



## 1. Immediate impacts on our organisation

### Funding

- 1.1. We are forecasting a **30% drop in income** for 2020 and beyond, which means we have to reduce our expenditure accordingly, from £1.5 million to £600k Wales for 2020.
- 1.2. We've had to postpone all of our face to face membership recruitment activity during this period. Recruiting support depends on establishing relationships, 65% of our new memberships are recruited face to face.
- 1.3. Event based engagement activities have all had to be cancelled over the summer. We hope to restart with a much reduced autumn and winter events. These will be more expensive and challenging with winter weather, meaning lower attendance and less opportunity to engage people in supporting our work.
- 1.4. In the first 5 weeks of lock down we saw a 50% increase in direct debit membership cancellations compared to the same period in 2019.
- 1.5. If membership recruitment were to halve in 2020, we estimate this would result in a net loss in our UK membership subscription income alone, of £4m (2020-25).
- 1.6. For our work, it is very important that the Glastir woodland creation grant continues to work quickly and effectively.
- 1.7. This is happening at a time when we were planning **to ramp up** activity to address nature & climate crises, and making the case for meeting the financial needs to do that.
- 1.8. The general impact on the economy will continue to reduce future charitable donations beyond 2020 through 2021. We are also seeing a diversion of funds from other funding sources (grants and trusts, corporate sponsorship and donations) to Covid19.

### Staffing

- 1.9. The furlough scheme has been a significant help. More than half of Woodland Trust staff in Wales has been on furlough in April and May, but most staff are now returning in June. Furloughing has particularly applied to staff unable to undertake roles which depend on face to face contact. This has included membership recruitment, event management and advising and supporting landowners.
- 1.10. The loss of direct contacts with landowners may reduce the amount of new woodland creation coming forward and reduce the area of ancient woodland coming into active restoration.
- 1.11. Communications and engagement activity has focused on on-line and social media, with a short term reduction in public affairs and output on traditional media.

- 1.12. Our priority is to try and retain capacity and recover activity and the Trust is not currently planning any staff redundancies, however investment in development new activity is heavily constrained.

### **Site Management**

- 1.13. The Trust's woodland estate has remained open to local visitors throughout the pandemic, but some car parks have been closed. Many have recently been re-opened subject to local assessment. We have had some really positive feedback (verbal, letters, on social media) about our woods and people have been grateful for the places we have provided for them to enjoy from home.
- 1.14. Whilst it is difficult to gather accurate visitor numbers, physical, observed and reported evidence suggests that most of our sites in Wales have been busier than ever during lockdown, given their position as local green spaces. Visitor counter data from one Trust site in England suggests that visitor numbers doubled in April/ May, with visitors ranging more widely across the site. This reflects what staff in Wales are seeing.
- 1.15. Site maintenance and management has been constrained by lockdown measures. Short term impacts include overgrown paths and postponement of woodland restoration and conservation operations, including control of invasive species. Delayed maintenance could result in cost increases, and reduced maintenance budgets will mean less path cutting.
- 1.16. We have experienced a significant increase in fly tipping and other forms of antisocial behavior, such as littering, unauthorised bike trail building and fire-setting. In one incident last week 1 ½ tonnes of waste was dumped in Wentwood Forest. The Trust, like other private landowners, has to bear the cost of dealing with this.
- 1.17. Longer term impacts will be influenced by the funding situation and impact the pandemic has had on the availability of contractors and site activity by volunteers. Ultimately the conservation status of sites may be adversely affected if difficulties continue for a lengthy period.
- 1.18. Most of our regular contractors furloughed staff and many are facing difficult decisions about whether they look to resume normal operations or downsize their businesses in the medium term.
- 1.19. We are planning to reactivate some lone-working volunteer roles next week, but there are significant barriers to safe management of volunteer woodland working groups, We do not anticipate group work resuming until at least July.
- 1.20. Planned new woodland creation, including at Brynau Wood in Neath, where the Minister launched the Wales National Forest just before lockdown, continues on track subject to Glastir grant administration and work schedules.
- 1.21. We have noticed an increase in illegal felling, including a case that impacted on the boundary of one of our ancient woods. Harvesting on land neighbouring our woods has continued during bird breeding season, raising concerns of ecological impacts. Some areas

have seen hedgerows grubbed out in springtime. It may be that some took the opportunity to undertake unauthorised activities or poor practice under the 'cover' of lockdown

### **Working with others**

- 1.22. The reduction in capacity across the sector is constraining ability to plan ahead for or deliver new partnerships and activity. However, there has been a willingness to discuss partnership working, aided perhaps by people's increased availability and the time saved by not travelling and going to meetings. Some certainty around funding for recovery programmes for this **and next year** will be important to catch up and address new circumstances.
- 1.23. We are engaged, with others in the sector, in an NRW led group addressing site management issues and needs. This could be a good foundation for longer term coordination once this crisis over and it would be good to see this cross-sector communication continue.
- 1.24. We are working with other NGOs to run a virtual festival on a Green Recovery 20-23<sup>rd</sup> July. The First Minister has agreed to launch this.
- 1.25. We continue to be engaged in various discussion and working groups and suggest that there is an important opportunity to have a greater impact by working together, for example on building back a Wales-wide Wildlife Conservation Programme and comprehensive green recovery.

## **2. Priorities for long term recovery**

- 2.1. We note that pandemic has greatly heightened appreciation of community and connection with the natural world.
- 2.2. Our strong view is that the urgent priority is to seize the green growth opportunities now emerging to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies, creating healthier, fairer, stronger and more resilient communities.
- 2.3. This requires a redirection of major investment funding from activities that contribute to climate damage and biodiversity loss (e.g roadbuilding and traffic generation), firstly towards substantially greener infrastructure, and secondly to making farming and forestry sustainable.
- 2.4. The first requires changing funding allocations to drive a significant greening in the nature of infrastructure for travel, energy generation, building construction and flood management.
- 2.5. The second requires acceleration of the direction of travel proposed for the new sustainable farming scheme for Wales to address pollution reduction and biodiversity recovery. For forestry, it requires diversification to genuinely achieve multi-purpose and climate smart objectives.
- 2.6. These measures all provide opportunities to create economic activity and jobs, especially at local community level.

- 2.7. We have set out in more detail our suggestions for achieving these goals in our document on the Roots and Branches of a Green Recovery. A summary is provided here.

### 3. Green our streets, towns and cities

- 3.1. **Tree and woodland strategies for every local authority:** Make every town in Wales a Tree Town<sup>1</sup> - delivering a minimum of 20% tree cover in all urban areas<sup>3</sup> and 30% in new developments. Increase the capacity of tree and woodland teams at all levels of national and local government, and community capacity and influence on planning decisions.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.2. **Look after the trees we have:** I-tree reports for every urban area, fully assessing the benefits of existing trees, especially mature trees.<sup>5,6</sup> Strengthen planning regulatory oversight, and update tree protection legislation to stop the removal of healthy mature trees, and protect green space and irreplaceable habitat such as ancient woodland and veteran trees.<sup>8</sup>
- 3.3. **Provide a universal green health service:** More tree covered green space, walking and cycling routes; readily accessible to everyone and improving air quality<sup>9</sup> everywhere. Invest in a Green Health Service that prescribes outdoor activities for health and mental wellbeing.<sup>10</sup> Support community tree nurseries and forest schools across Wales as outdoor classrooms, collecting and growing local tree seed and reconnecting people with trees, woods and nature.

### 4. Support Farmers to be Sustainable and Nature Friendly

- 4.1. **Invest in agroforestry to increase tree cover on farms and support climate smart sustainable farming:** Build support packages that allow landowners to apply cost effective and wildlife-friendly nature based solutions for flood management<sup>11</sup>, carbon storage and tree regeneration. This should include introducing “Hedges and Edges” payments, investing in the habitat and farming benefits of field boundaries, and designing farm support payments to ensure they provide reliable income from areas of high quality habitat.
- 4.2. **Strengthen advice and partnerships:** Invest in skilled advisory networks, and community based project officer led area partnerships empowered to meet the diverse needs and opportunities including collaboration to increase tree cover, restore habitats and apply nature based solutions to reduce flooding.<sup>13</sup>
- 4.3. **Improve air and water quality:** Reduce pollution from farms and forests, especially nitrogen, ammonia and phosphate emissions, pesticide residues and sedimentation. A key measure is to strengthen regulatory controls and mitigation requirements on the cumulative impact of pollution from intensive poultry and livestock units – trees can help.<sup>14</sup>
- 4.4. **Zero tolerance on litter and fly-tipping in the Welsh countryside.** Continue to reduce waste at source, including the use of plastics in farming and forestry. Invest more in tackling fly tipping with increased surveillance and enforcement action, reduced waste disposal fees and greatly increased fines.

## 5. Using trees to build networks across Wales to create a people and nature friendly economy

- 5.1. **A Wales National Forest that is people and wildlife friendly and climate smart.** Ensure the National Forest programme illustrates the range and breadth of sustainable woodland creation and management across all parts of Wales and embeds communities and stakeholders in decision making.
- 5.2. **Fix and store carbon.** Build up the rate of new woodland creation year by year, diversifying approaches including more natural regeneration in order to accelerate past 5000 hectares by 2025.<sup>15</sup>
- 5.3. We have a detailed proposal on how this can be achieved.<sup>16</sup> Ensuring that forestry is Climate Smart requires a package of measures including reducing the net emissions, and promoting carbon storage in forest ecosystems, in addition to the benefit of carbon sequestration by growing trees.<sup>17</sup>
- 5.4. **Restore wildlife.** The catastrophic decline in biodiversity and woodland wildlife, is apparent in the condition of Welsh woodland described in recent official statistics.<sup>19</sup> A priority is the restoration of Wales' internationally important woodland habitats and ancient woods and trees.<sup>18</sup>

## 6. Create economic activity and jobs

- 6.1. All the measures above create economic opportunities which can be developed by greening the focus of investment decisions. Other investment and procurement actions for farming and forestry include:-
- 6.2. Develop a range of funding options, allowing the mix and match of public and private sources, including public grants, farm support schemes, planning gain, carbon funding, corporate social responsibility funds.
- 6.3. Invest in local landscape partnerships that develop skills and capacity to create and utilise woodland, including sourcing timber for local house building.
- 6.4. Using the procurement opportunities arising from public funding apply robust sustainable sourcing policies and support markets under-writing and improving the predictability of demand, for example for nursery stock supply and fencing.
- 6.5. Plan nursery stock demand to ensure it is all disease free UK Sourced and Grown (UKSG), and includes locally collected seed for native species.
- 6.6. Use farm plans to plan fencing demand and ensure the supply of UKWAS certified fencing.<sup>20</sup>
- 6.7. The challenge of finding alternatives to the use of plastics in tree protection is a substantial new commercial opportunity.

## References and Further Information

- 1 **Annexe 1: Tree Towns in Wales.** Coed Cadw's brief 2 page summary of the case for Government and Local Authorities to work with the third sector to on a substantial Wales wide initiative to realise the substantial benefits of increasing tree cover in all urban areas in Wales. Unpublished, available from the Woodland Trust.
- 2 Wrexham CBC have an excellent Tree and Woodland Strategy which could be an exemplar for other authorities. **Wrexham CBC (2016) Wrexham Tree & Woodland Strategy 2016–2026** [http://old.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/env\\_services/trees/tree\\_and\\_woodland\\_strategy.pdf](http://old.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/env_services/trees/tree_and_woodland_strategy.pdf)
- 3 NRW has undertaken urban tree cover surveys producing comprehensive data on tree cover for every urban area in Wales. **Natural Resources Wales. Urban tree cover in Wales.** Available at: <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/green-spaces/urban-trees/?lang=en>
- 4 This study aims to establish the extent to which British local authorities actively manage their urban forests for regulating ecosystem services, and identify which resources local authorities most need in order to enhance provision of ecosystem services by Britain's urban forest.  
**Davies et al (2017 ) Challenges for tree officers to enhance the provision of regulating ecosystem services from urban forests.** Environmental Research Volume 156, July 2017, Pages 97-107.  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935117304942> Accessed 5 June 2020
- 5 **I-tree reports** are available for Wrexham, Bridgend, Tawe Valley and Cardiff <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco/i-tree-eco-projects-completed/>
- 6 **How to do an i-Tree survey:** A great video (13 mins) explaining how to take part in this UK-wide survey of urban canopy cover. [Watch it here.](#)
- 7 A joint response to the Law Commission review of Welsh planning law from the **Woodland Trust and Ancient Tree Forum on legal and regulatory measures to improve tree protection.** Law Commission Consultation Paper No 228: Planning Law in Wales Scoping Paper. 2018 . Unpublished; available from Woodland Trust
- 8 **Annexe 2: Development Threats to Ancient Trees and Woods in Wales 2019.** Coed Cadw's report on cases of ancient woods threatened by planning applications in Wales in 2019, and particularly reviewing the impact of road schemes, of ammonia pollution from intensive poultry units and the on-going loss of urban tree cover. Unpublished. Available from the Woodland Trust
- 9 A conceptual framework explaining how and where GI can improve air quality, and offer six specific policy interventions, underpinned by research, that will always allow GI to improve air quality.  
**Hewitt, C.N., Ashworth, K. & MacKenzie, A.R. Using green infrastructure to improve urban air quality (GI4AQ).** *Ambio* 49, 62–73 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-019-01164->
- 10 **Green Health and Access West Wales** is a new project in Pembrokeshire exploring innovative opportunities for green health, supporting existing initiatives and looking at ways to improve woodland spaces for access to people of all abilities.  
<https://www.coedlleol.org.uk/green-health-and-access-west-wales-ghaww/>
- 11 Brief Summary of evidence on how agroforestry interventions can help mitigate flooding, distributed to constituency AMs in February 2020. **Woodland Trust (2020) Agroforestry and flooding briefing note.**
- 12 **Annexe 3: Hedges and Edges Scheme Proposal.** This is a print out of a 25 page presentation of Coed Cadw proposals for a new universal Hedges and Edges farm support scheme. It summarises the evidence for the farming and biodiversity benefits and suggests how it can be delivered through farm plans. This presentation is intended for farmers, land managers and their advisers and those working on farm policy.
- 13 Government has published the very comprehensive official guidance and evidence base on working with natural processes to reduce flood risk. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-natural-processes-to-reduce-flood-risk>
- 14 This technical note summarises the impacts of ammonia pollution and the regulatory and mitigation

- measures needed. **Woodland Trust (2019). Assessing air pollution impacts on ancient woodland – ammonia. Woodland Trust Technical Advice Note 1.** February 2019 6pp .  
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/1687/ammonia-impacts-on-ancient-woodland.pdf>
- 15 The Woodland Trust’s **Emergency Tree Plan** describes how to increase tree cover and address the nature and climate emergency. Available at:  
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2020/01/emergency-tree-plan/>
  - 16 **Annexe 4: Plan to Increase Tree Cover in Wales.** This 16 page document presents Coed Cadw’s detailed strategy and recommendations on achieving the necessary increase in tree cover in Wales by 2050. We show how the ambitious targets are achievable through pursuing a broad range of approaches in ways that will engender public support and meet the needs of all of society. Unpublished. Available from the Woodland Trust.
  - 17 Reviews the priorities and practices forestry needs to adopt in order to be climate smart  
**Kauppi, P et al (2018) Climate Smart Forestry in Europe. European Forest Institute.**  
[https://www.efi.int/sites/default/files/files/publicationbank/2018/Climate\\_Smart\\_Forestry\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.efi.int/sites/default/files/files/publicationbank/2018/Climate_Smart_Forestry_in_Europe.pdf)
  - 18 There is slow progress with the restoration of the third of all ancient woodland in Wales that has been coniferised. WT State of PAWS. **Woodland Trust (2018) The Current State of Ancient Woodland Restoration.** Woodland Trust Research Report, January 2018. 32pp\_  
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2018/07/current-state-of-ancient-woodland-restoration/>
  - 19 The recent assessment of woodland condition across the UK undertaken by Forest Research describes in detail why majority of woodland in Wales and UK is failing to achieve “favourable” ecological condition . Forestry Commission (2020) NFI woodland ecological condition in Wales: classification results. National Forest Inventory. 36 pp\_  
[file://wtfs01/folderredirection/JRL/Downloads/FR\\_NFI\\_Condition\\_Scoring\\_Results\\_Wales\\_cxZEeL5%20\(6\).pdf](file://wtfs01/folderredirection/JRL/Downloads/FR_NFI_Condition_Scoring_Results_Wales_cxZEeL5%20(6).pdf)
  - 20 The UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) provides an independent certification standard for verifying sustainable woodland management. This is used by the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) in their independent audits of participating forest managers. All timber procured using public funds should specify this standard.  
<http://ukwas.org.uk/>