the impacts their funding of woodland management operations have on the delivery of ecosystems services. Underpinned by the UKFS, the UK Woodland CR plan reporting process enables businesses to fund woodland projects across the country and have the range of associated benefits recognised, allowing transparent and comparable CR reporting. This gives a new mechanism for funding the delivery of tree planting and woodland projects and will enable a wide range of organisations to carry out the works required to improve the condition of our natural assets and enhance the multiple benefits they deliver for society.

3.10 Trialling the UK Woodland CR plan. A number of businesses will now be piloting investment through the new UK Woodlands CR plan over the coming months. Forestry is open for business and *Grown in Britain* is beginning to link land managers with investors wanting to create new forests and improve our woodlands. This approach can then be voluntarily adopted by other businesses across the country where it can help support the delivery of a range of CR ambitions.

Together, these outcomes contribute to government aspirations: ethical and environmentally sound businesses supporting activities that bring societal and economic benefits, and empowering local groups to deliver across our society. This is business empowering society. The framework to invest in nature and a specific UK Woodlands CR plan are key elements in enabling this outcome. It should be noted that although the first pioneering practical application under this scheme relates to woodlands, it is anticipated that this approach could then be applied to a wide range of other important habitats that are in urgent need of support. It opens the door to subsequent development of equivalent codes, increasing opportunities for private sector investors, the natural environment, and the groups that work to protect and enhance nature.
**Wood culture**

A wood and woodland culture is where it is the norm across all sectors of society and the economy that there is appreciation, understanding, care, enjoyment and use of wood and woodlands, including all their products.

3.11 **A common identifier established.** The *Grown in Britain* logo and brand has been widely promulgated and is now used and recognised by many in the private sector customer base, the wood and forest industry supply chain and organisations promoting tree planting, woodland management, and societal outreach. Just as the logo on wood products described in 3.6 above will become synonymous with products sourced from woodlands and forests in a positive and responsible way, the complementary *Grown in Britain* logos have become and will increasingly become recognised as synonymous with a movement supporting a better future for the UK’s woodlands and forests.

3.12 **Virtual presence established.** A website (www.growninbritain.org) has been established, which is well visited, alive with new content and becoming a hub for people to go to for listing their events, demonstrating their commitment to the *Grown in Britain* cause, writing blogs and contributing to newsletters. A twitter account @GrowninBritain (linked to Facebook) has been established, which has its own ‘personality’ and at the time of this report has reached more than 4.5 million twitter account holders. More than 20 discussions have taken place within the *Grown in Britain* group on LinkedIn which has further extended outreach.

3.13 **Traditional communication presence established.** Our goal of engaging 10 million people in *Grown in Britain* has been exceeded when we add traditional communication outreach to our social media outreach. This includes articles in daily and Sunday newspapers, *This England* magazine, *The Structural Engineer*, *Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Journal*, *Forestry Journal*, *Timber Trades Journal* and features on Radio 4 and local television news.

3.14 **Grown in Britain events and activities delivered and planned.** Annual *Grown in Britain Week* established. Over 250 events have been held across the UK, spanning a wide array of activities associated with *Grown in Britain*, and many more will be held during *Grown in Britain Week*, which will take place every October. These events, as wonderfully diverse as nature, span a large and imaginative array of interests relevant to our woodlands and forests; from hard edged technical and business oriented conferences, to tree identification sessions, walks in the woods, tree seed collecting, fungal forays and school learning in the natural environment.
3.15 *Grown in Britain products in stores and beyond.* Outreach and awareness will grow significantly during *Grown in Britain Week* as retailers promote *Grown in Britain* branded products in their stores as part of the sourcing trials. Participants will include B&Q stores across the country, Travis Perkins depots in the Midlands, Heal’s department store, which will be promoting branded hardwood furniture, and community forests, which will market branded wood fuel.

3.16 *Wider forestry sector brought together around a sustainable future.* One of the most impressive findings of this report has been the huge contribution made by the diverse wider forestry sector to the economic, environmental and societal well-being of the UK. This plan brings together all those bodies who do so much to contribute to the planting, management and societal access to trees, woodlands and nature. The difficult economic environment and budget constraints across all kinds of bodies have made it harder for many of these organisations to prosper. The organisations that deliver *Grown in Britain* outcomes need a new, more sustainable future. *Grown in Britain* is helping them to better connect their efforts into a more unified voice, which businesses and government (particularly in Defra but also enabling cross-Departmental connections) can work with, to enable all the *Grown in Britain* opportunities to be realised in a more concerted way.
3.17 The campaign groups and woodland movement supporting action and outcomes. There is a strong, and thanks to social media, extensively connected campaign movement deeply committed to forestry issues. This movement has engaged most positively with *Grown in Britain* and has used its outreach and energy to connect with its network to support the creation of a stronger wood culture. For example, social media has been used for communications to engage, promote and coordinate events with the wider public. Local forest groups have organised events such as the forthcoming Wood Forum in the Forest of Dean.

Woodlands and forests in the UK face an uncertain future without a strong wood culture at their heart. It is this insight that forms the foundation of the new woodland movement at the grassroots.

3.18 Government working with the sector. The process of conducting this work has identified a number of activities government currently fulfils which are essential for supporting the goals of *Grown in Britain*. These include:

- The supply of round wood from the Public Forest Estate (PFE) to the sawmilling and processing sectors, whatever market conditions or weather conditions prevail. This provides essential continuity of supply, which would otherwise be at risk.

- Good data on future timber supply from the PFE and private woodlands via a National Forest Inventory and production forecast.

- Research that supports the innovation required to underpin the future success of the forestry and wood sectors.

- Access to expertise on ecosystems services and their delivery, which enable the outcomes around the UKFS and new woodland CR plan reported above.
The ‘Natural Health Service’ reinvigorated. Health agencies in this country (particularly the Sustainable Development Unit working across NHS England, Public Health England and with the Department of Health) has recognised evidence that shows the important contribution that woodlands and green spaces make to the health and wellbeing of society. All health promoting agencies (including the more recently established Health and Wellbeing boards) understand they have an important opportunity to create the right conditions locally that encourage and enable more activities in, and visits to, woodlands and forests. Staff, hospitals and health centres across the country have supported the goal of the NHS Forest to plant 1.3 million trees in the grounds of hospitals, health centres and other parts of the health and care system: therefore allowing patients, visitors and the 1.3 million NHS staff across the UK to have access to woodlands, improving recovery, health and wellbeing. However, the concept is still not universal and is not high enough on the priority list of those responsible for our hospital estates, especially when the benefit for improved patient experience, improved recovery rates, and improved physical and mental health of all ages is taken into account. Together these new emphases support the creation of a stronger ‘Natural Health Service’ where access to nature, woodlands and green spaces becomes one of the foundations for a healthier and happier society.

This especially extends to urban trees in our parks and on our streets which deliver multiple social, economic, environmental and wellbeing benefits to our increasingly urban population. In this capacity trees can help create and sustain community wealth.

1.3 million trees to be planted in hospital grounds
Structural and organisational outcomes

3.20 Delivery team in place. The core delivery team of people from private and public sectors, created at the outset of Grown in Britain, has generated strong links and networks with the new demand side, the supply side, the wider forestry sector, and across government departments. Seven of this core delivery team will remain in place after this report has been published to take forward the work, outcomes and benefits of Grown in Britain.

3.21 An extensive ‘movement’ supporting Grown in Britain has been created. A Grown in Britain Executive Team has been established. A powerful and extensive movement of the diverse, yet necessary and complementary organisations and public that support the Grown in Britain cause has been created and will endure. Much of this movement will be self sustaining and will not need external future direction and motivation. However, the Grown in Britain Executive Team will help the evolution of the programme and working arrangements which will continue delivery against the goals set. This will be co-chaired by Stuart Goodall, the Chief Executive from Confor, and Steve Cook from Willmott Dixon and Chair of the UK Contractors Group Materials Task Group and Procurement Committee representing the demand side of the industry.
4. Conclusions and next steps

This report does not list future recommendations for Grown in Britain. It is now the responsibility of the executive team, the delivery team and the wider movement to take forward the substantial achievements from the last six months. They will build on the collective will and energy shared by many to create a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests.

Grown in Britain has applied and built on the approaches and culture applied by the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) to deliver the infrastructure for the London 2012 Olympic Games. From a standing start in 2006, the ODA built an organisation that swelled from a few tens of people, to many thousands, who successfully, and despite scepticism from many, delivered a project with an outstanding safety record, on time, on budget, without litigation and which met demanding new performance requirements for sustainability and legacy. A key factor in achieving these impressive outcomes was that the approach adopted and culture developed unlocked inherent innovation and energy in many people at all levels to deliver against a shared goal.

Grown in Britain has a cause shared by many: to create a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests. It is open to all who share this cause and there is space for everyone who does. It focuses on creating outcomes, personal or organisational empowerment, and has a ‘can do’ philosophy. It brings together environmental, societal and economic factors into mutually reinforcing outcomes and purpose. It has been pragmatic and realistic in approach, while having ambitious and stretching goals. From day one it has set out to create a movement and a momentum that will endure.

This enduring approach is critical, because our woodlands and forests bring so much to our environment, society and economy, and have much more to offer in the future. They need and deserve a better and more sustainable future. And now, thanks to the open, positive and collaborative spirit adopted by the government, businesses, NGOs, the public and others over the last six months in support of Grown in Britain there is now a strong platform to build from.
And a year from now, why not...

— every school is a forest school so that school pupils can take inspiration and learning from the natural environment

— every 8 year old has a tree to plant and watch grow, to encourage young people to become more connected and more active in the natural environment

— local authorities, woodland and forestry NGOs working together to create green and woodland spaces for healthy and happy communities, supported by government policy in areas such as planning

— many, many young and redeployed people being trained on NGO-led projects delivering these green spaces, supported by business and government schemes

— an array of new codes under an Investing in Nature framework that cover other natural habitats requiring investment to protect and enhance the societal benefits we gain from them

— coronation meadows, mingled with trees as part of the Natural Health Service

— a reinvigorated and growing hardwood processing sector, built on the back of the early success of Grown in Britain

— refreshed investment in projects which have already transformed communities and the landscape but need a sustainable future.

There is the potential for many more achievements at a community and national level.

Let’s now build on the achievements of Grown in Britain and create a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests.
5. References


Grown in Britain Delivery Team

Dr Peter Bonfield, OBE, FREng, Chairman
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Bradley Bates, Defra
Andy Crawford, Defra
Steve Fowkes, Forestry Commission England
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Kanta Nar, BRE
Amy Worsley, BRE
Creating a sustainable future for our woodlands and forests
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In addition many UK businesses, organisations and individuals have shown support and added momentum to Grown in Britain. Thank you to all, including those listed here:

@worldwidewood  
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BSW Timber Group  
Alexander Mueller  
Buckland Timber  
Andrew Harvey Shopfitters  
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Angus Ross Workshop  
Building Research Establishment (BRE)  
Architecture & sp  
Bulworthy Project  
Arnold Laver  
Bunny Guinness  
B & K Structures Ltd  
Butterfly Conservation  
B&Q  
Campaign for National Parks  
Balcombe Estate  
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)  
Balfour Beatty  
Certainly Wood  
BAM Construct UK  
CH2M Hill  
Bankside Urban Forest  
Charltons Group  
Barcham Trees Plc  
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Bat Conservation Trust  
Chiltern Woodlands Project  
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Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty  
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Berkshire Save our Woods  
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Bioenergy Technology Ltd  
Clinton Devon Estates  
BM TRADA  
Clugston Construction Ltd  
Border Oak  
Clyde Gateway & Forestry Commission  
British Christmas Tree Growers Association  
Confederation of Forest Industries Ltd (Confor)  
British Hardwood Tree Nursery Ltd  
Confor Nursery Producers Group  
British Hardwood  
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Kent Wildlife Trust
Kier Group
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Layne Timber Systems
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Lend Lease
Lignum Associates
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National Forest Company
National Hickman
National Parks England
National Parks UK
National Trust
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New Horizon Forestry
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NHS Sustainable Development Unit
North West Regional Advisory Committee
Northern Ireland Forest Service
Nottinghamshire Eco Fuels
OneVoiceNewForest
Osborne
Our Clubs
Our Forests
Out of the Dark
Oxford Charcoal Company
Oxfordshire Woodfuel Programme
Perrie Hale Forest Nursery
Plantlife
Plumpton College
Pop up Farm
Premdor UK
Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) UK

Project Wild Thing
PRPSFL Studio
R F Giddings
Red Rose Forest
Red Tractor
Royal Forestry Society
Royal Horticultural Society
Ryall & Edwards
S J Jeffrey Woodland
Salop Logs
Save Cannock Chase
Save Delamere Forest
Save Kielder
Save Lakelands Forests
Save Our Woods
Save Sandlings Forest
Save Sherwood Forest
Say it with Wood
Scottish Enterprise
Scottish Forest and Timber Technologies Advisory Group
Sebastian Cox Furniture
Selectfor Ltd
Shepherd Construction Ltd
Shepherd's Huts
Shropshire Pallets & Timber Supplies
Silanus Trust
Silviculture Research International
Sims Hill Community Woodland
Sir John Cass Art, Architecture and Design Faculty
Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd
Sitting Firm
Skanska UK plc
Small Woodland Owners’ Group (SWOG)

Small Woods Association
Smith & Wallwork
Soil Association (Woodmark)
South West Surrey Save our Woods
South Yorkshire Forest
Sport and Recreation Alliance
Structural Timber Association
Suffolk County Council
Suffolk Wildlife Trust
Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Sutton Timber
Sylva Arborists
Sylva Foundation
T J Ewbank Ltd
Tata Steel
Tesco Plc
The Architects’ Journal
The Architecture Ensemble
The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare
The Community Forests
The Conservation Volunteers
The Crown Estate
The Deer Initiative
The Forest of Marston Vale
The Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF)
The Log People
The London College of Fashion
The National Cycling Charity (CTC)
The National Forest
The Old Post Office Farm
The Ramblers
The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
The Wild Network
The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside
The Wildlife Trusts
The Wooden Lamp Company
The Woodland Initiatives Network
The Woodland Trust
This England
Timber Strategies
Timber Trade Federation
Timber Trades Journal
Timberfirst
TimberWeb
Timcon
TRADA
Travis Perkins
Treco Biomass Boilers
Tree Council
TreeHub
Tree Station
Treelife
Treewood Charcoal
Treewood Harvesting Ltd
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UK Contractors Group (UKCG)
UK Timber Frame Association
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University of East Anglia
UPM Tilhill
Vastern Timber
Verco Global
Visit England
Volker Wessels UK
W L West & Sons Ltd
Waitrose
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
Wates Group Ltd
Welsh Forest Business Partnership
White Design Associates Ltd
White Rose Forest
Whitney Sawmills
Wildlife and Countryside Link
Willmott Dixon Holdings Ltd
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Witherslack Woodlands
Wood for Good
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Forestry is open for business and *Grown in Britain* is beginning to link land managers with investors wanting to create new forests and improve our woodlands. To get involved please contact the team.

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