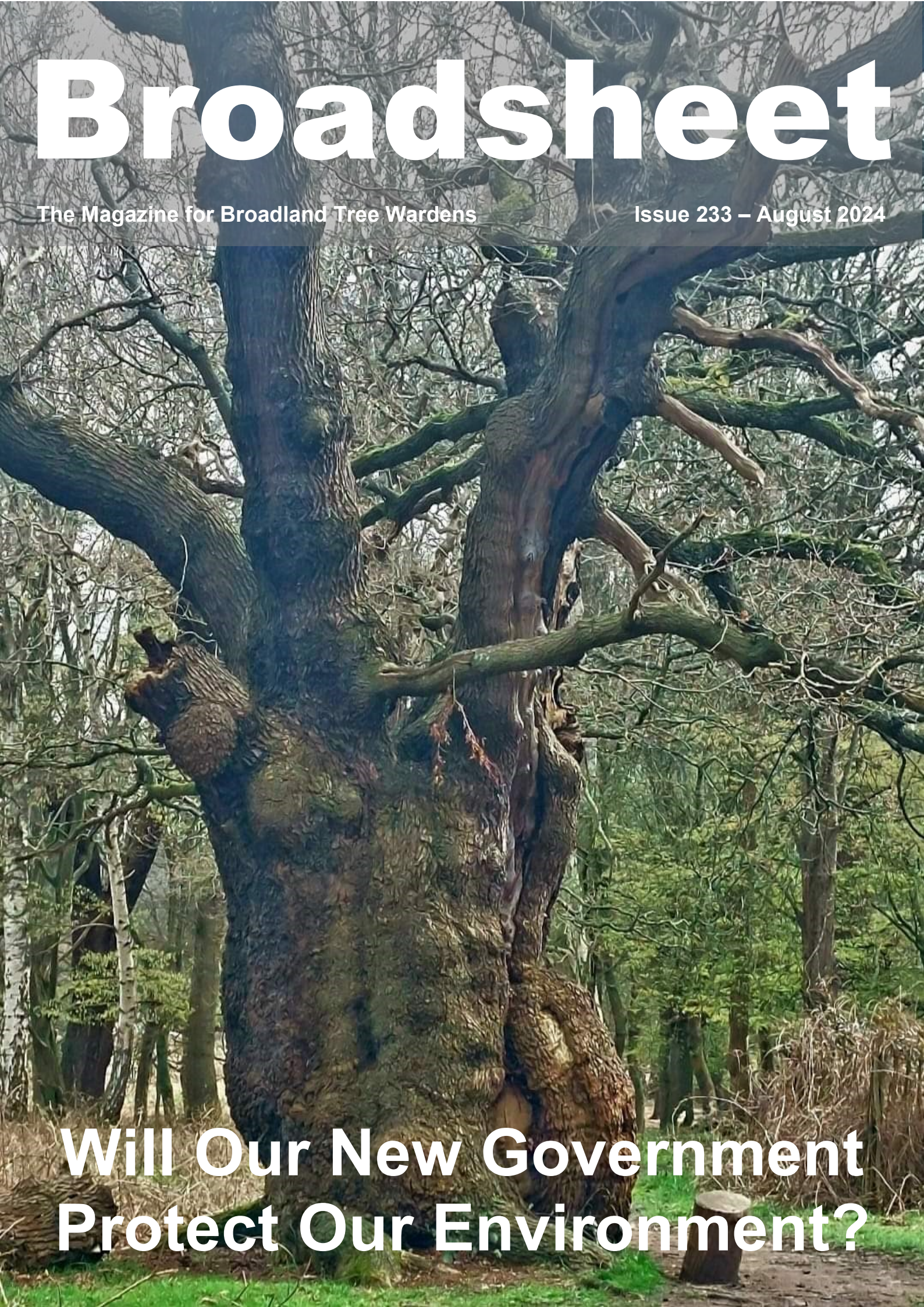




Broadsheet

The Magazine for Broadland Tree Wardens

Issue 233 – August 2024

Will Our New Government Protect Our Environment?

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The Monthly Magazine for
Broadland Tree Wardens



Issue 233 – August 2024

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Will Our New Government Protect Our Environment?

WHILST I voted for Jan Davis, our Green Party candidate in the general election, I'm afraid that 93.5% of the Broadland and Fakenham electorate disagreed with me. Furthermore, nationally 96% of the electorate disagreed with me. Oh well, I guess that's democracy!

Our economy, NHS, housing, and border security are in a pitiful state but most worrying to me is climate change and our precious environment.

I now look to Keir Starmer and his Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed, to start repairing the damage that has been done, undo some of the mistakes that have been made (and there have been some real howlers) and start working toward or net zero target.

Steven Mark Ward Reed OBE was born on 12 November 1963 and was Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from September 2023 to July 2024, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government from 2020 to 2021 and Shadow Secretary of State for Justice from 2021 to 2023. Prior to his election to Parliament, he was leader of Lambeth London Borough Council from 2006 to 2012.

So, will the new Labour government deliver for climate and nature? I believe that I can do no better than leave it to Friends of the Earth to answer that question.

After 14 years in power, the Conservatives have left a dire environmental legacy, with the UK's climate and nature targets veering dangerously off track. Friends of the Earth even took the previous government to court twice over its dangerously inadequate and unlawful climate plans (and won both times).

It's clear that we need to see some real leadership on climate and nature. This new Labour government now has the opportunity to ramp up action so the UK meets its crucial climate targets and make decisions that will safeguard our health and wellbeing now and protect our planet for future generations.

In its manifesto, the Labour Party made some important commitments:

- Meeting the UK's internationally agreed target to reduce carbon emissions by over two-thirds by 2030.
- Giving local authorities more powers to deliver a fairer green transition through better public transport and local nature protection.
- Stop granting new oil and gas licences.
- Seriously amp up renewables by 2030, creating jobs and cutting bills.

However, there's room for improvement. The new government must transform the UK's approach to tackling the climate and nature crises to ensure we all benefit from a fair, green, fossil-free future. We need to hold Labour accountable to those commitments.

So, what do we need from our new government? The Labour government should immediately withdraw its support for the new coal mine planned in Cumbria. The mine threatens to produce the equivalent emissions of over 5 million UK cars annually. If the new government doesn't withdraw its support for the mine, there'll be deep impacts on the progress

towards meeting targets vital for protecting against the worst impacts of climate change.

We need to make bold steps towards our renewable future, to secure cheaper and cleaner energy. The Labour government should lift the de facto ban on onshore wind power. Labour's shadow energy secretary Ed Miliband committed to scrapping a ban on building new onshore wind. Friends of the Earth will be watching closely to see how this plays out and applying pressure if needed.

The reversal of new licences for North Sea oil is a no brainer. We need to ramp up home-grown renewable energy to make sure we have secure and affordable energy. Pushing ahead with new oil and gas fields lines the pockets of rich energy giants and do nothing to help people struggling with the cost-of-living crisis in the way of cheaper bills or ensure energy security for the UK. By prioritising renewables and energy efficiency, we'll create a more sustainable and fair energy future.

We must put an end to sewage scandals. With raw sewage poured into our rivers and seas over 1,000 times a day in 2023, Labour should wipe the slate clean by making water companies, not their customers, pay for the clean-up and supporting a new legal right to a healthy environment.

While the new Labour government is a change, its manifesto still lacked ambition in key areas. There are 4 key areas that Friends of the Earth wants the new Labour government to address during its term.

It must produce an ambitious new climate plan. Following our landmark legal challenge that found the previous government's pitiful climate plan to be unlawful, the new Labour government is legally bound to publish a new strategy to outline how the UK will meet its crucial climate targets.

The plans Labour set out before the election included some big goals, like meeting our international climate commitment to reduce emissions by two-thirds by 2030, and seriously ramping up renewables. However, to achieve this the new government will need to up its ambition and develop a bold new climate plan that sets out how it will make sectors like farming, transport and housing much greener and we need them to commit to the investment that's needed to deliver for climate and nature at scale.

It must invest in insulation to slash bills and harmful emissions. There are economic rewards to be won from taking bold and decisive action on climate and nature. A good example would be insulating the nation's cold, damp, heat-leaking homes, which would save the UK economy billions each year through avoided NHS costs and days off work sick, while freeing up more of the public's hard-earned cash by helping to slash heating bills.

Friends of the Earth is calling for a total average annual investment of at least £6 billion a year over the next decade to ensure both a rapid programme of basic insulation and these

deeper retrofits can be implemented.

The new government must produce the right to a healthy environment. We need new legislation (the Environmental Rights Act) to implement the human right to a healthy environment in law.

Enshrining the right to a healthy environment in UK law would give communities the power to hold companies and government legally accountable for their polluting activities and for improving access to the health and wellbeing benefits of green spaces and trees.

We deserve to breathe clean air, to swim in clean seas and to have rivers that aren't polluted by toxic farm waste and sewage.

The new government and environmental destruction and injustices caused by major companies. We need a new law (the Business, Human Rights and Environment Act) to hold UK companies and the public sector accountable if they fail to prevent human rights abuses and environmental harm in the UK or overseas.

Environmental injustices are being felt most by marginalised communities globally. For example, in Indonesia and Brazil forests are being destroyed by UK companies. The new government should put planet over profit. They can do this by creating new laws to ensure companies prevent and pay for environmental destruction and injustices caused by their supply chains.

In the coming weeks and months, Friends of the Earth will be working with supporters and communities to hold our new government accountable. We have the solutions to address the climate crisis and restore nature. We just need the bold leadership to put them in motion.

New MPs need to hear how important a healthy local environment is to their constituents. We need to make ourselves heard.

You can always depend on Friends of the Earth to tell it as it is. The organisation never holds back and, to quote a corny old phrase, it boldly goes where others fear to tread.

SO just what should the new UK government do about the climate emergency? That was a question posed by University of Exeter researchers and reported by Alex Morrison on the University's website.

Labour won the July 4 general election, with more than 400 seats in the House of Commons. Here are the comments from Exeter researchers from a range of academic fields.

Dr Ceri Lewis, Assistant Director of the Global Systems Institute, said: "The impacts of climate change are already here. Our ocean is currently warmer than at any other time in recorded history and have been at a record high temperature every day since the 4 May last year. We are already seeing the impacts of this warming on key marine species, not just on the coral reefs currently experiencing a fourth global mass bleaching event but also in species distributions here in the UK. Many of these species do important jobs in the ecosystem or are important fisheries species. We urgently need to reduce carbon emissions to minimise further damage to these critical ecosystems."

Professor Peter Cox, Director of the Global Systems Institute, said: "Although climate change did not appear prominently in the election campaigns, it remains one of the biggest outstanding issues for UK governments to deal with. The concept of net zero is firmly based in the most robust climate science. I urge the Labour government to use its huge majority to pursue our national net zero targets with renewed vigour. Dealing with climate change is critical but would also have other huge co-benefits for national well-being."

Dr Natalia Lawrence said: "I hope the next

UK government has the courage to transform the nation's diet and food system. Plant-based diets have 75% less environmental impact and could prevent 24% of premature deaths. If British people ate meat-free lunches on weekdays we could save the NHS £2.2bn annually. All the evidence and actions we need are in Henry Dimbleby's excellent (2021) National Food Strategy. It was commissioned but largely ignored by the last government – perhaps it can be enacted by the new one."

Dr Fatma Sabet, a research fellow and sustainable food expert, said: "Schools have the largest share of government public food procurement spending. Investing a portion of school food funding in local agro-ecological food production is a win-win: it enhances food security and health equity while driving decarbonisation within the food system by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from synthetic fertilisers use and intensive industrial animal farming."

Steffen Boehm, Professor in Organisation and Sustainability, said: "The UK housing stock is one of the most energy inefficient in the developed world. The new government should not only make it mandatory for all new homes to be carbon neutral but there needs to be a massive decarbonisation effort of the existing housing stock. This makes environmental and social sense as people will benefit from lower bills and warmer homes."

Professor Patrick Devine-Wright, who leads the ACCESS interdisciplinary task force of environmental social scientists, said: "We now call upon the government to plan for a net zero transition that is informed by an understanding of social and cultural changes and that goes beyond economic, supply-side and narrowly framed consumer-based approaches. We need to build and communicate positive and collective visions of a net zero future that can galvanise widespread support for net zero changes, and that recognise the many benefits beyond reducing emissions, including better health, new jobs, technological innovation and a fairer society. We also know that a just transition will mean different things in different contexts, across different places and communities. It will require a place-sensitive approach that ensures that net zero interventions are locally appropriate, rather than 'one size fits all'. It will be important to create structures and processes that engage diverse publics in informative and pragmatic conversations about the changes required eg Climate Commissions and Climate Citizens Assemblies. This will make the transition smoother, faster and more equal. Finally, we believe it's crucial that government embed the critical, reflective and analytical skills of the social sciences in net zero institutions and policy, as evidenced by the work of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the GO-Science Net Zero Society report."

Dr Raphaëlle Haywood, Assistant Director of the Global Systems Institute, said: "The first thing our new government needs to do is acknowledge that humanity is part of our planet: we are not above or separate from nature. Whatever policies they choose must align with this fundamental principle. What does it mean in practice? Stop all new licences for oil and gas, now."

Dr Peter Melville-Shreeve, who has co-founded a company called Our Rainwater that enables people to take action to manage rainwater run-off to reduce sewer overflows, said: "In a changing climate, we expect to see more intense rainfall challenging our drainage infrastructure in the years ahead. We need politicians to follow through and support our

water companies to fix flooding and pollution challenges. Climate adaptation is needed at a system scale. Much of the rainwater landing on our cities is landing on our roofs and driveways, and the incoming government can help us manage rainwater at source. We can all play our part to intercept and manage rainwater, for example by deploying rain-planters akin to the Our Rainwater Smart Tanks demonstrated at the recent Chelsea Flower Show Flood Resilient Garden.

Professor Paul Halloran said: "We have run out of time to avoid 1.5°C of warming, but we can still reduce the risks of experiencing the worst impacts of climate change. We need the new government to supercharge our net zero plans and again lead the world towards a stable climate. If we don't hit net zero, the climate will keep warming. If we don't hit it soon, we increasingly risk triggering climate tipping points. Decarbonisation needs to be the top priority, but it is not enough. In addition, we need to be preparing to suck massive amounts of CO₂ out of the atmosphere. Carbon Dioxide Removal is currently a Wild West. One of the most important things this government could do would be to tame this frontier and put us on a track to a stable climate."

Professor Ben Groom, Dragon Capital Chair in Biodiversity Economics, said: "Stay the course, be a global leader and facilitate directed investment in energy transition and biodiversity restoration."

Exeter experts also commented on wider environmental issues. Professor Angela Cassidy said: "The debate over badger culling and bovine TB has been ongoing for over 50 years now with little sign of resolution. In order to move forwards, I recommend that ministers take steps to depolarise media debates, while listening and engaging at depth with the full range of people concerned with the issue. To understand the complex and developing knowledge landscape about badgers and bovine TB, instigating regular, open evidence reviews incorporating foresight and hindsight thinking, on this (and other controversial topics) would be a critical step towards finding sustainable solutions to this devastating disease problem."

ENVIRONMENT correspondent for The Guardian, Matthew Taylor, reported that the Green party will push the Labour government to "be braver" on key issues, from the climate crisis and sewage in rivers to housing and tax, according to Carla Denyer, the party's co-leader and one of its four new MPs.

The party quadrupled its number of MPs, beating Labour in Bristol Central and Brighton Pavilion and the Conservatives in Waveney Valley and North Herefordshire.

Denyer, the new MP for Bristol Central, said: "We are really delighted by the level of trust and support we have seen for the Greens, not just in our four target seats but in constituencies up and down the country."

The party gained nearly 2m votes overall and came second in 39 constituencies, giving it a "crucial electoral bridgehead", she said.

Denyer said the party would use its increased parliamentary presence to push the Labour party to go further on a range of progressive policies. "This result shows that many voters have had enough of incremental change – we need far-reaching action that can make a real difference to people's lives, to tackle the issues they are facing ... We, as Green MPs, will push Labour to be braver."

Denyer said the party would fight for more

urgent action to tackle the climate and cost of living crises, from the rollout of home insulation and heat pumps to greater investment in renewable energy. She said this transition to a low-carbon future had to be properly funded and planned, and not penalise working people financially.

The party will also push the Labour government on action to tackle sewage in the UK's rivers and seas and improve its housing offer.

She also said the Greens would make the case for a wealth tax on the super-rich to help fund investment in the UK's crumbling public services. "The Green party is the only one that is being honest about the state of our public services and what it will take to tackle them – and we shall be making that case loud and clear in parliament."

The party said its success was the result of "solid and positive campaigning" on the ground in its target constituencies.

Adrian Ramsay, the party's co-leader who won in the new seat of Waveney Valley, said it was the first time someone other than a Conservative MP had represented that part of the country. "The map of East Anglia is being redrawn. Gone is the sea of blue, to be replaced by swathes of Green," he said.

Ellie Chowns, who won her seat from the Tories in North Herefordshire, said although it was clear the Conservatives had become deeply unpopular, the result had more to do with the Greens' "positive offer" on investment in health, care and dental services, affordable housing and cleaning up rivers.

"Our role now is to challenge the Labour government to be better and we will strive to do that every day," she said.

MATHILDE GÉRARD reported for Le Monde that animal welfare organizations have demanded that foie gras be removed from Paris 2024 VIP guest menus, but despite the Organizing Committee's commitment to encouraging plant-based foods during the Olympic Games, and to sourcing products that respect animal welfare, the catering offered during the event may include foie gras.

Now that's enough to inflame the passions of those who have condemned this luxurious delicacy, emblematic of south-west France, but also a symbol of the worst kind of cruelty to animals.

In apparent contradiction to the Paris 2024 organizers' commitment to offer athletes and spectators at the Games a sustainable diet, reducing the role of meat and favouring products that respect animal welfare, the Games' catering service has not banned foie gras.

Its offerings have been aimed at corporate clients and guests who pay between 85 and several thousand euros for "experiences" on the sidelines of the competitions, ranging from access to VIP lounges to overnight stays in luxury hotels and top-of-the-line meals.

Outraged by the disparity between the virtuous rhetoric of the Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (OCOG) and some of its concessions, British animal protection organization Animal Equality, with the support of other NGOs, has launched a petition to have foie gras removed from the Olympic catering menu.

As of July 5, this had gathered over 36,000 signatures. "The Committee has already shown visionary leadership by crafting an innovative menu [for these Games] with nutritious plant-based meals," said Sharon Nuñez, president of

Animal Equality. "I urge them to listen to the international community's concerns and remove this divisive dish from the hospitality menu."

BROADSHEET could not possibly publish an editorial commenting on the new government's environmental policies without including the joint statement issued by The Tree Council, the Woodland Trust, Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) and Trees for Cities.

Headed "New Government must show commitment to trees", the joint statement reads: We have been pleased to see political parties once again recognise the importance of trees in their manifestos. However, if the many benefits of trees to society in both rural and urban areas are to be realised, urgent action will be required from the new government. This should include:

- investment allocated in the spending review to accelerate planting rates
- significant improvements in restoration and protection for valuable existing woods and trees
- tackling the lack of UK timber security
- improved access to training.

We need clear and strategic leadership from Government underpinned by a new trees action plan for England – connecting with all four nations to maximise the potential of trees. We also need a land use framework that identifies where tree establishment can best deliver for climate, nature, the economy and a healthier society. We stand ready to help whoever forms the government after 4 July to deliver on these aims.

THE new Labour government has announced plans to build on the "grey belt", as it tries to meet its pledge for 1.5 million new homes over the next five years. In an article for BBC Verify, Tom Edgington explained just what the 'grey belt' is and how many homes Labour could build on it.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves said an overhaul of planning rules would see councils in England expected to prioritise building on brownfield sites and poor quality areas in the green belt.

Labour has previously described the grey belt as "poor quality and ugly areas", including disused car parks and wasteland, on parts of protected land called the green belt.

The green belt, established more than 70 years ago, covers about 13% of England. Its aim was to limit the growth of large built-up areas and to stop large towns merging into one another.

Labour wants grey belt land to be used for new homes, with half to be affordable housing.

It has pointed to a disused garage in Tottenham, north London, as an example of a green belt site that cannot be developed into housing because of its designation.

However, Sam Stafford from the Home Builders Federation says it is crucial that the new grey belt is clearly defined.

"If you don't properly define what the grey belt is, what's to stop existing green belt land becoming 'scrubby' and 'ugly' just so it can be sold for development? If it's going to be a new class land of it needs to be defined in an objective and robust way."

For example, former golf courses and land used for mineral extraction could be designated as grey belt, Mr Stafford suggests.

Under the current rules, it is very hard to build on the green belt. Applicants need to demonstrate very special circumstances to justify planning permission.

As the grey belt will be a new category,

there is no official data on how much of it exists. However, estate agent Knight Frank has previously carried out its own analysis, external. It has identified 11,000 previously developed sites, making up less than 1% of the existing green belt. The sites are mainly concentrated in the south of England with just over 40% within the London green belt area.

In total, 100,000-200,000 new family homes could be built on the sites according to Knight Frank.

Nevertheless, Mr Stafford believes that building on both the grey belt and additional brownfield sites in urban areas will be necessary to meet England's housing needs.

"There just isn't the land within major towns and cities to meet the housing need in its entirety," he said.

To support his claim, Mr Stafford points to a 2022 report, external by planning consultancy Lichfields which found that even if every identified brownfield site in England was built to its full capacity, that would mean 1.4 million extra homes.

That is less than the housing target of both major parties ahead of the election. Labour pledged 1.5 million new homes in England and the Conservatives 1.6 million.

Labour says the grey belt developments must offer 50% affordable housing, external. This includes homes that are let at least 20% below local market rents. However, Charlie Hart from Knight Frank says this could be hard to achieve as inflation has significantly pushed up costs for developers.

Katie Townsend from the Centre for London think tank says that although the plan is for grey belt homes to be built by private developers, the government should consider stepping in.

"The best way to ensure affordable houses are built, particularly socially rented homes, is to increase government investment", she says.

Labour floated the idea of creating the grey belt long before the election. When Sir Keir Starmer mentioned it over a year ago, then prime minister Rishi Sunak ruled it out, external as he "wanted to make sure our green spaces are protected".

However, Ms Townsend of the Centre for London says attitudes might be shifting, pointing to polling showing half of Londoners supported building strategically on low-quality areas of the green belt, with only 19% against it.

Others disagree. Countryside charity CPRE Oxfordshire, for example, says land is "already under enormous pressure".

Its director Helen Marshall says: "Ten years ago we commissioned research which showed that over 70% of Oxfordshire wanted the green belt to remain undeveloped. Ten years later support for the green belt has increased to over 80%."

However, Mr Hart of Knight Frank says that while the green belt used to be seen as a "don't go zone", perceptions are shifting.

"It was conceived a long long time ago and the world is a very different place and we're now reviewing whether it's fit for purpose in the modern world."

SO, that's the outcome of the 2024 General Election according to your Network Co-ordinator. I will make just one final comment

Oh, how I wish I was GREEN with envy!

Have a great August.

John Fleetwood

Network Co-ordinator's Diary

AFTER what has felt like an age, the Sentinel Treescapes Project has resumed. Problems with the equipment are gradually being sorted and our team is refreshed and picking up where they left off. At least our 'engine room' has picked up. That is Joanne Collins (Thorpe St Andrew), Anna Rodriguez (Acle) and Paul Cowley (Weston Longville), as basically that is our team now.

There is one important change to our team though. Paul has found it difficult to devote as much time to the project as he would wish and, after all, Weston Longville is a long way from Buckenham Woods. So Joanne has taken over the role of our Project Lead and I am very grateful to her for that.

With Joanne taking over the lead role from Paul, the Executive Committee thought it only right that she should join the committee and I'm pleased to say that she has agreed.

The FERA Project Team remains the same and new lead Quddus will be one year into his three year PhD this September.

The FERA project team have been overhauling the equipment and installed new, more robust, water flow probes on the trees in Long and Belt plantations. They have removed the 2 pronged growth sensors from the trees as they were not getting reliable data and have concluded it is easier to measure the growth of the trees once per year which they did for the first time last autumn.

They have removed all the talkers from Lingwood so that it is clear of equipment.

They are going to check the batteries, take back those from us that are not working and give some of the Lingwood ones to Joanne. They are also trying to fix the hubs as they are not updating the dashboard as often as they should.

They have added talkers to some additional ash trees on the track that runs between Long and Belt plantations.

The dashboard is going to be modified so it is all listed as one rather than Belt and Long Plantation being split.

This is all great news and shows just how this project is a partnership. Our team makes a suggestion of request and the FERA team implements it.

I hope to be able to help more with the project in the coming months as I feel guilty that I haven't done as much as I should have and I apologise for that..

I'm sure that Paul will join me in thanking Joanne and Anna for their dedication and hard work. The success of this project is down to them. **Thank you ladies so very much.**

I am very pleased to have been asked by Freethorpe Parish Council (my parish) to sit on the sub-committee they have set up for the restoration and management of Wickhampton Pond.

The pond is currently dominated by *Typha* spp with *Crassula helmsii* (syn *Crassula recurva*), commonly known as swamp stonecrop or New Zealand pigmyweed, an aquatic or semi-terrestrial species if succulent plant in the family Crassulaceae. Originally found in Australia and New Zealand, it has been introduced around the world. In the UK it is one of five introduced plants that were banned from sale from April 2014. It grows on the muddy margins of ponds where it forms carpets with

100% cover, semi-submerged in deeper water or total submerged with elongated stems. It does not die back in winter.

Under Schedule 9 of the UK Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to cause *Crassula helmsii* to grow in the wild. The careful removal and disposal of the plant therefore has to be the priority of the necessary initial restoration works.

Crassula helmsii regenerates from tiny fragments and therefore easily spreads to new areas so its careful and effective removal is paramount.

Natural England has stated "This plant has not, so far, been eliminated from a natural site once it has dominated despite repeated general and spot treatments with herbicides". However, some experiences online from conservation organisations' attempts at controlling the plant in ponds and its lack of dormant period makes control in the autumn (when other plants die down) or late winter (before they have emerged) an option without killing everything else.

It is going to be a most challenging project and I have already learned a great deal. My plan is to listen to the experts and learn even more!

I attended an on-line meeting of the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) titled "Towards a New Green Infrastructure Strategy for Greater Norwich"

Comprising Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council, our Network is, apparently, a stakeholder.

The GNGB works in partnership to monitor and drive forward the delivery of infrastructure which is required to support growth in Greater Norwich. It pools the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income received in our three district authority areas into one shared Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF). The IIF is then used to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects across the full partnership area.

Since 2014 the GNGB has allocated approximately £39m of IIF funding and £54.5m of CIL supported borrowing which has helped lever in at least an additional £294m of match funding to deliver infrastructure projects across the Greater Norwich area.

The GNGB uses IIF funding to support a programme of projects in Greater Norwich, which deliver infrastructure across 4 core themes: Green Infrastructure, Transport, Education and Community (Which includes Libraries and Sport and Physical activity infrastructure).

This first of two scheduled meetings was titled "Developing the Green Infrastructure Strategy" and I had great expectations for it as it appeared that it was to be a consultation with local organisations, clubs, societies.

Regrettably, I have to say that I found it to be a huge dis-appointment. In fact, it was a waste of two hours.

The consultants were using technology that most of the attendees were unable to understand, let alone use. Indeed, although I used to use it regularly as part of my job, after 9 years of

retirement I had difficulty keeping it up with it.

I'm afraid that, in my view, it turned out to be no more than a box ticking exercise!

Yes, local organisations (stakeholders) have been consulted. We had the chance to have our say ... sort of.

So, I'm afraid that I won't be attending the second scheduled meeting, "Developing the Strategic Delivery Plan" scheduled for 11 September and, from the show of hands at the end of this first meeting, I don't think I will be the only one!

I was appalled to read an article by Oliver Murphy, reporter for The Hunts Post, revealing that Anglian Water has been given the joint worst environmental rating in the UK for the third year running.

The water company received a two star rating from the Environment Agency on July 23. The body said the water company requires improvement after hundreds of pollution incidents were recorded in 2023.

The report found that over 90% of the UK's serious pollution incidents were caused by four companies: Anglian Water, Southern Water, Thames Water and Yorkshire Water.

The two-star rating, which each of these companies holds and Anglian Water was also awarded in 2021 and 2022, means improvement is required to resolve ongoing issues and hazards.

Sadia Moeed, area director for Environment Agency in East Anglia, said: "We are disappointed that Anglian Water is a two-star company for the third year in a row. Where there is evidence of non-compliance we will not hesitate to pursue the water company and take appropriate action.

"As part of our national investment in water company regulation, we will increase our regulatory presence across Anglian Water's sites, contributing to the 4,000 inspections across the country this year, increasing to 10,000 next year."

Environment Agency Chair, Alan Lovell, said "For the nation to have cleaner rivers and seas, water companies must take responsibility to understand the root cause of their problems.

So I won't be watering my trees with tap water!

YOU must know by now that I am an "animal lover" and a vegan. Not just cuddly pets but all species, from a little spider to an elephant and all those between have the same right to live. They are not here for our use or enjoyment or consumption.

So you won't be surprised to learn that I was appalled to read in Animal Aid's campaign magazine, Outrage, that more than 60 million non-native-bred pheasants and partridges are released into the countryside every year, just to be shot for 'sport'. Only a tiny fraction of the birds are actually eaten. It is a huge and shocking waste of lives.

Yes that's right. 60 million! What does that do for our environment?

UK Getting More Hot And More Wet Days – Met Office

By Justin Rowlatt, BBC Climate Editor

CLIMATE change is dramatically increasing the frequency of extreme high temperatures in the UK, new Met Office analysis has confirmed. Its annual State of the Climate report says data from 2023 shows the country is experiencing significantly more really hot days. Its observations suggest there has been an increase in the number of really wet days too, such as the prolonged and heavy rain Storm Babet brought to wide areas of the country in October last year.

The report finds the UK is also seeing a 40% increase in the number of what the Met Office describes as “pleasant” days – those with temperatures of 20°C or more – and has become 9% sunnier over the last few decades.

Those changes may sound positive, but the UK’s shifting climate represents a dangerous upheaval for our ecosystems as well as our infrastructure.

For example, between 1961 and 1990 only London and Hampshire recorded six or more days a year with temperatures over 28°C, which the Met Office defines as “hot days”. By the latest decade (2014-2023) virtually everywhere in England and Wales was seeing this many hot days, while the South-East now gets over 12 in a year.

The increase in the number of “very hot days” of 30°C or more has been even more dramatic, trebling over the last few decades.

Rainfall patterns vary much more than temperature, but the Met Office says it is still possible to identify an increase in the frequency of the wettest days. It looked at the top 5% of wettest days in the period 1961 to 1990 and found extremely wet days like these were occurring 20% more frequently in the most recent decade.

“Some of the statistics in this report really do speak for themselves,” said lead author and Met Office climate scientist, Mike Kendon. “The climate is not just going to change in the future,

it is already changing.”

The new report confirms 2023 was the second warmest year on record for the UK, had the hottest June ever recorded and the joint warmest September. Separate studies by Met Office scientists found all these events were made much more likely to happen because of human-induced climate change.

February, May, June and September 2023 were all ranked in the top-ten warmest on record in the UK for the same months in a series dating back 140 years.

The Met Office says there has been a rapid increase in the frequency of record-breaking warm temperatures in recent years, while there have been virtually no new records for cool weather. For the UK overall the warmest months on record have been May 2024, June 2023, December 2015 and April 2011. The last record cold month was December 2010.

The State of the Climate report finds 2023 was the seventh wettest year on records going back to 1836. March, July, October and December were all amongst the top-ten wettest for the same month in the series.

It is these weather extremes, of heat or rainfall, that have the biggest impact on people, says Prof Liz Bentley, the Chief Executive of the Royal Meteorology Society.

“These changes are leading to more heatwaves and flooding, which profoundly impact communities by straining healthcare systems, damaging infrastructure, and disrupting daily life”, says Prof Bentley.

Other significant weather events include seven consecutive days with temperatures

above 30°C in September. A UK first. Unusually the hottest day of the year was also recorded in September (33.5°C on 10 September).

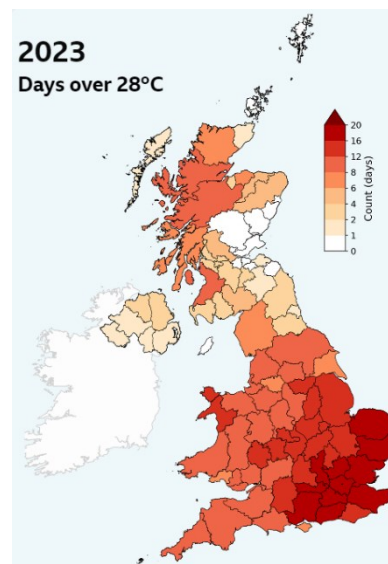
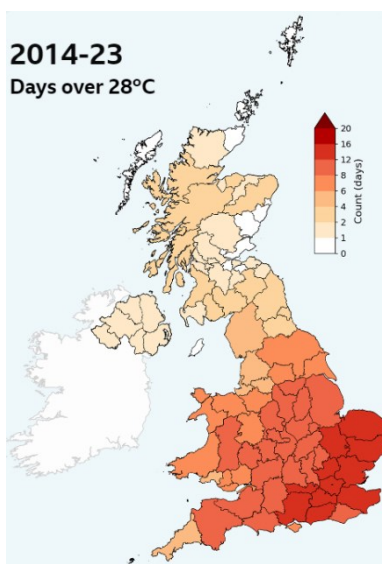
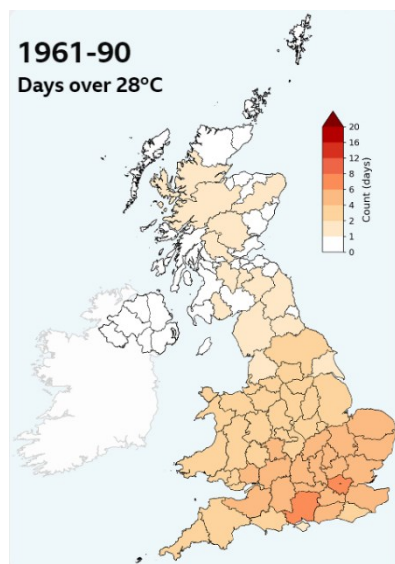
Scotland had its wettest two days on record on 6 and 7 October in a daily series dating back to 1891, with 6.5cm of rain – almost 40% of the average you would expect for October.

Storm Babet was the single weather event with the most impact during the year. It hit the country between 16 and 21 October, bringing widespread prolonged and heavy rainfall.

Furthermore, the country had a very dramatic near miss too. Storm Ciaran had the potential to be as severe as the “Great Storm” of 16 October 1987, says the Met Office. Winds of up to 100 mph (160 km/h) killed 21 people across Europe when it struck in early November 2023, but the UK was lucky, the strongest winds bypassed the country to the south.

The report came as the record for the world’s hottest day tumbled twice in one week, according to the European climate change service. On Monday 22 July the global average surface air temperature reached 17.15°C, breaking the record of 17.09°C set the day before. It beats the record set in July 2023, and it could break again.

Climate change has already made extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, heavy rainfall, storms and droughts, more frequent and stronger in many parts of the world. Scientists say these events will become more intense and happen more often unless the world can make dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.



UK's Elms May be Making a Comeback

By James Weldon for The Conversation

ELM trees were once stalwarts of the UK countryside that towered out of hedgerows, lined fields and woodlands. Glance at the landscape paintings of John Constable for a vague idea of what has been lost. Elm timber made ships, chairs and even water pipes until the 19th century. These trees, and the world they held up, came crashing down when Dutch elm disease caused what is arguably the worst change to the UK's countryside in living memory. The fungal disease carried by the elm bark beetle arrived on UK shores early in the 20th century and killed some elms but left the majority standing. Elm trees were not out of the woods though – a more virulent strain arrived in the 1960s and destroyed most of the UK's 30 million elms.

Since the near total loss of elm save for a handful of trees that avoided the disease, generations have grown up without seeing a mature elm in the landscape. This has entrenched the public perception of elm as a lost species.

While I grew up in the countryside surrounded by trees I had always believed that the elms were gone. It was another fungal infection, ash dieback, responsible for wiping out the majority of Europe's ash trees, that sparked my interest in tree disease. As I began a PhD researching how society responds to the loss of a tree species I started thinking about elms more. All of a sudden, I was noticing elms hiding in hedgerows.

It is the characteristic asymmetry of elm leaves, one side joining the stem further down than the other side, that gives this species away. It turns out that millions of elms still exist across the UK, particularly in southern England, as small hedgerow shrubs. In fact, these stunted relics are, according to one government plant pathologist, more numerous than the pre-epidemic elm population.

Elms have persisted by producing suckers: new stems that the trees send out from their roots. The tree may succumb to disease and die but new stems appear and take its place. These suckers allow the tree to regenerate until they are caught by the disease again, allowing elm to exist today in a cycle of life and death or what a former ecologist described to me as a perpetual adolescence.

While these "adolescent" elms demonstrate an amazing ability to persist, work is underway to restore elms to the landscape in their majestic adult form.

Since the outbreak of the mild strain of Dutch elm disease, there have been various attempts globally to produce resistant elm.

Breeding programmes in the US, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain have yielded

several varieties that can withstand even the more virulent form of Dutch elm disease. These are the result of one of two methods: hybridising European elms with naturally resistant Asian species such as Siberian elm or Himalayan elm, or finding and cloning naturally resistant European elm trees.

UK government funding for elm research has favoured efforts to understand the pathogen and how it spreads at the expense of breeding resistant varieties and trialling the suitability of elms grown outside of the UK's climate. Fortunately, a network of knowledgeable private citizens has taken up the mantle of elm research and poured time and effort into the trees.

At sites across the UK, elm enthusiasts import and care for new varieties of disease-resistant elm. These citizen scientists monitor their suitability for the local environment, how the new trees compare with elms of the past and

their ability to attract and host species traditionally associated with elms, such as the white-letter hairstreak butterfly.

A few disease-resistant elm varieties can now be bought in the UK and many have since been planted in parks and on streets, but their wider introduction is hampered by their cost. While most large-scale planting projects will buy trees for less than a pound a sapling, disease-resistant elms are only available as larger trees and come with a larger price tag; in some cases, there are additional costs for navigating post-Brexit import laws.

Breeders alone retain the right to propagate and sell their creations. This means that UK nurseries cannot take cuttings and start selling their own trees. One enthusiast, Dr David Herling, tried to avoid this problem by creating his own disease-resistant variety of elm that was patent-free and so unable to be sold for profit. Sadly, Herling died before he was able to see his creation reach its potential, but others continue his work to produce the tree at scale – and it is starting to gain the attention of the media.

A recent Guardian article highlighted Herling's work and discussed new elm varieties as part of a reintroduction, a species which "disappeared" that we should "bring back". This narrative can be seen elsewhere, in campaigns to "re-elm the British countryside", reinforcing the false perception of elm as a lost tree and erasing the fact that millions have endured.

Elm has had a turbulent history, but there are reasons to be hopeful. This is not only because of the work of dedicated people, but because there are other ways that the species has persisted despite the departure of the towering trees of the past.

Next time you go for a walk, keep an eye out for these "missing" trees.

James Weldon is a PhD Candidate in Geography, Cardiff University. He receives funding from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).



John Constable's The Cornfield (1826) features a towering elm.

Going Green: Trees Helping Breathe New Life Into the World

By Angela Terry for Fife Today

I absolutely love trees but why do I keep hearing about people cutting them down so much? People all around the world love trees and for good reasons. Anyone who has sought shade from them this summer will feel grateful for whoever planted them but unfortunately a small minority are wreaking havoc with a chainsaw.

We need no further evidence of that than when the Sycamore Gap was cut down in September last year. The much beloved tree was the site of many wedding proposals, featured in Kevin Costner's Robin Hood Prince of Thieves and has its own hashtag too.

The men accused will stand trial in December but the reason it's made so many headlines is because trees are incredibly emotive; old and established ones especially.

The Sycamore Gap bordered the UNESCO world heritage site Hadrian's Wall and its gnarly branches were believed to be over 300 years old. That means it was growing when Mozart was born and when the French Revolution started.

It's not just old trees in special places that make headlines though. A woman who illegally cut down a protected tree on her driveway in the West Midlands has been spared a fine despite cutting down a beautiful specimen of ash.

The tree in Solihull was protected by a TPO that had been in place since the 1990s, but what a lot of people have found frustrating is that the tree existed before the couple's home was built.

A farmer in Wales was fined just £1,500 for destroying 20 acres of his own woodland. It's estimated it'd cost £52,000 to restock it with the species he cut down.

It was there when they bought the house. They knew what they were buying, they knew the ash was big and would continue to grow. They also knew it was protected.

13,660 hectares of trees were planted in 2020, and in England the Forestry Commission planted around four million trees between 2022 to 2023. In total, the UK has three billion trees – that's around 45 per person.

While planting new trees is absolutely essential for the UK and tackling climate change, we need to protect the old ones we have. Mature trees are magnificent. They keep ground secure with their root systems, reducing the risk of landslides. They absorb rain and surface water and prevent flooding and they're a haven for wildlife and nature.

As well as their beauty, they extract carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and that's essential for reducing global warming too. Over their lifetime, a tree could absorb over one tonne of CO₂. That's the equivalent of driving 2500 miles in a car.

The issue when they are cut down though is that the carbon they've absorbed is released back into the atmosphere when the tree is burnt or left to rot so they go from a carbon store to CO₂ releaser. A 2023 study from the University



of Derby found surprisingly that Brits love trees more than we love our neighbours so they need to be protected at all costs from the chop.

Damned United actor Michael Sheen has partnered with Radio 4 on Buried: The Last Witness.

The untold account of one of the world's first-ever whistle blowers on 'forever chemicals', sees Michael Sheen join Dan Ashby and Lucy Taylor for an explosive new story. He said: "I think the most shocking thing that has been uncovered has been the scale of the problems, and the scale of the potential dangers to people."

Swap crisps and nuts for seaweed crisps. Seaweed doesn't require any fresh water and it absorbs CO₂ as it grows. It's sustainable and is a climate friendly fast growing snack option.

The UK might have experienced a mini heatwave in certain places recently, but parts of mainland Europe have been sweltering for weeks. There've been wildfires in Greece with extreme temperatures hitting 43°C and even the Acropolis has been closed with the mercury rising across the country.

We know that temperatures are rapidly rising globally and also that scientists like me have been banging the drum for years about this issue, but in the last decade we have also seen the increasing impact on lifestyles in a way that we hadn't until now.

My friend spent a fortune on taking the holiday of a lifetime all the way to the Mediterranean last summer.

When she got there with her family, they just could not enjoy the activities and all the excursions that they had planned because it was simply too hot to do anything other than stay within touching distance of the hotel pool

and the pool's cool water. They only ventured out in the evening shade.

They had spent a four figure sum to sit by a pool for a week and, in addition, there was all the airport hassle as well, when they had in fact planned to see so much more and they were understandably disappointed.

Travel insurance is unlikely to cover you for it being too hot wherever you go.

With all this in mind, and also with the soaring global temperatures right now, doesn't it make more sense not to fly, but to holiday in the UK, or take a train to mainland Europe and give yourself less hassle and stress?

The issue isn't just temperatures upon arrival either. Flight Free have got plenty of ideas on where and how to holiday in Europe without taking a flight. No Airport Expansion are a group set up with a mission to halt airport expansion in the UK.

Part of the issue is that as Brits on an island we're conditioned to think travel to Europe has to include a flight but it absolutely doesn't.

The train to Marseille from Paris takes just three and a half hours and the train from London to Paris takes just over two hours. Timed right you can be in the South of France quicker than you could fly to Paris with check in times being up to two hours before the flight.

With climate change being a global problem it's not just Europe either. India has been experiencing its own heat wave of over 44°C with over 100 deaths and 40,000 cases of heat stroke.

Climate change means changing a lot of the things we're used to. We simply can't live or travel in the way we've been accustomed to and the more we fly, the faster we'll accelerate the impact.

Climate Crisis Driving Exponential Rise in Most Extreme Wildfires

By Damian Carrington, Environment Editor for The Guardian

THE climate crisis is driving an exponential rise in the most extreme wildfires in key regions around the world, research has revealed. The wildfires can cause catastrophic loss of human life, property and wildlife and cause billions of dollars of damage. Scientists say this is climate change “playing out in front of our eyes”.

The analysis of satellite data showed the number of extreme fires had risen by more than 10 times in the past 20 years in temperate conifer forests, such as in the western US and Mediterranean. It has increased by seven times in the vast boreal forests in northern Europe and Canada. Australia was also a hotspot for these devastating fires.

The scientists also found that the intensity of the worst wildfires had doubled since 2003, and that the six years with the biggest numbers of extreme fires had all occurred since 2017. On average across the globe, extreme wildfires have more than doubled in frequency and intensity over the past two decades.

The researchers also warned that the rise in the huge fires was threatening to create a “scary” feedback loop, in which the vast carbon emissions released by the fires cause more global heating, which causes more fires.

The new research helps resolve an apparent paradox, in that global heating has driven an unambiguous rise in hot, dry fire weather, but the area burned by wildfires has fallen. The researchers said that most fires were small, started by humans, caused relatively little damage and may be declining due to expansion of cropland and cuts in crop waste burning. Including all fires in global analyses therefore obscured the rapid rise in the most intense and destructive wildfires.

“The fingerprints of climate change are all over this rise,” said Dr Calum Cunningham at the University of Tasmania, Australia, who led the new study. “We’ve long seen model projections of how fire weather is increasing with climate change. But now we’re at the point where the wildfires themselves, the manifestation of climate change, are occurring in front of our eyes. This is the effect of what we’re doing to the atmosphere, so action is urgent.”

Cunningham said there were very significant increases in extreme wildfires in the conifer forests of the American west: “That’s concerning, because there’s a lot of people there living in very close proximity to these flammable vegetation types and that’s why we’re seeing a lot of disasters emerge.”

He added: “The concerning thing, especially with the really carbon-rich ecosystems, boreal forests, that are burning intensely, is that it’s threatening to create a feedback effect.”

The research, published in the journal



Nature Ecology & Evolution, analysed data from Nasa satellites that pass over the Earth four times a day. The researchers identified the 0.01% most extreme wildfires, measured by the energy released in a day, giving a total of almost 3,000 events.

They include extremely destructive recent wildfire seasons in the western US, Canada, Australia, Portugal, Indonesia, Siberia, Chile and the Amazon. One region that did not suffer disproportionately was the eastern US, despite being heavily forested in places. This may be due to different tree species that are less prone to drying out, said Cunningham.

Dr Mark Parrington, at the EU’s Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (Cams), said the research showed the “changing climate is leading to clear observed increases in extreme wildfires” outside the tropics and in regions and

ecosystems that have not frequently experienced wildfires in the past. High northern latitudes were heating at double the global average and this was where the biggest increases in extreme wildfires had been taking place, he said.

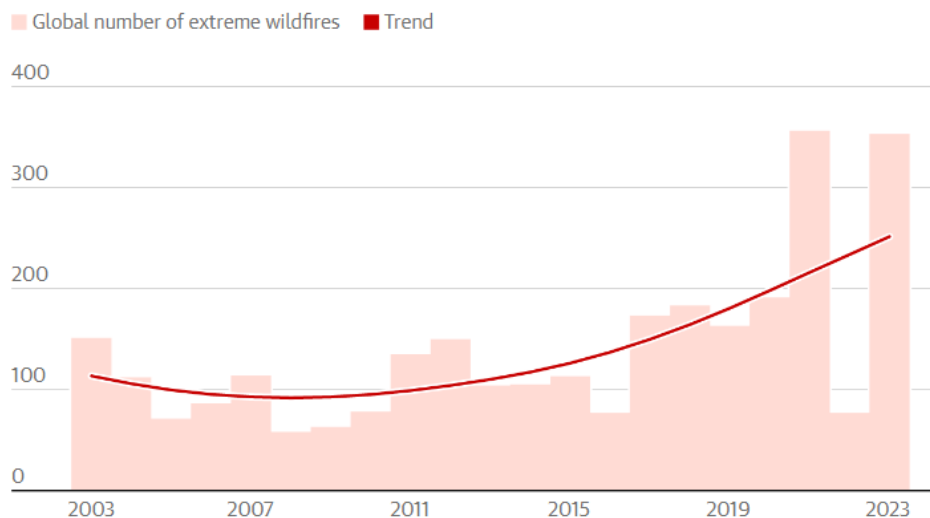
Parrington said the new research and his work at Cams were likely to be underestimating the actual intensity, as the satellites are unable to record data for full days and the fires can be obscured by thick smoke or clouds.

Much greater action to prevent and cope with extreme wildfires was urgently needed, Cunningham said, with slowing global heating by cutting fossil fuel burning foremost. Also needed was the thinning of wood in suitable forests and controlled low-intensity burning to reduce the buildup of highly flammable wood, he said.

“Indigenous Australians have been managing landscapes for millennia, using [small] frequent fires, so fuel loads never became too high,” Cunningham said. “As a result, this matrix of patchy burns of different ages produces natural fire breaks and meant catastrophic fires didn’t seem to happen. We might be able to harness some of that wisdom.”

Alert systems and evacuation planning were also vital, he said: “A lot of people die during evacuations, because they haven’t left early enough.”

The most extreme wildfires have doubled in frequency since 2003



Guardian graphic. Source: Cunningham et al, Nature Ecology & Evolution, 2024. Note: The most extreme wildfires are in the top 0.1% of fires by radiative power, identified from 21 years of satellite data

Ips typographus Tree Pest Found on New Species

WOODLAND managers, landowners and the forestry industry are encouraged to remain vigilant as the Forestry Commission today announced on Thursday 25 July a number of new eight-toothed spruce bark beetle *Ips typographus* findings in the South East of England. *Ips typographus* is a serious pest of spruce trees in Europe which was first identified in the UK in 2018.

It prefers stressed or dying trees but under the right conditions it can attack healthy trees and has the potential to cause significant damage to Great Britain's forestry and timber industries.

Following extensive surveillance, further outbreaks have now been found in the Demarcated Area in Kent and West Sussex, adding to the number of outbreak sites detected this year. The Forestry Commission continues to take swift and robust action including rapid eradication measures in response to the findings.

The finding of *Ips typographus* on a small number of cut and fallen Sitka spruce trees in close proximity to infested Norway spruce trees on a site in West Sussex marks the first time the beetle has been discovered on this species. There is no evidence of spread within the UK and the recent outbreaks are most likely due to natural dispersal of the pest from mainland Europe.

Defra Chief Plant Health Officer Professor Nicola Spence said "We can confirm that new findings of *Ips typographus* in the South East of England have been reported by the Forestry Commission on a small number of cut and fallen Sitka spruce trees in West Sussex.

"All landowners and land managers should



remain vigilant for *Ips typographus* as temperatures rise, continuing to check the health of spruce trees on their land. Landowners, agents and timber processors should note ongoing restrictions for movement of spruce material and methods of forest operations in the Demarcated Area."

Forestry Commission Director of Forest Services Dr Anna Brown said "Rapid eradication measures are being taken, alongside wider surveillance to determine the scale of the outbreak, and identify further management steps required."

The Forestry Commission is urging landowners to be vigilant and report any sightings of this beetle anywhere in Great Britain using the [TreeAlert form](#) in order to help reduce risk.

Landowners are encouraged to proactively remove spruce from the South East of England

and replant with other non-susceptible species. They may also be eligible for funding if their land is in the ['Proactive Spruce Removal area'](#). Landowners and managers served with a Statutory Plant Health Notice due to an outbreak on their site may be eligible for grants to support felling and restocking activity through the Tree Felling Pilot.

This announcement follows the introduction of [new measures outlined on 5 June](#) to protect against the impact of *Ips typographus* through the extension of the Demarcated Area. A Demarcated Area is in place in the South East of England and East Anglia to prevent potential spread of the pest, in line with the eradication action taken by the Forestry Commission to manage outbreaks. Within the Demarcated Area, the felling and movement of all spruce material, including trees and wood with bark, isolated bark, and wood chip with bark, is prohibited unless authorised by the Forestry Commission. Click here for full guidance of the requirements.

Additional Information

[A new map indicating the 'Proactive Spruce Removal area' is available via this link.](#)

[Click here to read a blog outlining research taking place into the susceptibility of different spruce trees.](#)

[An updated Outbreak Sites Summary Map is available via this link.](#)

Newark Town Council Vote Against Motion to Stop Use of Legislation for Tree Works Without Planning Applications

A motion was brought to Newark Town Council's full council meeting on July 24 by Mathew Skinner, requesting the council "commit to never again utilising a piece of national legislation (Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 211)) which permits that a local authority can; remove, topping, lopping or uprooting of a tree by, or on behalf of a local authority in a conservation area without the submission of a planning application".

His motion suggested that for any future tree works in a conservation area that are needed, the council should "follow the same process as any other type of organisation or householder".

Mr Skinner explained his reasoning for bringing forward the motion, referencing his "shock and horror" at the removal of trees from Sherwood Avenue park earlier this year by Newark and Sherwood District Council, acting as a contractor to the town council.

He added: "I believe as an authority we

should lead by example."

Paul Taylor spoke against the motion, and questioned the legality of the council 'ignoring' national legislation, which he suggested was "there for a good reason".

He explained the tree removal at Sherwood Avenue park had been necessary as the trees were blocking the view of CCTV cameras in the area, and claimed the motion was "playing politics with children's safety".

Neil Ross echoed the sentiment that the legislation was there for a reason, and suggested the motion did not offer an "improvement in process" unlike the council's recently agreed tree management policy for

which he thanked Mr Skinner for his contributions.

He added that he recognised there had been issues with communication over the tree works at Sherwood Avenue park.

Summing up, Mr Skinner said it was the council's choice whether to use the legislation or not and highlighted the previous district council's administration's decision to submit a planning application for the removal of trees in the Library Gardens.

He added that if members "really supported" trees they should support the motion.

It was not carried, with 13 votes against the motion, one abstention, and two votes for.

Tree Bark Plays Vital Role Removing Methane From Atmosphere

By Ellen McNally for The Guardian

MICROBES in the bark of trees play a vital role in removing methane from the atmosphere, scientists have discovered. The greenhouse gas is a product of agriculture and the burning of fossil fuels and is 28 times more potent than carbon dioxide. However, it remains in the atmosphere for a shorter time.

Methane has been responsible for about 30% of global heating since preindustrial times, with emissions currently rising at their fastest rate since the 1980s.

The team behind the study by the University of Birmingham, published in the journal *Nature* and led by Prof Vincent Gauci, investigated methane absorption levels in upland tropical forests in the Amazon and Panama; temperate broadleaf trees in Wytham Woods in Oxfordshire in the UK; and boreal coniferous forest trees in Sweden.

Methane absorption levels were found to be the highest in tropical forests, probably thanks to the microbes' ability to thrive in warm and wet conditions.

Previously, soil was thought to be the only terrestrial sink for methane, with bacteria in the soil able to absorb the gas and break it down to use as an energy source. However, Gauci said the research highlighted "a remarkable new way in which trees provide a vital climate service".

The Global Methane Pledge, launched in 2021 at the COP26 climate summit, outlined the aim to cut methane emissions by 30% by the end of the decade. Gauci said: "Our results suggest that planting more trees, and reducing deforestation surely must be important parts of any approach towards this goal."

Tree planting has become a key tactic in combating the climate crisis, with the UK government planning to spend more than £500m on trees and woodlands between 2020 and 2025, but another piece of research published on July 24 shows countries must weigh up the benefits and disadvantages of tree planting, with natural forest regeneration proving more cost-effective in some circumstances.

Jacob Bukoski, a scientist from the Oregon State University college of forestry, and his team analysed data from thousands of reforestation sites in 130 countries for the study, published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. They found that natural regeneration would be most cost-effective over a 30-year period for 46% of the areas studied, while planting would be more cost-effective for 54%.

"Generally speaking, we can let forests regenerate on their own, which is slow but cheap, or take a more active approach and plant them, which speeds up growth but is more expensive," said Bukoski. "Our study compares these two approaches across reforestable landscapes in low- and middle-income countries, identifying where naturally regenerating or planting forests is likely to make more sense."

Natural regeneration was found to be more cost-effective in areas such as western Mexico, the Andean region, the southern cone of South America, west and central Africa, India,

southern China, Malaysia and Indonesia.

A combination of factors made natural regeneration better in these areas, such as whether there were sufficient ecological conditions for tree regrowth, opportunity and implementation costs, and carbon accumulation rates.

Scientists ultimately determined that using a combination of both approaches globally would be 44% better than natural regeneration alone and 39% better than solely planting. "If your objective is to sequester carbon as quickly and as cheaply as possible, the best option is a mix of both naturally regenerating forests and planting forests," Bukoski said.

While reforestation can prove highly effective in offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, the authors stress that reforestation is a complement to, not a replacement for, reducing emissions from fossil fuels. The entire mitigation potential of reforestation over 30 years would only equate to less than eight months of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The authors also argue that many other factors must be considered alongside carbon when deciding where and how to reforest landscapes, such as reforestation's impact on biodiversity, demand for wood products and non-carbon biophysical effects such as water availability.



East Anglian Regional Tree Warden Forum

7 September 2024

THIS autumn our Regional Tree Warden Forum for East Anglia is kindly being organised in partnership with Norfolk County Council with generous support from the Trees Outside Woods, Shared Outcomes Fund, research project.

Trees in Britain are in a state of flux. Climate change and new pests and diseases present serious challenges. However, the good news is that policymakers are making funds available for planting trees and hedges. We need to understand how we can all use

science and good practice to grow and care for healthy trees.

The Shared Outcomes Fund is a £5 million research project jointly co-ordinated by Defra, The Tree Council and Natural England over the last 5 years. It explores how to best establish trees outside woodlands using new techniques and experimental ideas that have been developed and tested in 5 local authorities

across England.

The venue for the Forum is yet to be finalised but Broadsheet will let you know as soon as it can along with registration details..

As always Tree Warden Forums are brilliant at bringing us all together for some learning, sharing and networking aimed at supporting you as Tree Wardens in your role in planting and caring for trees in your local communities

Green Credit Rules: Death by Trees?

An article by Pia Sethi for Mongabay

AS the rain clouds gather darkly over the grasslands and fields of Shokaliya village in Rajasthan, throngs of birders congregate. In the monsoon of 2014, I joined the annual pilgrimage to witness the fabled jumping-jack breeding display of the lesser florican. With the rain angling down, we watched a slender black, white, and gold-sequined male float up into the sky, arch his head with fluttery ribbons curling upwards, and let loose a volley of rattling calls to attract the female.

This endemic nomad, about which little is known, makes a guest appearance to pirouette for the female in the rains before it rather mysteriously vanishes for the rest of the year.

However, receding grassland habitats and seasonal variations in rainfall have caused its numbers to decline, leaving it critically endangered, but implementing the recently passed Green Credit Rules might contribute to wiping out the lesser florican, along with the great Indian bustard and other iconic species already on the brink.

The amendment of the 1980 Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA) in 2023 sent shock waves through the country. It was met with widespread protests and citizens have since challenged it in court. However, the amendment also set in motion a concatenation of notifications and rules. These supposedly green epistles, especially the Green Credit Rules, could prove lethal to many of our natural ecosystems, turning them into tree-lined ecological graveyards.

The Centre issued the Green Credit Rules (GCR) in October 2023 under the Green Credit Programme (GCP), aimed at using market-based mechanisms to incentivise environmental protection. Industries and others can generate green credits for various activities, including tree plantations. A notification issued on February 22, 2024, indicated the method to earn credits via tree plantations. This notification specifies planting a minimum of 1100 trees per hectare according to local silvi-climatic and soil conditions, where each tree equates to a single green credit.

The GCRs are a double whammy for Indian forests. States must afforest land to compensate for diverting forests, including diverse and wildlife-rich ones, for non-forest use, under the rules of the FCA and its 2023 amendment. This is known as Compensatory Afforestation (CA). However, the GCR now allows green credits generated by growing trees to meet these CA obligations.

Hence, the GCRs lack even the already limited latitude of compensatory afforestation. For instance, while CA does not stipulate ecological restoration to restore deforested areas, the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act of 2016 allows using CA funds for several activities other than artificial regeneration (plantations). These include assisted natural regeneration, forest protection, wildlife protection and management and the Green India Programme. In contrast, the GCRs only apply to plantations, which, as any ecologist knows, could never replace the loss of natural forests.

Most alarmingly, the GCRs also promote growing trees over and above these CA



requirements, such as for corporate social responsibility, on forest lands. For instance, the GCRs allow tree planting on degraded land parcels, including open forest and scrubland, wasteland, and catchment areas that are under the administrative control and management of the forest department. The GCR ambit is far more expansive, and insidious, than CA since it allows tree planting on some of the most unique and fragile ecosystems, speciously written off as degraded lands or wastelands, should states choose to do so.

The prevailing use of canopy closure as the sole indicator of ecological worth relegates most non-forest ecosystems to degraded status, ie with either open canopies (densities <40%) or as scrub (<10%), but one could hardly expect ecosystems such as grasslands and savannahs, cold and hot deserts, coastal areas, wetlands, and marshes, harbouring their fair share of rare, endangered and endemic species, to be thickly forested. Such ecologically important open or treeless areas are labelled Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs). Under the GCRs, ONEs under the administration of the forest department are fair game for industrial-scale tree plantations—if states decide to parcel them out for such activities.

The GCRs use subjective criteria to identify sites for planting, only partially based on an ecological or scientific foundation. Canopy closure is no barometer of the value of a non-forest ecosystem. Is a desert a degraded ecosystem that requires tree planting because it is branded open forest or scrub? If so, should one not shroud the Desert National Park with trees? This unscientific approach has led to the misplaced focus on planting trees in Ladakh, a unique and fragile mountain cold desert. Ladakh has evolved its unique set of adapted fauna and flora over countless years of evolution. Planting trees endangers this native biodiversity.

Misclassification of ecosystems is also rife. For instance, it is easy to erroneously label mesic savannahs as dry tropical forests because remote sensing spectral signatures of different ecosystems are sometimes difficult to distinguish, such as grasses with rainfed agriculture or forest plantations and woodlands.

The British played an instrumental role in tilting the bias against non-forest ecosystems, particularly grasslands. Grasslands were nothing more than a forest blank. Since then, undervalued grasslands, which support a high density of mammals and 500 million livestock and are also important for below-ground carbon sequestration, have been considered prime targets for afforestation. In the shola grasslands of the Western Ghats, this ill-advised planting of exotics has obliterated 23% of the total shola grassland, reducing populations of the endemic Nilgiri Pipit and Nilgiri Thar.

The importance of non-forested Open Natural Ecosystems (ONEs) covering 10% of the land surface of India in the low-elevation arid and semi-arid regions is recognised globally for biodiversity conservation and as the wellspring of pastoralist livelihoods. Not only are ONEs misclassified, but in large part, they are also officially labelled wastelands in the Wasteland Atlas of India. An astonishing 69% of semi-arid ONEs coincide with classified wastelands, while the protected area network provides refuge to less than 5% of the area under ONEs. Much of India's fabled wildlife lives outside the protected areas, many in these so-called wastelands.

As mis-designated wastelands, ONEs are prone to tree planting. These areas may encompass some of the largest tracts of ONEs spread across the States of Rajasthan (30%), enveloping sand dunes, grasslands and thorn scrub of the Thar, and the savanna grasslands and open woody savannas of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. Planting trees will

further attenuate their already precarious state. The State of India's Birds (2023) report found that birds of ONEs have declined precipitously. For instance, there has been a more than 50% dip in grassland specialists due to existing habitat loss and degradation.

However, the GCR may not only turn some ONEs into jungles of the dead. Tree plantations, especially monocultures of oil palm or rubber, may well replace parts of India's most diverse forests in northeast India. The Wasteland Atlas pigeonholes regenerating shifting cultivation fallows as wastelands, despite a 2018 NITI Aayog report pointing to the fallacy of this approach. Shifting cultivation, or *jhum*, is carried out primarily in the Eastern Himalayan and Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspots. In *jhum*, patches of forests are cropped for a year or two and then left fallow to regrow forests. These so-called wastelands, consisting of active crops and regenerating fallows, span at least 8,446.76 km² of the north-east.

Figures from the Wasteland Atlas, which suggested a halving of areas under *jhum* in just two years, led the NITI Aayog to question the authenticity and accuracy of these figures. Despite the report suggesting that shifting cultivation lands with long fallow cycles should be classified as distinct land uses, not as abandoned land, wastelands, or unclassed state forests, they remain in limbo. The NITI Aayog's analysis also highlights the unreliability of the current data designating an area as marginal.

Based on this data and the odd notions of what constitutes wastelands, vast swathes of India's most productive lands are just waste. These include some of the most biodiverse jungles under *jhum*, permanent snow-clad mountains—the source of rivers—or marshes that are important for water recharge and have high ecological diversity.

Definitional issues complicate the picture. There is no clear consensus on what constitutes a wasteland or how it differs from degraded lands. Hence, the Wasteland Atlas and the Atlas of Degraded Areas provide different areal estimates. As a result, it is impossible to quantify degraded or wastelands with any degree of certainty.

The next issue is the questionable extent and quality of India's existing forest cover. Open forests compose 9.34% of India's geographical area (GA); scrub forests cover 1.42%. Together, they constitute almost 11% of the GA. Even if we exclude the forest cover comprising scrub, virtually half (43.2%) of the extant forest cover is in the open category. Are we going to convert half of what remains of forests, which includes non-forest ecosystems such as savannah grasslands and deserts, as mentioned earlier, to plantations for green credits? Or should we focus instead on regenerating, restoring, and rewilding ecosystems, which goes beyond merely planting trees? Ecological restoration aims to revitalise the structural integrity and functional niches of forests. As even a child knows, a forest is far more than trees. A forest includes the multi-layered tree canopy, the shrub understory, the herbs, and the soil, with their interlinked faunal assemblages.

Orchards, parks, and plantations that also count as forests already inflate the reported forest cover. Implementing the GCR would mean that significantly more than half of India's forests could be just plantations in the foreseeable future.

Studies suggest that plantations cannot provide the same ecosystem services as a forest. Therefore, the tree-centric GC approach will be detrimental to the ecosystem services of

carbon and water. Afforestation is not a panacea nor the most effective climate-mitigation solution. For instance, plantation activities in 'catchment' areas, as envisaged in the rules, are unlikely to restore water flows or store as much carbon as natural forests. The effects of afforestation on soil organic carbon are also context-dependent, according to a recent study. Afforestation increases soil organic carbon density in C-poor soils (lower in organic carbon), but decreases it in C-rich soils, especially in deeper soils. This over-estimate the ability of afforestation to enhance soil organic carbon using the fixed biomass to soil carbon ratios assumed by previous studies.

Recent research shows that regrowing natural forests could mop up 23% of global CO₂ emissions from the atmosphere each year because the ability of regrowing natural forests to capture carbon is higher than previously estimated. Current Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defaults underestimate carbon accumulation rates in young forests by 32% globally and 53% for tropical forests. Protecting, ecologically restoring and regrowing natural forests rather than planting fast-growing, non-native, and commercial monocultures would likely yield more benefits for biodiversity, local communities, hydrological water flows, and carbon sequestration and storage.

Uniform prescriptions of 1100 trees are best suited to commercial plantations of one to a few species that are best grown on private lands. Forest areas with existing rootstock, seed sources, and relatively intact soils need nurturing to regenerate. Tambe et al. (2022) argue that plantations fail to address the drivers of degradation in the first place. Unless we tackle these issues with the approval and involvement of local communities, plantations are doomed to fail, particularly in the absence of accountability for high mortality and low survival. In the words of Patton-Cook et al. (2021), it is best to "protect, manage," (here I would also add regenerate) "and then restore lands for climate mitigation," rather than simply growing trees. The February 22 guidelines excised even the few precautions, such as lists of tree species that would be appropriate to plant in specific rainfall zones, that appeared in the draft rules of October 2023. Plantation norms became even more rigid, from the more flexible 100-1100 to a fixed 1100 per ha.

Each forest type is unique, with its distinct species composition and abundance, fine-tuned to its local environment and ecosystem. Prescribing a fixed number of species to plant across ecologically distinctive areas is absurd. Rain-drenched tropical rainforests, for example, are heterogeneous, with bewilderingly high densities of trees and lianas compared with a dry thorn forest adapted to desiccation. In semi-arid areas, less than 100 trees per ha produce the most benefits for water recharge. The selection of tree species and numbers for plantation is context-specific and requires precise tailoring to the rainfall, forest type, soil, topography, and microclimate.

However, do pan-Indian tree plantations or afforestation drives work? We could look at India's CA track record to gauge this.

There is sufficient and compelling evidence that CA, the principal afforestation programme in the country, suffers from numerous flaws, despite the availability of more than 50,000 crores. Government data indicates the diversion of 3.05 lakh ha of forest land between 2008–09 and 2022–23. To compensate, the forest department afforested 9 lakh hectares.

Critics have found fault with several aspects of CA, such as the questionable quality of lands

selected for afforestation, failure to obtain the consent of tribals and other forest dwellers, and planting of lands in ecological zones distant from the diverted forests. For instance, the government intends to destroy the tropical rainforests of Great Nicobar Island to build a container port and then offset this loss with a zoo safari in the distant Haryana Aravalli Hills.

Significantly, almost 60% of the CA funds remain unspent. According to an analysis of CA from Himachal Pradesh, "over half of the state's budget for tree planting is wasted on plantations that are unlikely to survive and/or are poorly designed to achieve the state's goal of increasing forest cover." Interestingly, the 2013 CAG compliance report on CA questions the absence of adequate safeguards for CA and the reliability of official data on CA.

Although field-based research on the efficacy of CA is scarce, current sources starkly underline the failure of CA on several fronts. The evidence suggests that these plantations show poor survival rates and fail to simulate natural forests. CA often occurs in areas of high tree cover, defeating the very objective of afforestation, or where the biophysical situation is unconducive to plant survival. In the Kinnaur Division of Himachal Pradesh, locals uprooted tree seedlings from the grasslands where they traditionally grazed their cattle. Across the country, it is often impossible to trace plantations listed in government records.

The tree species fail to reflect either biodiversity values or the preferences of local communities. Instead, the focus is on fast-growing species. Most CA programmes ride roughshod over local people, failing to take their consent, ideas, and support. The GCRs fail to mention local communities or their rights over forests, which the Forest Rights Act (FRA) guarantees. The 2022 Rules of the FCA eliminated the need for consent from the Gram Sabha for forest diversion. The GC is also deafeningly silent on sharing the benefits with the communities. Empirical research suggests better outcomes where communities participate in monitoring and management and have access to secure community rights.

The GCR is beset with numerous problems and lacks even a token exhortation to plant diverse native species or emulate the structure or composition of a forest. Industry can use forest lands and other productive ecosystems to raise industrial-scale plantations and generate compensatory afforestation credits.

All these changes signal a reversion to a British-origin, revenue-centric vision for India's forests. These overturn decades of engagement to shift the policy needle to conserving forests for biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the rights of local communities, culminating in the enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 and the Forest Rights Act of 2006. We should repeal the GCR, recognise the value of open natural ecosystems in their own right, and alter our perceptions, mapping, and definitions of waste and degraded lands. Biogeographic and ecosystem-based approaches must supplement indicators like canopy cover. Simultaneously, it would behoove us to move from a plantation or even compensatory afforestation-driven focus towards ecosystem restoration in the current U.N. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Or else, I might never again see the ballerina of the grasses dancing in the rain.

The author has a PhD in ecology from the University of Illinois and works on issues relating to forestry, biodiversity, natural resource management and climate change.

After Historic 2023 Drought, Amazon Communities Brace for More in Brazil

By Amanda Magnani for Mongabay

IMAGES of dozens of freshwater dolphin carcasses and cracked soil where once laid navigable rivers shocked the world in 2023, as the worst drought in history hit the Brazilian Amazon. Now, there is a chance that 2024's pictures will be even worse, a report presented by the Civil Defence of the state of Amazonas suggests.

Despite rains that restored navigability and reconnected communities that had been left isolated by last year's historical drought, rivers across the region are at lower levels now than they were during 2023's already meagre flood season.

In early May, the Negro River reached 25.57m, roughly 1.75m and 3.75m lower than the past three years. In June, the Madeira River saw levels recede 3m in two weeks, reaching 4.15m on the 19th, the lowest level in 2024.

So far, Amazonian states haven't seen enough rain to indicate promising changes in this forecast. In Rio Branco, Acre's state capital, for instance, it had rained 1.2mm by the end of June - a concerningly small portion of the 60mm expected for the period.

In addition in June, 82 cities across the country were under extreme drought and 735 in a state of severe drought, an escalation of 2023's numbers for the same month (one city facing extreme drought and 44 facing a severe one).

National and international media have reported that this year's drought will surpass 2023's and arrive a month earlier than predicted. Meanwhile, Renato Senna, a researcher at the National Amazon Research Institute, said that last year's event isn't over yet.

However, for Ayan Fleischmann, an environmental engineer and researcher at Mamirauá Sustainable Development Institute, a social organization funded and overseen by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, these claims are not accurate. "We don't have enough elements to assert that the next drought will be extreme," he told Mongabay.

Fleischmann expressed concerns about what he called "sensationalism" surrounding the topic, something, he said, was shared by other experts during an event that gathered professionals from both governmental and non-governmental institutions on June 26 to assess the conditions of the main river basins in the Amazon region and outline a scenario for the coming drought.

Even though this has been a below-average flood season, he said, rivers have indeed seen increased levels that represent the end of the dry season, whose peak is four months away. Too far away for any precise forecasts. To add even more uncertainty to the predictions, the La Niña phenomenon (when the waters off the Pacific coast are colder than usual) will be at play in South America, which tends to increase rainfall in the Amazon region, Fleischmann said - in 2023, El Niño, which typically causes the opposite effects, was in action. "There is a consensus among the [experts] community that it is still too soon to make any claims," he said.



The Amazon is not a monolith, Fleischmann added. While the region known as the Arc of Deforestation has indeed seen increased droughts, the past decade witnessed six of the 10 worst floods in the Negro River's recorded history. Earlier this year, around the same period extreme floods hit more than 100,000 residents of the state of Acre as communities in the state of Roraima struggled with wildfires.

Droughts and floods are part of a natural annual cycle of the Amazon's hydrology, according to Patrícia Pinho, deputy science director at the Amazon Environmental Research Institute. "The problem we see now is in the increased range of the two extremes of this cycle," Pinho told Mongabay.

"The droughts we have witnessed of late are dramatic, not only due to intensity but also to extension, as they are lasting longer every time. Because of climate change, events of a magnitude that used to take place once every hundred years are now unfolding every five years or so."

Climate change also made the 2023 historic drought 30 times more likely, according to a new report from World Weather Attribution. The event threw the region into a state of emergency and affected more than half a million people.

Still, Fleischmann called for caution in communicating it. "The dynamics of the rivers dictate everyday life around here, and last year's drought was traumatizing. So when you profess that this year's will be worse, you don't foster action. You merely create panic."

Last year's drought dropped the economic output of Manaus' industries by 16.6%. This season, Manaus' companies feel they have no time to waste waiting for accurate predictions. The previous drought delayed the arrival of merchandise by 90 days and increased logistics costs by 300%.

As companies prepare for 60 days of limited navigability (twice the normal), Amazonas' Federation of Commerce of Goods, Services and Tourism has been meeting with representatives of state and federal governments to address the next dry season. In June, the

federal government announced 500 million reais (roughly \$90 million) to be used in dredging sections of the Amazonas and Solimões rivers in an attempt to assure their navigability.

For some states, waiting is also not an option. In Rondônia, after the Madeira River's levels dropped 3m in two weeks, the state's capital, Porto Velho, was officially declared to be in a state of alert on June 19. In Acre, following the floods in February, the Rio Branco River reached the lowest levels registered for May in the past five years, leading to the creation of a crisis office and the declaration of an environmental emergency in all 22 of the state's municipalities. Meanwhile, the state of Amazonas has estimated that the 2024 drought will affect 150,000 families, and authorities have already advised people to stock water and food in preparation for possible extreme conditions.

Fleischmann recognized that governments were acting much sooner this year than in 2023, a signal that lessons have been learned. Yet, he argued that the actions were far from enough. "There is still a long way to go. We need more than just distributing food when the extreme event is already happening. What we need is prevention, and it has to be long-term."

More than that, it is necessary to bridge what Pinho called the "adaptation gap." "Brazil has been hiding behind the mitigation agenda, mostly through reducing deforestation in the Amazon, which is very important, of course, but not enough. We are still too far behind in our adaptation efforts," she said.

"Even extreme events don't become disasters if we are prepared," Fleischmann said. However, that preparation is more challenging in the Amazon region than elsewhere. He said that communities in the region were used to two potential disasters every year. "As soon as an extreme drought is over, while still struggling with the effects, there's the imminent danger of extreme floods. That barely leaves enough time to prepare."

For local communities on the frontline, the consequences are "perverse and negative," in Pinho's words, as they entirely depend on very

delicate river dynamics. Yet, these communities still find ways to get together and collectively work on solutions, especially faced with the absence of the state, she said. "At the same time, however, the burden falls heavily upon their shoulders."

Water loss has been an enduring issue in the Brazilian Amazon, according to a June study published by MapBiomas, a collaborative network that produces mapping of land cover and water coverage. Besides having the largest water surface in Brazil (62%), the biome has also lost the largest area of water coverage since 1985, the year the series started.

Across the country, the issue started to worsen in the year 2000 and has become critical in the past decade. In Roraima, the most affected state, flooded areas shrank by half over the past two decades.

Pinho said that, alongside the Arctic region, the Amazon Rainforest is one of the most sensitive biomes to rising temperatures and climate change.

There is an even more complex combination of reasons behind the drastic water loss. "There are three main factors: deforestation, forest degradation and the ongoing climate crisis," Carlos Souza Jr, a researcher at the Brazilian conservation nonprofit Imazon and one of the study's authors, told Mongabay.

Souza said deforestation leads to temperature rise and local precipitation decline, leading to longer and drier summers in areas already deforested. Meanwhile, the impact on forest areas that, even standing, are facing degradation caused by environmental changes, decreases the forest's resilience and increases its vulnerability to wildfires. "Finally, we have climate change, with large-scale effects, such as stronger and more frequent El Niños and the warming of Atlantic waters. All of that, combined, makes for a drier and more prone-to-burning Amazon," he said.



Researchers analyse the carcasses of Amazon dolphins that died due to the high temperature of the Lake Tefé waters in 2023. Image courtesy of Miguel Monteiro/Mamirauá Institute.

In 2023, alongside the worst drought in history, the Amazon also saw fires increase by more than 35%. More than seven times the national increase of 6%. Furthermore, the 2024 forecast is sombre. So far, the Amazon has seen more than 60% more fires than in the first six months of 2023, the worst scenario in 20 years.

While the Amazon lost the largest flooded area, the neighbouring Pantanal, one of the world's largest wetlands, also has lost a high percentage of water surface. MapBiomas reported that the biome lost 29% of its flooded areas when comparing flood peaks between

1988 and 2018.

This year has also witnessed the worst wildfires in the region's history, with more than 3,500 fires registered, roughly 50% more than 2020's previous record of 2,534 fires. Almost all of them have been identified as caused by human action and found on private property. According to Marina Silva, Brazil's environment and climate change minister, they are directly related to increased deforestation.

With the peak dry season in the Pantanal usually happening in September, 2024's record-breaking wildfires might still reach more devastating levels.

National Trust Plants 600 Trees in Norfolk's Sheringham Park

By Lily Boag, Live Reporter for Eastern Daily Press

A team at the National Trust's Sheringham Park have planted more than 600 trees as part of a huge conservation program. Climate change warnings have prompted the need to diversify the park's Wild Garden to "secure its future" in the face of hotter and drier summers. The work includes the migration of the most important rhododendron species to more temperate locations and removal of more invasive plant species, such as *R ponticum*.

It follows warnings to gardeners to "protect British nature" after they were urged not to buy *R ponticum* which can spread tree diseases and harm native wildlife.

Over the coming decades, it's hoped that the newly planted trees will create a tree canopy that will shade the most important rhododendron species at Sheringham Park.

In the Wild Garden, 180 new specimen trees have been planted, including red maple, Colorado Blue Spruce, Japanese cedar and Tibetan cherry. The team has also created a new lilac bank that will add further interest for visitors in the spring, with 15 different varieties

of vibrant and fragrant lilac shrubs.

With its plentiful supply of nectar, it's hoped this new bank of planting will support a thriving population of butterflies.

The park will also continue to preserve its collection of some of the best surviving work from the famous landscape gardener, Humphry Repton.

National Trust countryside manager, Richard Daplyn, said: "It's important that we're planning for the future and adapting to the changing climate. The new lilac bank and tree plantings not only add another dimension for our visitors, but they will benefit the wildlife of the estate. Year-on-year, the landscape will evolve to put on a fantastic display of different foliage,

seasonal colour and flowering times."



Half of Kew Tree Species at Risk of Death Owing to Climate Crisis

By Helena Horton, Environment Reporter for The Guardian

MORE than half of the tree species at Kew's Royal Botanical Gardens are at risk of death because of climate breakdown, a study by the public body has found. Founded in 1840, Kew Gardens says it houses the largest botanical collection in the world. During the drought of 2022, the botanical gardens in south-west London lost 400 of its trees.

Scientists at Kew decided they should map and chronicle the climate risk to the trees to see how many could feasibly be lost to the changing weather in the coming decades.

The finding that half of Kew's 11,000 trees are at risk has led the organisation to write a succession plan to replace some of the trees that are likely to die as the climate breaks down.

Kew is particularly vulnerable as much of its planting was done at least 100 years ago, when future climate scenarios were not considered. The site was thought to have a specific and stable climate that supported trees that liked damp soil.

The UK's 10 warmest years since 1884 have occurred in the 21st century and London's climate in 2050 is expected to be comparable with present-day Barcelona. The succession plan is important as urban trees help cool the area and provide shade for the habitat during heatwaves.

Climate modelling by Kew drawing on

specific projections for west London and weather station records from the botanical gardens have been combined with global tree data and details of existing plant collections, alongside empirical testing.

The researchers found that more than 50% of Kew's tree species could be vulnerable by 2090, with 45% predicted to be at the edge of their known range and 9% outside their known range based on mean annual temperature.

This has implications for British natives such as English oak *Quercus robur*, common beech *Fagus sylvatica*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*, which could be at risk in areas of the UK with a similar climate to Kew.

Vulnerable trees Kew has chosen to replace include those that are drought tolerant: Iberian alder *Alnus lusitanica*, native to Portugal and Spain; Farges' fir *Abies fargesii*, endemic to central China; cherry hackberry *Celtis cerasifera*, native to China, Myanmar and Tibet; Montezuma pine *Pinus montezumae*, native to Central America; and spoon oak *Quercus urbani*, native to Mexico.

The report also states that existing species sourced from hotter European climates, such as

oak trees, may be more resilient than English oaks, as they have adapted to the stressors in a hotter, drier environment.

Richard Barley, the director of gardens at Kew, said: "[The succession plan] is a crucial and very timely step towards understanding the effects of the projected climate on our living landscapes, enabling us to implement changes that will make them more resilient.

"This is not just about Kew Gardens though; it is a broad call to diversify the plants we select for our landscapes. By focusing on resilience and adaptability we hope to show it is possible to mitigate the severe impacts of climate change in both urban spaces and gardens such as Kew."

Ross Cameron, a professor of environmental horticulture at the University of Sheffield, said of the findings: "The implications from the Kew report are reasonable. It is logical to assume that tree species, for example, that prefer moist damp conditions may struggle in the south-east of England in future. So our native *Alnus* (alders) and *Sorbus* (rowans and whitebeams) may find conditions too dry to succeed

Disease Wreaking Havoc in Australia

By Padraig Collins for Daily Mail Australia

SCIENTISTS and conservationists have warned that a little known, but lethal, disease is destroying trees and doing massive damage to Australia's ecosystem. Ginger bark syndrome, which appears in drought stressed gum trees, is ravaging forests in Tasmania and has also hit Western Australia. Huge patches of forest in the island state are turning brown and dying, which Dr Tim Wardlaw from the University of Tasmania first observed in 2013 when he worked with Forestry Tasmania.

"During routine inspections, we found a lot of the trees in their plantations along northern Tasmania had ginger stems, sort of a red stain on the stems," he told *Daily Mail Australia*.

"When we looked more closely at those a sample of those trees. We cut them down and dissected them and instead of just the limited gum veins, they had big pockets of gum just underneath the bark.

"The best explanation of that was the very hot weather we had that year triggered the stems to think they were suffering damage and

they basically have this big response to wounding and that bleeds out and gives the wood that characteristic red colour," he said.

Dr Wardlaw said while the problem has more to do with high temperatures than a lack of water getting to the trees, "they tend to go hand in hand, so we had a big episode of mortality".

Though Dr Wardlaw first observed the condition in northern Tasmania, a prolonged drought means the south of the state is now also affected.

Conservationist and bush regenerator Sean Tooker was driving in the Huon Valley when he saw "great large patches of trees that appeared to have just died".

It was "almost like a suicide of trees of all ages, saplings right through to old trees and other pockets," he told ABC radio.

"I was looking at trees I've seen for decades. Big, beautiful, old Tasmanian blue gums, all bleeding. They've been stained by their sap."

Dr Wardlaw said "autumn was very dry and it's been much warmer than normal. They basically form air bubbles in the xylem, the water transport (in the trees) and those air bubbles when they fall in response to drought water transport, that's when the trees start to die."

He said wet forests were originally thought to be immune to most of the climate impacts because they very rarely have drought, but that

has not turned out to be the case and in fact they're 'very sensitive to warming temperatures', Dr Wardlaw said.

Forest ecologist Dr Jennifer Sanger said the ecosystem "may not bounce back".

"Most people very used to seeing trees impacted by fire and when a fire comes through, a lot of species can spring back and grow back," she said.

Dr Sanger said a lot of people "are assuming that this will happen after this drought event (in southern Tasmania), but that's not the case because of the internal cavities of these trees are kind of crumpled, they are not able to recover from drought stress like this, which is very unfortunate".

She pointed out that Western Australia has also been affected.

"They've been really badly hit over quite a wide amount of coastline and in some areas it's been so severe that ecologists have described it as ecosystem collapse. So there will be some plants that grow back, but it's probably going to be a very different mix of species to what's currently there," Dr Sanger said.

French Snap Election Parties Overlooking Climate Change Nightmare

An article by Adeline Rochet, Programme Leader, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, published on the EuroNews website

If you look at the big picture, despair is only allowed for a short moment. Then we must go back to work and continue the fight because hope is the strongest bond shared by all humanity, Adeline Rochet. As a French citizen, the outcome of the first round of the French snap elections is a heartbreaker. As a climate campaigner, it is an absolute nightmare.

Whatever the final result and the final composition of the Parliament, climate and the environment have been blatantly absent from the campaign.

How could it be otherwise when the decision to revoke the current set of MPs was so sudden and with the far right closest to power than at any time since World War II?

Yet, climate change didn't hit pause over the weekend: the parallel pictures of a "brown" far-right wave taking over the French electoral map, while torrents of mud were taking over alpine towns, in Northern Italy, in Austria, in Switzerland, were properly bloodcurdling.

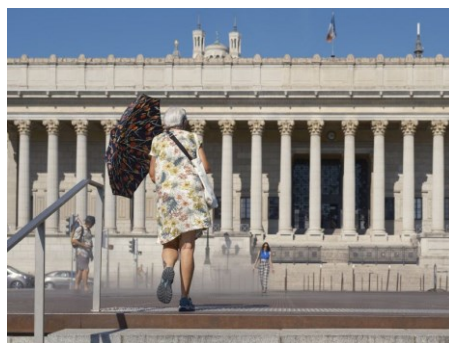
And each and every day, the planet warms a fraction more, and we lose a bit more natural capital and ecosystems because of uncontrolled human activities. The environmental crisis doesn't hold its breath as it waits for polling stations to close.

There are still several scenarios on the table for France, but none really are comforting: a far-right government is a serious threat to democracy, civil peace and equality and will likely only damage the social fabric. Who knows where the downward spiral would end?

However, even a stalemate between three political parties will prevent meaningful political action and prevent fixing the issues that led France there, the causes of French citizens suffering and worries.

It would, at best, delay the looming crisis of the regime by a few months. French politics is not designed for compromise and coalition; the system as it is now feeds on clear-cut clashes, and chances of addressing the faults of the current constitution are growing thinner every day.

None of the potential scenarios will prioritize the transition to a climate neutral, nature positive economy, despite the huge benefits it could bring, provided the state plans for it, creates the condition to deliver on ambitions, puts serious money on the table while building confidence for private investors to follow in that direction.



It is a problem for France, of course: the country may not be such a big direct greenhouse gas emitter, but it's nonetheless the seventh economic power globally, with huge indirect emissions.

In fact, the French population on average consumes twice the available resources of the country each year.

Putting a stop on current sustainable investments plans in France would see dozens of thousands of jobs destroyed, losing assets and infrastructures that will be needed for tomorrow's markets, meaning durable recession, destroying the social fabric a little further.

It would send a terrible message externally: if France gives up on trying to engage in the sustainable transition, then why would its allies even try? The current sense of collective motivation in the "race to clean" would suffer from France giving up.

For Europe, a French slump could escalate to the supra-national level, creating the conditions for a blocking minority in the European Council against any green and/or social policy initiative, threatening the progress that we've seen over the past decade.

Slowing down now on the sustainable transition is a massive financial risk, deepening inequalities as the most vulnerable will suffer the most from climate change and from a poorly planned transition.

This is a very gloomy picture, but it should lead to renunciation. Since every 10th of a

degree of warming makes a difference, and every species going extinct matter, climate and environment protection can't be placed on a back burner, waiting for a more favourable governance to arise.

The temptation to give up when the context becomes so difficult is strong and understandable, mental health can be at stake when the sense of helplessness is so strong.

However, if you look at the big (planet and humanity big) picture, despair is only allowed for a short moment, then we must go back to work and continue the fight because hope is the strongest bond shared by all humanity.

Now, more than ever, civil society actors should feel empowered to carry on and overcome the hardship of failing political leaders.

Citizens, NGOs, unions, academics, and business leaders must and can step up to push for positive change from the bottom up.

History is full of precedents for successful grassroots mobilisation: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the suffragettes and the end of apartheid all came from civil society and private actors.

Equally important are the other levels of governance that private actors can lean on: the very concept of sustainable development was acknowledged by the UN in the 1970s, and we know that cities and regions are on the front line to effectively implement the green transformation through their procurements and investments.

For climate and sustainability advocates, a global shift to authoritarian governments will be the dawn of a new era, but there's no need for fatal sentiments that this is the end of all our hopes and mobilisation, provided there's a collective effort to imagine what the next strategy should look like.

Today, the motto "Be the change that you wish to see in the world" sounds more accurate than ever.

Adeline Rochet is Programme Leader at the Corporate Leader Group Europe within the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL).

Google's Emissions Climb Nearly 50% in Five Years Due to AI Energy Demand

By Dan Milmo Global Technology Editor for The Guardian

GOOGLE'S goal of reducing its climate footprint is in jeopardy as it relies on more and more energy-hungry data centres to power its new artificial intelligence products. The tech giant revealed on July 2 that its greenhouse gas emissions have climbed 48% over the past five years.

Google said electricity consumption by data centres and supply chain emissions were the primary cause of the increase. It also revealed in its annual environmental report that its emissions in 2023 had risen 13% compared with the previous year, hitting 14.3m metric tons.

The tech company, which has invested substantially in AI, said its “extremely ambitious” goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2030 “won’t be easy”. It said “significant uncertainty” around reaching the target included “the uncertainty around the future environmental impact of AI, which is complex and difficult to predict”.

Google's emissions have risen by nearly 50% since 2019, the base year for Google's goal of reaching net zero, which requires the

company removing as much CO₂ as it emits.

The International Energy Agency estimates that data centres' total electricity consumption could double from 2022 levels to 1,000TWh (terawatt hours) in 2026, approximately Japan's level of electricity demand. AI will result in data centres using 4.5% of global energy generation by 2030, according to calculations by research firm SemiAnalysis.

Data centres play a crucial role in training and operating the models that underpin AI models like Google's Gemini and OpenAI's GPT-4, which powers the ChatGPT chatbot. Microsoft admitted this year that energy use related to its data centres was endangering its "moonshot" target of being carbon negative by 2030. Brad Smith, Microsoft's president, admitted in May that "the moon has moved" due to the company's AI strategy.

Microsoft's co-founder, Bill Gates, said in June that AI would help combat the climate crisis because big tech is "seriously willing" to

pay extra to use clean electricity sources in order “to say that they’re using green energy”.

Big tech companies have become major purchasers of renewable energy in a bid to meet their climate goals.

However, pledges to reduce CO₂ emissions are now coming up against pledges to invest heavily in AI products that require considerable amounts of energy for training and deployment in data centres, along with carbon emissions associated with manufacturing and transporting the computer servers and chips used in that process. Water usage is another environmental factor in the AI boom, with one study estimating that AI could account for up to 6.6bn cubic metres of water use by 2027 – nearly two-thirds of England's annual consumption.

Editor's comment. AI is not used in the production of Broadsheet!!!

250 Young People Take Part in Suffolk Youth Climate Conference

Published on the Suffolk County Council web page

THIS year's Suffolk Youth Climate Conference, held on July 3 at Suffolk One Sixth Form College, was organised by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership. It is just one way that the partnership is engaging with schools, charities, and community groups to bring about positive change, not just for the environment, but also for the health and wellbeing of Suffolk residents.

Speakers such as Chris Packham, Lord Deben, Kids Against Plastic and Scarlett Westbrook inspired the students with messages of urgency and hope. Chris Packham's talk looked at the power young people have to shape the future.

A range of workshops allowed the children to discuss topics such as electric vehicles, nature-based solutions, the global food system, coastal adaptation, plastic pollution, flood and water management, sustainable fashion and climate anxiety.

Students also had the opportunity to engage with 30 charities and organisations, that are all working to improve the natural environment in Suffolk.



Emma Dixon, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Manager, said "The Suffolk Youth Climate Conference empowers young people in Suffolk to join us in the fight against climate change."

"The Suffolk Public Sector Leaders wel-

come any opportunity to bring communities together to share knowledge and tools as we collectively work to reduce Suffolk's carbon emissions and protect our natural environment. All students in attendance will leave with the tools to express their views and concerns about climate change in their area to their local MP."

Chris Packham, broadcaster, environmental activist and animal welfare campaigner, said "Suffolk has put together a bold coalition of initiatives to address climate breakdown. Wise, because this beautiful and biodiverse county is also a fragile environment which will need to embrace a brave and rapid transition to a lovable future."

"Hope for me lies in the young, so it is critical that we do not just listen to their needs and ideas, but give them an active role in shaping their future, not a token seat at the table - but the leading voice".

Zoe, a teacher at Stour Valley Community School who attended, said "We had an amazing time today. My students were buzzing with ideas and really fired up with challenging our Strategic Leadership Team to implement real change at

school."

Jake Robson, Sixth Form Principal at One Sixth Form College, said "Such a stimulating and important event for young people in Suffolk. Their generation has undoubtedly inherited a

climate challenge, but it was abundantly clear that their presence today signalled they are ready to rise to it, transform attitudes, and bring about change."

'Slow-Walk' Protests Banned at 1,200 Locations

By Tom Wall and Josephine Casserly for BBC File on 4

THE scale of efforts by oil companies and public bodies to protect their premises from environmental protesters can be revealed in new BBC analysis. More than 400 demonstrators are named in court orders that restrict protests at more than 1,200 locations, the data gathered by File on 4 shows.

The civil injunctions - in force at places like oil terminals, petrol stations and racetracks across England and Wales - also apply to "persons unknown", meaning anyone could be prosecuted.

The enforcement of civil injunctions has been reported before, but our analysis is the first time the extent of their use has been calculated.

Oil companies and public bodies say the orders are needed to prevent disruptive and dangerous protests, but a lawyer acting for protesters says they are unfair and amount to a "privatised system of justice".

Raj Chada, the head of criminal law at Hodge Jones and Allen, has told us his firm had no injunction cases until 2021, but it is now representing close to 80 individuals.

"There was the odd case previously, but the scope and number of [protest] injunctions is now unprecedented," he says.

The anti-protest injunctions limit what people can do, who they can associate with and where they can go. The punishment for breaching one can be up to two years imprisonment or an unlimited fine. A heavier penalty than for equivalent offences in criminal law.

Eight have been taken out by oil companies including Shell, Esso and ExxonMobil. National Highways and Transport for London account for five more and the other two were taken out by local councils (one by North Warwickshire and a joint injunction by Essex and Thurrock).

These organisations argue the measures are needed to deter protesters, because police can only act after an offence has been committed. However, lawyers acting for the protesters argue that civil injunction proceedings lack some of the safeguards of the criminal system.

A civil injunction application can be made without the knowledge of the defendant or any representation in court. Once an order is granted, attempts should be made to inform those named - including putting up signs, sending emails to protest groups and serving papers on individuals in their homes.

Few applications to the High Court are

challenged because legal aid is not available for the initial hearing, says lawyer Raj Chada. Protesters can argue their case at a second hearing, but must abide by the injunction's rules until then.

Breaching an injunction is not technically a criminal offence. However, local authorities can apply for special powers to give police the power of arrest.

Sarah Benn (pictured), a retired GP from Birmingham, was imprisoned for 32 days in 2022 for repeatedly breaching an injunction preventing protests near Kingsbury Oil Terminal in Warwickshire, the largest inland oil storage depot in the UK.

Her breach consisted of protesting on a grass verge and sitting on the private road leading into the terminal.

"They could easily have... arrested us for obstruction of the highway," she says, "but because [we had] breached the High Court injunction we all went to prison."



Benn was one of 10 people given custodial sentences for breaching the injunction three or more times. Fifty-one people spent time in prison on remand after being arrested for breaking the injunction.

North Warwickshire Borough Council, which took out the injunction, has declined to comment as it is applying to the High Court to renew the measure for three more years.

However, court documents filed by the council's lawyers claim the actions of the

protesters, which included entering the site and climbing oil storage tanks, could have led to an explosion affecting the entire area.

Oil companies on the Kingsbury site have declined to comment. Valero Energy, which operates out of the terminal, has a separate anti-protest injunction in place.

A Freedom of Information request submitted by the BBC shows North Warwickshire council officers met oil company representatives 10 times, partly in relation to obtaining the injunction. The council does not hold minutes of the meetings. The request also reveals the council spent £155,000 on legal fees in the process.

Lawyer Raj Chada argues the proliferation of injunctions amounts to "private justice" - only available to those who can afford to pay.

Protesters risk being ordered to pay their opponents' legal bills if they make an unsuccessful challenge to the injunction, he says. "[This] can run to hundreds of thousands of pounds."

The environmental group, Friends of the Earth, is now taking a case to the European Court of Human Rights, challenging the use of anti-protest injunctions in the UK.

File on 4 has contacted the other organisations to have successfully applied for civil injunctions.

National Highways says it is unable to comment due to the general election, but it has previously said it sought injunctions to deter extremely dangerous and reckless protests on motorways.

Transport for London says it took out injunctions to ensure London's road network could operate safely and that emergency service vehicles could move freely through the city.

Essex County Council and Thurrock Council say their injunction does not restrict anyone's right to carry out lawful protest. "It simply seeks to stop protesters from unlawfully blocking or damaging the public highway as part of that protest," says a spokesperson.

Shell says the injunctions are not about preventing freedom of expression but preventing "unlawful and dangerous protests".

Esso and ExxonMobil told us they were unable to comment on active litigation matters.

Half of Argyll Commercial Forests Flouting Green Rules, Says Watchdog

By Jamie Mann for The Ferret

ENVIRONMENTAL rule breaking in Argyll's commercial forests has polluted protected lochs, including one home to Scotland's rarest freshwater fish, and put drinking water supplies at risk, the nation's green watchdog has found. Inspections by the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) found foresters failing to protect waterways from pollution, leaving behind hundreds of plastic tree guards and burning, burying or abandoning waste.

Both "public and private drinking water supplies continue to be put at risk" from forestry operations, Sepa reported.

Of the 47 sites assessed between November 2022 and October 2023, 25 were compliant with water protection rules and forestry standards, while 22 were non-compliant. The results were "extremely disappointing for the sector", Sepa said.

The Ferret obtained the report, its data and warning letters sent to polluters, via a freedom of information (FOI) response from Sepa. An FOI from Scottish Forestry, which is responsible for regulation, confirmed that half of the rule-breaking sites are owned by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS), which manages around a third of Scotland's forests on behalf of the public. The other half were run by private operators.

Sepa sent warning letters to FLS after it polluted Loch Eck, which is home to Scotland's rarest freshwater fish, the powan, and Lussa Loch, a protected site.

A forestry think tank argued that FLS was setting a poor example for the industry, while opposition MSPs called on ministers to explain the actions of the Scottish Government agency and install "robust penalties" for rulebreakers.

FLS claimed the "vast majority" of its operations met official regulations. It faced "challenges in Argyll", but was working with Sepa to improve practices. Sepa said there had been a "positive response" to its inspections from the industry, and that its study did not mean rule breaking is widespread.

Sepa launched a series of arranged and unannounced inspections following "several forestry related environmental incidents" in Argyll – one of Scotland's biggest regions and a centre of industrial forestry.

It wanted to assess whether forestry operations were complying with Scotland's water protection regulations and the UK Forestry Standard, which promotes sustainable forestry. Nearly half of the 47 surveyed sites were not.

Failures included poor or inadequate civil engineering, and inappropriate management and storage of water and waste. This caused or risked pollution, flooding, erosion, and the blocking of waterways used by migrating fish.

At a quarry managed by FLS, near Loch Bealach Ghearran, Sepa found waste that had been partially burnt and buried at the site's entrance.

At other sites, operators, including FLS, ignored guidance to create a five-metre buffer zone to stop conifers from polluting water, instead planting the trees within a metre of



waterways. Conifers can harm water quality, fish and other aquatic life by leaking chemicals, blocking light, and acidifying water with the needles they drop.

FLS flouted buffer zones at Doig's Grave, near Lussa Loch, and at River Eachaig – the latter of which is home to sea trout. In 2021, Marine Scotland found sea trout had reached record low numbers, although an 11% rise was recorded the following year.

Sepa's report added that large stacks of timber had been left on roadsides for so long that they "may meet the legal definition of waste". Its data shows that all abandoned log stacks were found on FLS sites.

"We have raised these findings in good faith with the sector and Scottish Forestry in the hope that companies and regulators now focus on ensuring that standards improve such that all forestry work complies fully with the industry standard for environmental excellence," Sepa's report said.

Sustainable forestry practices are key to delivering aims and objectives set out in Sepa's river basin management plan, which aims for 92% of waterways to be in 'good' or better condition by 2027.

While Sepa's Argyll probe found 47% of forestry sites to be complying with environmental standards, a similar study in the south of Scotland in 2014-15 found a compliance rate of 74%. Forestry guidance was then updated and sent out to foresters, while workshops were held across Scotland to improve practices. A follow up "snapshot" study in 2019 found a 90% compliance rate.

The Argyll assessments showed "poor compliance despite the abundance of improved information, improved communication, and shared learning", Sepa said. It was due to launch further inspections and enforcement

actions, send out improved guidance, and arrange workshops, the report added.

In January, Forest Policy Group, a Scottish think tank, ran a 'Better Forestry' conference in Perthshire to discuss ways to improve woodland management. Participants "were clear that FLS should be acting as an exemplar for the sector," said the think tank's Gordon Gray Stephens.

However, the Argyll report showed that "they have some way to go before this can be a reality," Stephens claimed. His organisation has "long been of the view that the regulator has had insufficient resources to properly oversee many aspects of forestry, and this report is evidence that this is the case."

He added: "What arrangements have and Sepa made to revisit Argyll, or to inspect forestry operations elsewhere, to ensure that basic standards are met?"

Green MSP Ariane Burgess said: "This is extremely concerning and will worry a lot of people in the area. Our forests are iconic and have a really important role to play in creating more sustainable communities, but that can't happen when the rules are being flouted or ignored."

"When we support our natural world, it supports us. All of us benefit from clean waters and thriving nature. There must be enforcement and robust penalties for landowners and managers who are putting our nature and wellbeing at risk."

Scottish Liberal Democrat climate emergency spokesperson Liam McArthur MSP said: "People would rightly expect the highest standards of care and maintenance from a Scottish Government body."

"Ministers should explain how their practices can sit properly alongside commitments to promote biodiversity, keep our waters clean and ensure our countryside is

pristine.”

FLS said that the “vast majority” of its operations across the country met regulations and official forestry standards.

“While we always strive towards best practice, the challenges in Argyll have on occasion been extremely taxing and our response has been found wanting, such that Sepa has advised on improvements to a few operations, and issued us with two formal warnings, which we immediately acted upon,” said a spokesperson.

“Thanks to this ongoing work we are adapting and improving the training and guidance we give staff and tightening up our contract documents to improve, achieve and maintain higher standards of operational

planning and delivery.”

Scottish Forestry highlighted that when it grants permission for trees to be felled, it does not supervise the operations, but expects operators “to comply with all legislation and guidance”.

“Where significant non-compliance arises we can require corrective actions and where necessary, suspend or revoke permissions,” said a spokesperson. “Ensuring all forestry work is carried out to the correct standard to protect the environment is extremely important and we work with colleagues in Sepa and the wider forestry sector on this compliance work.”

Eilidh Johnston, senior manager, water, industry and rural economy at Sepa, said: “Scotland’s woodlands play a nationally

significant role in contributing to our environmental, economic and social wellbeing, including our fight against the twin climate and nature emergencies.”

She added: “We work closely with public, private and third sector interests on environmental performance and areas of focus, including in Argyll where a small, randomly selected programme of inspections highlighted points for improvement.

“We’re pleased with the positive response from sector interests and have continued to engage across a series of workshops in 2023 and 2024. There is no suggestion that small scale sampling is indicative of wider patterns, locally or more broadly.”

Tree Planting Scheme Popular With Celebrities Made Climate Change Worse

By Mark Howarth For The Scottish Mail On Sunday

A scheme that allowed celebrities and other investors to get tax breaks by planting trees has resulted in millions of tons of carbon being released into the atmosphere, experts claim. Television host Terry Wogan and pop stars Phil Collins and Cliff Richard were among those who saved a fortune by planting conifers on peatland they bought in the far north of Scotland.

However, the UK Government scheme disturbed ancient bogs in the Flow Country of Caithness and Sutherland that had locked up carbon for millennia.

Now scientists have calculated that the project, which ran throughout the 1980s and ended in 1993, has likely contributed to climate change by releasing huge amounts of greenhouse gases.

The study, which has yet to be peer-reviewed, was led by Leeds University expert Tom Sloan, in collaboration with the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, York and the Highlands & Islands plus Midlothian-based Forest Research.

Scientists who compared soil samples from eight Flow Country plantations estimated there had been a net loss of carbon at six sites and a net gain at two.

The researchers stated: ‘In the UK, tax incentives contributed to the rapid and extensive afforestation of naturally treeless, deep peatlands that were otherwise not financially attractive for forestry and typically not planted commercially.’

The tax incentive was introduced by Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative government to accelerate tree-planting and job-creation in rural areas. It allowed taxpayers on the highest rate of PAYE, then standing at 60%, to claim capital allowances on creating forests, which attracted grants too. They would then sell the mature woods into state ownership, pocketing a tax-free profit as well.

One area used was the Flow Country, a vast expanse of unspoilt peatland believed to be a store for 400 million tons of carbon. A sixth of it,



some 172,000 acres, was drained and planted.

Snooker world champions Steve Davis and Alex Higgins were among those to have invested. MP Michael Forsyth, later Scottish Secretary, complained in the Commons in 1987 that his party’s policy had inadvertently created ‘a new generation and class of absentee landlords, consisting of pop stars [and] snooker players’.

After the National Audit Office questioned whether the taxpayer was getting value for money, the incentive was scrapped.

Terry Wogan sank £115,000 into the scheme in 1985, buying 1,430 acres of Flow Country peatland. He sold his three plots a decade later, making a profit of around £57,000 – the only part of the dealings on which he had

to pay tax.

The Royal Society of Edinburgh recently published a report into Scottish forestry policy, calling for a review of subsidies.

Professor Ian Wall, chair of the inquiry, said: “Tree-planting on the Flow Country was the result of landowners rushing to harvest substantial tax benefits leading to clear damage to the area’s biodiversity and, as this research identifies, a net increase in carbon in the atmosphere. Woodland on deep peats needs to be removed, in the Flow Country and elsewhere, and restoration work undertaken.”

Scottish Forestry said modern planting is “carefully and thoroughly assessed against tight environmental regulations”.

Twelve Trees by Daniel Lewis Review – a Global Arboreal Odyssey

By Josie Glausiusz for The Guardian

TEN fathoms deep below the Gulf of Mexico and several miles off the coast of Alabama lies a submerged cypress forest sprouting with sea anemones. More than 60,000 years old, the cypress trees, some of them 6ft in diameter, were buried in sediments for millennia before they were exposed in 2004 when waves driven by Hurricane Ivan scoured the sea floor.

“Although the trees were dead, they were still standing in place,” writes Daniel Lewis in his global arboreal odyssey, *Twelve Trees*. Cypress samples brought to the surface could offer clues to the effects of climate on wood from that long-ago era, he explains, but soon after the discovery of the watery forest, salvage companies sought permits to dig up the ancient logs and turn them into furniture.

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“Although the trees were dead, they were still standing in place,” writes Daniel Lewis in his global arboreal odyssey, *Twelve Trees*. Cypress samples brought to the surface could offer clues to the effects of climate on wood from that long-ago era, he explains, but soon after the discovery of the watery forest, salvage companies sought permits to dig up the ancient logs and turn them into furniture.

For much of humanity’s history, trees have been perceived as wondrous beings: we admire them, revere them and conjure dryads from their innards. However, for corporations they’re commodities: a source of timber, rubber, fuel, toilet paper, and the absorbent fluff found inside nappies. They’re also sources of food, medicine, shade and vital habitat for birds, insects and small mammals, as well as lichens, mosses, and ferns.

Most importantly, global forests absorb approximately 7.6bn tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, sequestering it in their roots, leaves, branches and trunks. A recent paper in *Nature* suggests that restoring and protecting fragmented forests could, over time, remove an additional 226 gigatonnes of planet-heating carbon (830 gigatonnes of CO₂) from the atmosphere. Yet forests burn at a rate of 22,000 sq ft (2,000m²) per minute in the Amazon, Lewis writes; in Central Africa, 10m acres (4m hectares) of trees disappear every year.

Lewis, an environmental historian at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, considers our urge to both conserve and consume. His journey takes him around the world to ponder the beauty of 12 tree species,



*Rooted in time ... the General Sherman tree, Sequoia National Park, California.
Photograph: Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times/Getty Images*

mostly the magnificent and often vulnerable, including redwood, sandalwood, baobab and ebony (though humble bonsai trees get a brief nod).

In Cameroon, for example, Lewis contemplates the Central African forest ebony, *Diospyros crassiflora*. Its jet-black heartwood is highly prized, used to craft piano keys, guitars, door knobs and pool cues. Ebony faces threats including illegal logging and conversion of forests into grazing land or palm oil and rubber plantations. Lewis highlights an initiative to transform the growth and harvesting of ebony in Cameroon, led by Taylor Guitars, supplier to – yes – Taylor Swift.

In 2011, Taylor Guitars co-founder Bob Taylor bought a dilapidated ebony mill in Cameroon’s capital, Yaoundé and refurbished it to supply wood for his instruments. Five years later, the company partnered with the Congo Basin Institute in Yaoundé to develop ebony tree nurseries and a community-based planting programme. The company also replants ebony and fruit trees that buffer Cameroon’s Dja reserve, a Unesco world heritage site. In 2022, Lewis reports, 27,810 trees were planted.

Trees don’t live in isolation: they are important habitats for myriad plants and animals. *Sequoia sempervirens*, the redwood that grows in a band along the Pacific coast of North America, can reach heights of more than 100m. High in its canopy are soil pockets that support crickets, beetles, molluscs, earthworms

and amphibians, including a wandering, skydiving salamander, *Aneides vagrans*.

Coast redwoods can live for 2,000 years. The olive tree, though rather shorter, can also reach an impressive age: one tree in the “Noah” olive grove in Bchaaleh (northern Lebanon) was recently carbon-dated to more than 1,000 years old.

Although Lewis sometimes veers into extraneous detail, he charms with occasional flights of ecstasy, as when he encounters the mighty ceiba tree, *Ceiba pentandra*, in Manú national park, a haven of terrestrial biodiversity in south-western Peru – “the most gigantic tree I have ever seen ... with enormous buttress roots radiating out in the all directions” He touches the rough bark, circumnavigates the tree, communes with it, climbs into its branches, “trying to bring its world more fully into my own”.

Many of us would like more trees in our world. They represent stability and continuity and, as Lewis notes, forests “feed the planet through a profusion of fruits, vegetables, nuts, spices and other edibles”. They offer splendour, cooling and coherence and, he says, “they need to have their own rights, and be accorded their own dignity”.

Twelve Trees: And What They Tell Us About Our Past, Present and Future by Daniel Lewis is published by Simon & Schuster (£22).

Saving Our Trees and Woodland

THERE appears to be an ever increasing conflict between BMX riders and those who love the countryside. In particular, Wildlife trust bosses are fighting an ever-increasing number of selfish people (and not only youngsters) who believe that they have a right to destroy our natural habitats so that they can carry out “bike stunts”.

A disturbing report by Catherine Musgrove for the Lancashire Post revealed that BMX riders are being blamed for damage to a Lancashire wildlife reserve.

Bosses at Lancashire Wildlife Trust say an area of wildflower meadow Cross Hill Quarry nature reserve near Clitheroe has been dug up to create jumps for mountain bikes, “seriously damaging” the important habitat.

Kim Coverdale, East Lancashire Reserves Officer at the Trust said: “The quarry floor at Cross Hill Quarry is one of the most important areas on the site for wildflowers.

“In fact just next to the damaged area an orchid was in flower, and countless other important species associated with these limestone grasslands may have been lost.

“We very much want people to be able to visit and enjoy the nature reserve, but to do so responsibly. The Wildlife Trust and our amazing volunteers work really hard to look after this wonderful place, so to see this damage is really disappointing.”

The nature reserve at Cross Hill Quarry includes areas of both woodland and meadow, hilled with special species that flourish on the limestone bedrock.

The wildflower meadows are filled with crosswort, quaking grass, lady's bedstraw and of course orchids such as common twayblade, bee and marsh orchids and common spotted orchids. These in turn support numerous wonderful pollinators such as hoverflies and bees.



Cross Hill Quarry is well-known for its rich insect population. The diverse habitats support birds such as nuthatches, blackcaps, willow warblers, blue tits and great tits. Kestrels are often seen hovering over the open areas. As night falls Daubenton's bats skim insects from the surface of the nearby River Ribble, and pipistrelle and noctule bats hunt along the reserve's woodland edge and out in the open areas of the reserve.

Kim added: “Whilst making a few small jumps may seem harmless it can actually have a really significant effect on species right across the nature reserve, on top of damaging this precious wildflower meadow. Nationally, we have seen a 97% decrease in our wildflower meadows since the 1930's so it really is important that we treasure and protect these beautiful habitats and protect the diversity.

“Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act

1981, it is unlawful to uproot any wild plant without permission from the landowner or occupier, and whilst we have no desire to go to such lengths, we just appeal to people to love and care for our nature reserves.”

SUCH matters aren't always that clear cut though. A Dad has hit back at a housing association that has sealed off a woodland after children were using it as bike park.

Bron Afon housing association branded the use of the ancient woodland for riding bikes as vandalism and “anti-social behaviour”, but Robin Willis said youngsters had cleared Garw Wood, which runs between homes in a densely populated area of Croesyceiliog, in Cwmbran, of rubbish so they could use it for riding their bikes

He said: “It was overgrown and full of brambles and has been for decades and a group of local kids have gone in over the last three weekends and cleared it and made a little bike track, it's only 200 or 300 yards.

“The area was overgrown and people have used it for a shortcut and the boys have cleared rubbish out of there. They had four black bags of rubbish out of there and there were cans, glass and plastic bottles.”

Mr Willis, who lives close to the woodland, said his children, aged nine and ten, could hear the boys riding their bikes and he was happy for them to join with them. “My boys heard them playing over the fence and they were all well-mannered boys. I got speaking to them, realised I knew their parents and I had no problem with my boys playing with them.”

Mr Willis said he also cooked food for all the boys on Sunday and has a photograph showing a black bin bag laden with rubbish, hanging from a den made with fallen branches.

Bron Afon placed metal fencing at the entrance to Garw Wood last month after it said it had been contacted by “concerned local residents' groups” on Monday, June 24 and said “severe damage” had been caused as bark had been removed from some mature trees. It said the trees may never recover as a result.

It also said it was concerned about the use of area for riding bikes and the creation of ramps.

It said while the ramps may not “inherently harm the woodland associated activities and lack of proper planning can lead to negative consequences”. That includes damage to trees and soil disturbance if creating ramps involves digging up earth that could disturb the “delicate eco system of the ancient woodland” and destroy flowers including bluebells.

It also said “increased human activity can disturb wildlife habitats, scare away animals, and disrupt natural processes”.

Bron Afon claimed its grounds maintenance team cleared “large amounts of litter (bottle, cans and other litter)” from Garw Wood this week and said there was “no evidence of any being cleared”.

It also said it has been maintaining the area. A spokesman said: “The woodland is part of a regular inspection regime carried out by Bron Afon and regular woodland management has



been carried out by Bron Afon and local resident groups over the past five to 10 years to encourage natural regeneration and growth of wild flowers, especially the bluebells.”

So what do you think. Is an angry father trying to “protect” a play space for bike-riding youngsters .. free of charge ... or is a housing association trying to protect and conserve ancient woodland?

Answers on a postcard please to ?????

I was pleased to read an article by PA News Agency published on the Lowestoft Journal website reporting that firefighters are urging the new government to prepare the country for the impact of rising temperatures following June's heatwave.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) said there had been wildfires across much of the country, warning that the fire and rescue service was “fragmented, overstretched and chronically underfunded.”

The union called for urgent investment to prevent a repeat of fires in the summer of 2022, when it claimed fire and rescue services were pushed to breaking point.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, said: “An incoming Labour government will need to wake up to the harsh reality of the climate emergency. We need urgent decarbonisation to avert the worst dangers of climate collapse, but we also need to adapt. Firefighters are battling the effects of soaring temperatures, but a decade of brutal cuts has left the UK unprepared.

“The fire and rescue service is fragmented, overstretched and chronically underfunded. Two years ago, UK firefighters were pushed to breaking point responding to raging wildfires without enough resources. We must not see a repeat of this chaos.

“The number of extreme weather events will only continue to rise, placing even more pressure on our overstretched fire service. “Failing to invest in the fire service means failing to protect homes and lives from climate disasters.”

LYDIA CHANTLER-HICKS reported for the Evening Standard that thirteen people have been arrested by Greek authorities after fireworks launched from a yacht allegedly sparked a forest fire on the island of Hydra.

Firefighters brought the blaze, which burned part of the island's only pine forest in the remote area of Bisti under control early on June 28.

Thirteen yacht crew members and passengers appeared before a prosecutor having been arrested at a marina in the Athens area.

Hydra, south-west of Athens in the Saronic Gulf, is popular among foreign visitors and those travelling on yachts.

"We are outraged," Hydra Mayor George Koukoudakis told state TV. "If it's true, it is something that really saddens me."

Hundreds of firefighters struggled to contain wildfires fanned by gale force winds on two Greek islands and in southern parts of the country's mainland, as authorities warned many regions face a high risk of new blazes.

More than 30 firefighters backed by two aircraft and five helicopters were battling a wildfire burning on the island of Andros in the Aegean, away from tourist resorts, where four communities were evacuated as a precaution.

"More firefighters (are) expected on the island later in the day," a fire services official told Reuters, adding there were no reports of damage or injuries.

Wildfires are common in Greece but they have become more devastating in recent years amid hotter and drier summers that scientists link to climate change.

A wildfire near Athens last month forced dozens to flee their homes, which authorities said they believed was the result of arson as well as the hot, dry conditions.

Meteorologists say the latest fires are the first time that the country has experienced "hot-dry-windy" conditions so early in the summer.

"I can't remember another year facing such conditions so early, in early and mid-June," meteorologist Thodoris Giannaros told state TV.

On June 28, a 55-year-old man died in hospital after being injured in a blaze in the region of Ilia on Greece's Peloponnese peninsula, as several fires burned on Greece's southern tip.

Several hundred firefighters have been deployed to battle more than 70 forest fires across the country since June 28. High winds and hot temperatures extended the risk into June 30, the fire service said.

Earlier on June 29, firefighters tamed a forest fire on the island of Salamina, in the Saronic Gulf west of Athens, and another about 30km east of the capital.

After forest fires last year forced 19,000 people to flee the island of Rhodes and killed 20 in the northern mainland, Greece has scaled up its preparations this year by hiring more staff and stepping up training.

HENRY MARTIN, Freelance Reporter for The Sun, reported that a woman has revealed how strangers chopped down a beautiful historic willow tree in her front garden without her permission.

Consultant psychotherapist Aisha Ali, 50, said she was "profoundly heartbroken and outraged" by the felling, which took place while she was away from her Norfolk home on July 2.

The tree, which had stood for more than 100 years, was allegedly destroyed by men who arrived with a flatbed truck and earthmover and trespassed on Ms Ali's property.

The men were said to have left the site at

Walpole Highway, near King's Lynn, after a neighbour told them Ms Ali was calling the police, the Eastern Daily Press reports.

It is claimed that the men initially claimed they were from a nearby farm before saying they had permission from Ms Ali's parents, who have been dead for 10 years.

They are also believed to have said they were working for "highway management" and were concerned about protecting valuable farm equipment from harm.

One local said: "I've lived here 30 years and it's never caused a problem."

After the felling, Ms Ali said: "I am profoundly heartbroken and outraged by the mindless destruction of the willow tree on my property. This majestic tree, which had stood for over a century, was not just a part of my landscape but a living testament to local history and natural heritage."

Registration numbers allegedly belonging to vehicles involved have been sent to police.

A Norfolk Police spokesman said: "Police are investigating an incident of criminal damage in Walpole Highway. An unknown person is believed to have cut down a tree at a property on West Drove South during the day on Tuesday 2 July 2024 between 1-2pm. If anyone has any information please contact us quoting crime reference 36/46190/24."

WRITING for Wales Online, Abbie Wightwick reported that a landowner who illegally felled eight hectares of native woodland in one of Wales' most beautiful natural areas has been convicted in court. Jeff Lane will have to pay more than £12,000 following the court case - however it is a fraction of the nearly £80,000 he's estimated to have made from his crime.

Lane felled the trees in Gower, Swansea, which is an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in Wales. He was prosecuted under forestry legislation by Natural Resources Wales and, in a UK legal first, was issued with a confiscation order for £11,280 under the Proceeds of Crime Act as well as a fine of £1,500.

However it is a fraction of the £78,64.68 that NRW estimated he had made from his crimes. Natural Resources Wales officers said it was one of the worst offences of illegal felling they had seen for 30 years.

Lane illegally felled trees covering an area equivalent to 12 football pitches within the Gower Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty near Swansea between April 2019 and September 2020, without the appropriate licence. Having previously been found guilty of forestry offences at Swansea Magistrates court in April 2022, the landowner was slapped with the confiscation order and fine by the judge.

Lane's offences relate to felling without a licence and for noncompliance with an enforcement to replant those trees. He Lane appealed the April 2022 conviction and was tried again in November 2022 where he was found guilty again.

The application for a confiscation order under the POCA was made on June 14 2024 at Merthyr Tydfil Crown Court by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), who also prosecuted Mr Lane for the forestry offences. The Judge agreed with the NRW's claim that Lane had benefited financially to the tune of £78,64.68 from his crimes.

However, the Judge made a confiscation order which now orders Lane to pay £11,280 as his available amount.

Native and wet woodland are a priority habitat listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act. Many trees were uprooted



and damaged to an extent where they are unlikely to regenerate.

Nick Fackrell, Forest Regulation Senior Officer for Natural Resources Wales said: "We have a legal duty to protect the natural environment in Wales and that includes ensuring compliance with forestry regulations. We welcome the outcome and hope this sends a clear message that we won't hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action to protect wildlife and the environment."

"Using the Proceeds of Crime Act to punish illegal felling is a bold step that we hope will make people think twice before acting recklessly against the environment. We cannot take our woodlands for granted. Felling licences are part of the system we have in place so we can manage our trees and woodlands effectively and sustainably, protecting them and making sure they continue to benefit us all now, and into the future."

"Actions like these undermine the work of farmers, foresters and land managers working legally and sustainably to look after our wildlife and countryside, grow our food and produce our timber."

THE Woodland Trust plans to carry out the extensive work at South Park near Prudhoe, prompted by *Phytophthora ramorum*, a disease caused by an algae-like organism that can easily spread between tree plantations, particularly larch trees, but does not affect humans.

The Forestry Commission issued a Statutory Plant Health Notice to The Woodland Trust with an order to fell all affected trees.

Infected trees must be felled and destroyed to prevent further spread of the disease.

John Wilson, site manager for The Woodland Trust, said: "It is sad that we have to remove the trees but it is a legal requirement to stop disease spreading."

"South Park is a wonderful local attraction and we are looking forward to improving it further over the coming months. Once the trees have been removed we will be planting new native broadleaved trees over the coming tree planting season."

"Also the ground flora in parts is shaded out under the larch trees and especially rhododendron so with its removal it will give native plants a chance to flourish once more."

ANDY GIDDINGS reported for BBC News, West Midlands, that more than 2,000 people have signed an online petition calling for a halt to the felling of trees alongside a main road.

Protests have also been staged against the work alongside the A38 in Bromsgrove.

The petition calls on Worcestershire County Council to stop the work and carry out a review while considering alternatives. The authority said the aim of the project, external was to reduce congestion and that any tree-felling would be kept to a minimum.

The online petition said the trees "play a



crucial role in maintaining air quality, providing habitats for endangered wildlife, and enhancing the beauty of our community".

As well as urging the council to carry out a review, it said it should consider plans to mitigate the environmental impact.

The campaigners said they had another 1,500 signatures on a paper petition.

The authority said the A38 "suffers from significant congestion leading to lengthy journey times and poor journey time reliability" and that tackling that congestion was a priority.

It said in order to carry out the work "there is a requirement to remove some trees," but that work would be kept to "an absolute minimum" and would be carried out by qualified and experienced ecologists and arboriculturists.

It also said all trees that are removed will be replaced on a 2 for 1 basis as close as possible from where they are removed.

The work will also involve improvements to footpaths and cycle routes.

ELEANOR BURLEIGH, digital reporter for Bucks Free Press reported that woman living in a 'less affluent' part of Marlow says landlord Red Kite has refused to cut back 'huge' trees which are leaving her in the cold and dark year-round.

Liz McFetridge, 43, believes her part of the pretty Buckinghamshire town is often overlooked by those charmed by its riverside vistas and well-maintained High Street.

Gunthorpe Road and Wiltshire Road, near Liz's small two-storey home, are less visible than other parts of Marlow, making them less crucial to its 'Best Kept Village' bid, and, to the 43-year-old's mind, an example of "people who are less affluent being ignored".

Liz, who has lived in Butler Court on Gunthorpe Estate, a community housing area owned by Red Kite, for six years with her two children, says the primary issue not being addressed by her landlord is the epidemic of "huge" trees "engulfing" people's homes.

She said: "We've had major problems growing anything in our garden because all the light is blocked. Branches keep coming down and blocking the gutters and we have to keep the lights on all year. It's always cold, too, which can be handy in the summer, but also means we get damp on the walls."

Her main concerns revolve around her children, aged six and nine, spending their early years in a cool, dark house with "sticks all over the garden and bird poo everywhere".

However, Red Kite has told her the trees



won't be reduced unless judged as "dangerous or damaging", a threshold Liz thinks is too high a bar to produce any meaningful preventative action.

"I'm only allowed to cut the branches that hang over into my garden, but if I do that, Red Kite hands the responsibility over to me for any danger posed by the remaining tree.

"Several of my neighbours feel the same way. We just want some of these trees to be topped off so the light can get through. I know it's not the biggest problem in the world but it's very frustrating to not be able to do anything about it."

Comparing the overgrown trees in her area to those in another of Red Kite's more central Marlow estates, Foxes Piece, the 43-year-old said she believes a discrepancy is down to pressure on the housing association to keep the image of "Marlow as people like it to be seen" intact.

"I don't know anywhere else in the town with the number of weeds we have here or the level of badly maintained paths. Getting any sort of change feels incredibly difficult."

Julie Gamble-Kemp, head of communications and brand at Red Kite, said: "The trees in this area are all mature and healthy and at their last inspections, carried out late last year, it was deemed that no work was required.

"Indeed, many of our tenants enjoy the trees and would be equally as upset if they were to be cut back or removed. We have recently carried out £1,500 of tree works at nearby) Marchant Court to cut two trees back from buildings.

"We have no plans to carry out further work at the moment, but if the tenant in question would like to contact us again with the details of the exact tree they are referring to, we will look into this at our next inspection."

WRITING for North Norfolk News, Dereham & Fakenham Reporter Danielle Champ reported that The National Trust plans to cut down 80% of the trees at a conservation area in North Norfolk in order to encourage growth of rare acid grassland.

The trees, which are mostly sycamore but also include black pine, turkey oak and other species, are currently situated on the land to the north of Friary Farm Caravan Park in Blakeney.

The purpose of the felling at Friary Hills is to "improve areas of grassland priority habitat," according to the application submitted to North Norfolk District Council.

Acid grassland can be found in areas with nutrient-poor, free-draining soil, characterised by grassy tussocks and bare ground.

Mark Watson, countryside manager for the National Trust, said: "We are seeking consent to carry out tree work at Friary Hills on the Norfolk coast to help restore an area of lowland acid grassland.

"This type of habitat is rare and classified as a priority habitat, its restoration has therefore been identified as important. We are proposing to remove a selection of non-native trees over the next two years, that will allow the grassland to recover.

"By improving the quality of this habitat, halting any decline, and removing competition from non-native species, we'll be creating a better balance to be able to support a diverse range of plants, invertebrates and birds, notably migrant birds flying in from the continent that will use this area to stop and rest," he said.

A determination deadline is expected for August 13.

TOM OAKLEY reported for BBC News, Nottingham, that Trees in a Nottinghamshire cemetery are at risk of being felled after vandals drilled holes and poured diesel into them.

Police launched an appeal after 12 lime trees in Manton Cemetery in Worksop were targeted. The trees, which are about 120 years old, have started to die and might have to be removed if they cannot be saved. The force said work would cause "significant disturbance" to nearby graves that date back hundreds of years.

A statement on West Bassetlaw Police's Facebook page added: "These historic trees, which are around 120 years old, have stood since the cemetery's opening and are vital to the site's heritage. The graves near these trees date back even further."

Police said the trees were targeted between the beginning of March until 6 June.

Bassetlaw District Council said the trees, which back on to houses in Forest Lane, will "probably" have to be felled.

Richard Bell, a tree officer for the council's park and open spaces team, said: "Somebody has drilled into 12 mature lime trees and poured some liquid into them. It's put the trees into decline, and it looks like they're going to die.

"I don't think they're going to come back; it's just a case of seeing what happens. They probably would need to get felled. They've approximately drilled in five inches and then poured the liquid into it.

"We will see how many of the lime trees die, and then we will determine how many will have to be replaced, but it will take a couple of generations before they can get up to a [similar] height."

It comes after five trees in the same area were damaged with an axe and a saw last year, the council said.



JASON HUGHES reported for the Swindon Advertiser that Wiltshire residents have been left "horrified" by "disgraceful" tree felling by the Ministry of Defence in an ancient woodland.

Public access to Avon Grove Wood, between Foxham and Lyneham, closed in December 2023 so the Ministry of Defence (MoD) could begin a programme of removing trees with ash dieback.

However, eight months later the public bridleway through the woods remains shut and residents have been critical of the extent of the tree felling that has taken place. They have formed the Avon Grove Wood Group to demand the public right of way is reinstated and a plan for the removal of trees made public.

A spokesperson said: "We were horrified by what we saw as we ventured into the area when it became clear that it was not reopening any time soon. The initial thinning out of ash trees has turned into environmental vandalism which cannot ever be restored in our lifetime and efforts to start replanting the woodland should be started as a matter of urgency.

"Paths are now undulating trench-like ditches and it is difficult to imagine what our abundant area of natural beauty once looked



like. There has been a disgraceful act of disregard for both the environment, and the conditions of the Forestry Commission licence."

The group says the area qualifies as ancient woodland because it has been continuously wooded since 1600.

Many residents of the surrounding villages regularly used the woods for walking their dogs. One of these walkers, Marie Fox, said the loss of the woodland had impacted villagers. She said: "Lots of use the woodland on a regular basis so it has been noticed and we aren't happy. It's a beautiful place, a little haven for wildlife, people are really concerned this has happened."

The MoD says the bridleway will be reinstated once tree felling is completed, alongside the installation of updated fitting pipes to the drainage culverts. It is hoped this will aid water movement across the woodland.

A spokesperson emphasised the felling is necessary to avoid the risk of branches falling and injuring members of the public.

They said: "We are felling trees affected by ash dieback close to the public bridleway due to the risk of branches falling and injuring members of the public. We will also take the opportunity to thin the woodland to allow trees more space and light to grow, which will promote more ground flora. Additionally, we will replace with native broadleaf species next winter, to provide more diversity of species and greater resilience against future pests and diseases."

FAMILY Coady-Stemp reported for BBC News, South East, that The future of four lime trees in a pedestrianised town centre is in the balance. The trees, in Church Street, Leatherhead, will have a "hard prune" to stop "slippery residue" falling on the surrounding pavements.

Surrey County Council held a consultation in February to get residents' views on replacing the trees.

Cutting the trees back is an interim measure



to prevent them being in full leaf over the summer, the authorities said.

Dave Farmer, owner of Surrey Hills Cycleworks, in Church Street, said the trees were not cut back enough to maintain the box shape which could help with the problem. He said the trees, planted after improvement works in 2017, were another example of councils "wasting people's money".

In a statement, the council said pruning would have been carried out anyway, but has been brought forward a couple of months.

It added: "Surrey County Council and Mole Valley District Council have considered taking this step to ensure that potentially slippery residue produced when the trees are in full leaf during the warmer months is not dropped onto the surrounding pavement."

Mole Valley could not confirm the cost of the trees, with the improvement works being a joint project between the councils and funding from other sources.

SOME people appear to believe they are above the law and certainly show no respect for it. So it is with the ongoing saga of Langley Beck, 55, over his illegal dumping on his 14-hectare plot in Boxley Woods, Kent, over 10 years.

Jimmy Nsubuga reported for Yahoo News that Maidstone Council has spent £43,000 of taxpayers' money pursuing landowner Langley Beck over his 14-hectare plot in Boxley Woods, north of Maidstone in Kent.



The local authority started enforcement action in 2014 after it found the land, located in an area of outstanding natural beauty, littered with broken vehicles and waste.

Beck, 55, was previously described as having a "hoarding disorder" in a parallel contempt of court case, for which he was given a suspended prison sentence.

He was due to be sentenced on 12 July after being convicted of breaching planning regulations. However, he turned up to the hearing at Maidstone Crown Court unrepresented by a solicitor and asked for a postponement.

Another hearing has been set, where Beck faces an unlimited financial fine.

The sentencing hearing had already been postponed twice. Once because of difficulties finding a courtroom and once because Beck had failed to show up.

Beck told the judge, Mr Recorder Fowler, that it was his intention to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights. Beck said he had suffered "21 years of persecution by those dirty, lying, sons of b*****s (the council)" and he described the hearing as "an invitation to a necktie party".

In a parallel case, in which Beck had appeared in the High Court for contempt of court, his defence had claimed that he was unfit to plead because he suffered from a "hoarding disorder". That was rejected at the High Court last April by Mr Justice Sweeting, and Beck was

convicted of contempt of court for failing to comply with a previous order to clear up the land and was given a four-month prison sentence suspended for two years.

Mr Recorder Fowler said he was prepared to give Beck five weeks to find legal representation. He said: "I am aware that there are certain psychiatric issues that would make it undesirable for Mr Beck to speak on his own behalf."

He told Beck: "I give you this one opportunity to get representation. But if you come back without representation, the case will proceed anyway. If you do not appear, a warrant will be issued for your arrest."

Beck has also been living in a temporary building on the plot without planning permission, it was said. He said he was unable to afford representation and was waiting on his application for universal credit to come through.

Scott Stemp, prosecuting, told the hearing that Beck had previously been represented at hearings by Irwin Mitchell solicitors but the firm has since withdrawn its services because it was not being paid.

Beck also owns 11 acres and a nearby cottage at Westfield Sole Farm in Harp Farm Road.

He was previously banned for life from keeping animals after locking up dogs in their own filth and failing to let ducks have water.

RORY BENNETT reported for MyLondon that A Hounslow bed and breakfast has been landed with a record fine after it felled six trees in a conservation area. Skylark Bed & Breakfast LLP, on Bath Road, has been fined £17,000 for the offence, with added costs making the total amount payable £23,186.50.

The six mature trees felled were found to be within the St Paul's Hounslow Conservation Area. The fine constitutes the largest fine for felling trees ever handed out in the borough.

It was Hounslow Council officers who first discovered the company's illegal activity, bringing it to prosecution. The council said that the 'trees were integral to the local landscape and played a vital role in maintaining the environmental and aesthetic quality of the area'.

Property owners wanting to make changes or work affecting trees in a conservation area must first have it approved by the council to ensure compliance with conservation regulations. Not doing so could result in prosecution.

Hounslow Council states that it owns and manages 383 tree species and over 124,000 trees throughout the borough. It says the court case and hefty fine is proof of its commitment to protecting the area's natural features.

Cllr Tom Bruce, Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Assets, Regeneration and Development, said: "We are deeply committed to protecting the natural and historic environment of our borough. Trees play a major role in mitigating against the effects of climate change and making our borough a greener and healthier place to live, which is why punishments for cutting down trees illegally are so important."

"The illegal felling of these trees was a serious offence that not only violated conservation area regulations but also deprived the community of important natural assets. This record fine sends a clear message that such actions will not be tolerated, and we will take decisive action to protect our green spaces. I want to thank our enforcement team for their diligent work in bringing this case to court."

Skylark B&B called the incident an "honest mistake" and apologised to all concerned. The company says it checked for TPOs on the trees

but found none, so proceeded, before being told of the Order.

It said it would work with the local council to improve the local area "as we have always done through our business practice by adding value to the area through hard work and investment."

AN example of what the government's new planning rules could mean was reported by Daniel Mumby for Somerset's CountyGaz. Protected trees on the edge of Somerset's county town could be torn down to allow more than 1,400 new homes to be built.

Persimmon Homes South West and Redrow Homes put forward joint plans in December 2021 for phase two of the Monkton Heathfield urban extension, which will deliver new homes at Taunton's north-eastern edge along with employment sites, a new school and a relief road.

A decision on the plans has been repeatedly delayed since September 2022, during which time the masterplan for the development has been altered through substantial negotiations between the developers and planning officers.

Under the most recent revisions to the masterplan, a number of trees which are covered by TPOs will have to be cut down to make room for the new relief road linking the new homes to the A38.

West Monkton Parish Council has stringently objected to this element and is calling on local residents to formally oppose the destruction of these trees, of which three are at least 100 years old.

The Orders do not prohibit any changes to the trees at all (such as removing branches if they are a threat to public safety), but they cannot be cut down, uprooted or otherwise damaged without written consent from the council's planning team.

In a statement published on their official Facebook page, West Monkton Parish Council said: "We need your help to stop the developers putting profits before our precious wildlife. Persimmon and Redrow Homes want to cut down up to eight mature trees as part of their proposed 1,450 home Monkton Heathfield phase two development.

"At least six of the trees have TPOs on them and three are mature oaks that must be more than 100 years old. The trees are important habitat for rare and endangered bats that the developers own ecological surveys have identified in the area. Please help to save these trees."

Phase two of the urban extension (now being marketed as Langaller Park) covers the land between the existing homes and the Walford Cross waste depot, along with a small amount of land to the north of Monkton Elm Garden Centre.

The most recent version of the plans envisions a total of 1,450 homes, nearly five hectares (around 12 acres) of employment land, a 'through' school (combining primary and secondary provision on the same site, a 'district centre' with local shops, a 'mobility hub' and a new eastern relief road to link up with the A38.

The green space within the site has been significantly rearranged, with the relief road being surrounded by new homes rather than skirting around the southern and eastern edges via a series of roundabouts.

While commercial space remains at the eastern edge of the site, the local centre and 'mobility hub' is concentrated around the western section. The layout of green space is designed to provide a buffer between the new homes and the M5, and to enable phosphate

mitigation to be delivered within the site to prevent any damage to the Somerset Levels and Moors.

Numerous local residents have already objected to the planned loss of trees on the council's official planning portal.

Stuart Goble, who lives on Mead Way, said: "I think it is disgraceful and shows a total lack of consideration for our dwindling natural environment, that Persimmon want to cut down trees with TPOs on them.

"Plans should be adjusted to ensure these valuable habitats are maintained within the Monkton Heathfield phase two planning framework for the benefit of all, rather than boosting profits for the developer by taking the easy approach and continuing to build low-quality housing in our village."

David Fowler, who lives on Bawler Road, concurred: "These trees play a crucial role in our local ecosystem, providing habitat for wildlife and improving air quality. The trees have been identified as either being suitable for, or currently containing bat roosts.

"Protected trees have significant aesthetic value to the community, contributing to the area's character and residents' quality of life. "The developers should be required to explore alternative designs that incorporate these protected trees, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development."

Gracienne Jackson, who lives on Knight Close, added: "These trees are protected for a reason – plenty of wildlife creatures and animals can be found there. Build around these trees. We still need to have these green open spaces for all ages to enjoy. Development must be allowed to happen but not at the expense of these trees and land."

The council's planning committee west (which makes decisions on major applications within the former Somerset West and Taunton area) is expected to make a decision on the Monkton Heathfield proposals by the late-autumn.

CAMERON ROY reported for The Daily Mail that a controversial housebuilder has faced another brush with the law after he was fined £20,000 for poisoning fish by polluting a 13-mile-long river in Wales.

Fiorenzo Sauro, 54, previously made headlines in 2019 when he was fined £300,000 for chopping down 70 protected trees, including one of Britain's first ever giant redwoods. The tradesman is the director of Enzo's Homes Ltd, which has been slapped with another fine for shoddy building work.

Environmental officers found his company polluted a tributary of the River Llwyd with silt while working at a site in Abbey Woods, Cwmbran. Silt can harm fish and other invertebrates, by clogging their gills and reducing light in the water.

They found that the pollution was caused by water run-off from the site which had been contaminated with silt, which is dust-like



material which has minerals that are larger than clay but smaller than sand.

The company had a warning letter after NRW raised concerns with Enzo's staff regarding the silt fences on site and their ability to cope with heavy rain.

Officers had also met with site managers from Enzo's Homes multiple times on mitigation measures needed to minimise the risk of polluting the Dowlais Brook, a tributary of the River Llwyd. However, on a site visit on January 12 last year, NRW officers found that overnight rainfall had completely overwhelmed the mitigation measures in place.

Although some attempts had been made to improve the mitigation measures - concerns remained on the build-up of silt behind the fences and how it would cope with more rainfall.

That month, NRW officers collected water samples from the river adjacent to the building site which showed high levels of suspended solids - small solid particles which remain in suspension in water.

Enzo's Homes Limited pleaded guilty at Cwmbran Magistrates' Court to causing an illegal water discharge activity under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. The company was fined £20,000, ordered to pay a £2,000 victim surcharge and NRW costs of £7,389.42.



Alastair Krzyzosiak, environment officer for NRW, said: "The construction industry has a duty of care to the communities in which they operate, to ensure the correct controls and safeguards are in place in order to prevent incidents such as these occurring. If construction companies plan properly, even during periods of very heavy rain, there should be no ecological impact.

"I hope this fine will send out a clear message that environmental legislation is to be taken seriously. We will not hesitate to take appropriate action against those who disregard regulations and jeopardise the natural environment we all know and love."

The fine for river pollution comes five years after Sauro paid for 70 protected trees to be felled to make way for new homes at a site in the Penllergaer Estate, Swansea, south Wales. Among the trees to be chopped down was a 90ft redwood tree which was planted in the area in 1842 - ten years before redwood seeds are credited with being brought to Britain from America.

A court at the time heard the towering tree was estimated to be worth more than £66,000 but, in reality, it was 'irreplaceable'.

Mr Sauro and his company were originally ordered to stump up a fine totalling £300,000 by a district judge in Swansea, but the company boss appealed against the fine and said the redwood "was never meant to come down" and the felling was "an accident".

An appeal hearing at Swansea Crown Court ruled in 2021 that Mr Sauro and his company

must instead pay £100,000.

Mr Sauro said at the time: "The whole matter had an effect on the company's reputation. We had abuse on social media, on email, by letters, we had threats". He added that there was "no financial gain" from chopping down the historic tree.

The court heard Mr Sauro had visited the site with a tree consultant in August of 2018 to mark protected trees with spray paint. He said the trees had already been marked with a silver tag as a "belt and braces" way of showing which ones should not be felled.

The company boss told the court that any tree that did not need to be preserved was then marked with a red cross, but he was then told the following morning that there had been a "balls up" and he needed to get to the site.

The court heard Mr Sauro arrived on site and was told by contractor Arwyn Morgan: "The tree had dieback on it and it had to come down and it was not marked".

Mr Sauro said: "It was clear the tree protection plan showed the redwood was to be retained. Anyone who saw the tree protection plan would know this was never meant to come down".

Mr Morgan, 50, a self-employed contractor felled the 90ft tree to make way for the new houses. He was previously fined £120,000 after pleading guilty to contravening tree preservation regulations, but that fine has now been reduced to £4,000 on appeal.

The redwood tree was planted in 1842 by keen botanist John Dillwyn Llewelyn who imported trees from all over the world.

Swansea council received an anonymous phone call informing them the trees had been felled.

Judge Clee, sitting in the appeal hearing at Swansea Crown Court in 2021, said Mr Sauro had failed to follow a tree protection plan and failed to appoint a specialist to oversee the felling as he had been advised to do.

The judge said he was satisfied on the evidence he had heard that there was no financial advantage to felling the trees.

However, they had been destroyed not due to a mistake but due to negligence on the part of Mr Sauro and site manager Carl Anderson.

WRITING for BBC News, South West, Eve Watson reported that a giant redwood tree in Exeter believed to be more than 100 years old will have to be felled after deteriorating, the city council has said.

The tree is in the Pincus Gardens allotments and Exeter City Council said it will have to be brought down for safety reasons.

The council's tree experts confirmed the tree, which is about 23m (75.46 ft) tall and a descendant of the giant redwood trees in California, cannot be saved and 95% of the foliage had turned brown.

Ruth Williams, the council's lead councillor for city management, said it was "beyond saving" and once it had been felled the council will "consider planting another tree of a species more suited to the allotment's location".

Experts said the tree's root system had been impaired and there is also some historical fire damage around its base.

Ms Williams said: "No-one likes to cut trees down, especially a tree as iconic as this one, so loved by many local residents, but unfortunately this one is beyond saving and will need to be taken down to be made safe."

Felling is likely to take place before the end of the year, subject to planning consent, required because the tree is in a conservation

area. The council said it intends to dismantle the tree by aerial ascent and rigging, as there is no access for a crane or mobile elevated work platform.

The tree is thought to come from a shipment of seed collected from the Calaveras Grove in California which arrived in England in December 1853. The seed from this batch was widely distributed throughout Europe.

The council manages giant redwoods in Exeter and there are four young ones that were planted in Pincus gardens in 2011.

ANDREW BATT reported for Wokingham Today that permission has been refused for work to be performed on two protected trees. An application was made by a home owner in Evendons Lane to reduce the height and overhang of the sycamore and lime trees to suitable growth points.

The reasons given were that the trees affect the sunlight that we get in the garden, the amount of debris and sap that falls from the tree affects the ability to use the garden, and concerns that large pieces of the trees could fall and hurt someone.

In its letter refusing permission for the work, Wokingham Borough Council said: "When looking to undertake works to a protected tree, it is the responsibility of the applicant to supply adequate proof with the three protection order application, in the form of written arboricultural advice or other diagnostic information from an appropriate expert.

"To date, no detailed arboricultural information has been submitted to demonstrate that the tree is dangerous or diseased or that the work is in the interests of health and safety.

"The proposed height reduction is considered major pruning works, and causes permanent harm to the trees' health. The proposed reductions would create many pruning cuts throughout the canopy of each tree, which would act as entry points for decay fungi."

It added there are many benefits to trees and particular trees in the urban landscape.

"Trees absorb carbon dioxide, improve air quality, reduce water run-off and flooding, provide shade and shelter to reduce urban temperatures, create wildlife habitats and reduce noise.

"There are also aesthetic benefits from trees which make our environment more enjoyable as trees contribute to local character, make up a valued part of the historic environment, enhance privacy and add greenery and colour which collectively help to contribute to better mental and physical health.

"Benefits from trees increase correspondingly with the size of the tree. Fuller canopied specimens which grow large will have a far greater environmental and urban landscape value than a smaller tree, or a potentially large-growing tree which is maintained in a smaller size.

"For this reason, urban trees in the Borough will be protected from inappropriate pruning works, and allowed to grow their full potential size where it is practical and reasonable for them to do so.

"The Council has concluded that the proposed works in the application would be excessive and harmful to the health and wider amenity of the trees. No evidence has been submitted to demonstrate the works are necessary for health and safety reasons."

HAMISH BAILEY reported for the Bournemouth Daily Echo that a Bournemouth couple has called on

the council to cut down a large oak tree which they say has begun to crack their wall.

Christine Flood, 66, and Colin Flood, 73, have reached breaking point after spending the last 30 years calling for BCP Council to cut down a large oak tree that hangs over their garden.

After growing exponentially since they first moved in, the couple has claimed the roots of the oak have begun to crack a back wall while costing them hundreds of pounds in maintenance.

Christine said: "If the tree was over in the field opposite it would be beautiful but it's stuck here because no one has planted it and it's not the right space. If you look at other oak trees, they're huge so this is going to keep getting bigger and bigger."

Despite efforts to contact the council, Colin and Christine said little communication has been had between the parties over 30 years.

Although the tree was trimmed back, the couple say this just made the issue worse as the tree just grew back stronger.

Colin said: "They trimmed it once and it just made it grow more. It's now starting to lean and the ground can't support it much more because the ground is all silver sand. It will collapse eventually."

He said there were three other oak trees that were also growing in the area which were quickly removed due to fears they would affect the foundations of the house. He now hopes the council can take similarly quick action in removing this tree before it's too late.

Councillor Andy Hadley, portfolio holder for climate response, environment and energy at BCP Council, said: "Our arboriculture team closely monitors the condition of the oak tree in question. It is also maintained on a regular basis as part of this process. Currently, we have no intentions to fell this tree.

"Oaks are a haven for 2,300 wildlife species and contribute significantly to the local ecosystem as well as the broader environment."

The council added it is not believed the tree is under a TPO.

RYAN SMITH reported for the Ledbury Reporter that Herefordshire Council has received a report from a concerned resident after she claimed she saw a member of the public removing wood from trees in woods near the local railway station.

The authority will now be sending people to the area to ensure there is no unauthorised tree removal taking place.

Nature lover Amber Astron-Christo, who said she had caught people hacking trees, contacted the Reporter expressing her worry about the situation and confusion as to how many people were doing this.

She claimed that several weeks ago when walking to the train station, she found an elderly man cutting down a silver birch tree in the woods along the old railway track.

She added when she approached him, he claimed he was cutting it for firewood and it was a 'dead tree' and the man's claims were 'clearly untrue' as the wood and tree stump showed her that the tree was 'very much alive.'

She said: "He seemed organised with a powered saw and a trolley to transport the logs. I saw him on two other occasions and took photographs of the damage."

Over many weeks, she has continued to see several more instances of numerous trees being chopped or parts hacked away. She has taken photographs showing several trees with branches cut off, others where only a tree trunk remains and, in some cases, the entire tree has been chopped down.

Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area News

Broadland Tree Preservation Orders Served, Confirmed and Revoked

TPO No	Address	Served	Trees Protected	Status
2023 No BD0635	Land south of Muck Lane, Rackheath	21/11/2023	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, Y6, T7, T8, T9 and T10 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0645	Marriotts Way south of De Ja Vu, 12 Reepham Road, Cawston	26/01/2024	T1 oak	Confirmed
2024 No BD0647	Land south of 28 Station Road, Salhouse	08/02/2024	T1 & T2 oak	Confirmed
2024 No BD0648	Land north of Ringland Lane, Ringland	02/02/2024	T1 hornbeam	Confirmed
2024 No BD0649	Land at Blofield Hall, Hall Road, Blofield	11/03/2024	T1, T3, T4, T7 & T9 oak, T2 monkey puzzle, T5 Persian ironwood, T6 Eucalyptus, T8 silver birch, T10 sycamore, G1 (2 x oak), G2 (2 x oak & 2 x sycamore) and G3 (1 x magnolia, 1 x multi-stemmed cypress, 3 x yew, 4 x Acer, 1 x western red cedar (maiden) & 1 x western red cedar (multi-stemmed))	Provisional
2024 No BD0650	Rear garden of 13 Bernard Close, Rackheath	07/03/2024	T1 ash & T2 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0654	Boundary of 89 Taverham Road and bridleway, Taverham	19/04/2024	T1 & T2 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0657	Front garden of Orchard House, Laburnum Drive, Blofield	07/05/2024	T1 oak	Provisional
2024 No BD0667	18 The Green, Freethorpe	02/07/2024	T1 oak	Provisional

Current Works to Trees Subject to a Tree Preservation Order and Section 211 Notifications for Works to Trees Within Conservation Areas

App No	Address	Cat	Species / Requested Works	Decision
2024/0959	19 Station New Road, Brundall	TPO	T1 horse chestnut & T2 lime – fell.	28/03/2024
2024/1634	4 Berryfields, Brundall	TPO	T1 lime - height reduction from 20m to 13m.	05/06/2024
2024/1636	2 Carter Road, Drayton	TPO	Beech - 25-30m tall. 3m crown reduction and 20% crown thin.	Refused
2024/1662	Durrell Cottage, 6 Woodland Drive, Thorpe End	211	T1 - fell due to die back.	No objection
2024/1673	9 Beverley Road, Brundall	TPO	T1 sycamore - carry out an overall crown reduction and crown clean. Crown spread - (N) 7m to 4m, (S) 6m to 4m (E) 6m to 4m, (W) 7m to 4m. Crown height to be reduced from 14m to 11m.	Approved
2024/1683	38 Springfield Road, Taverham	TPO	T1 fir - height reduction from 40m to 25m.	Approved
2024/1685	47 Silk Mill Road, Hellesdon	TPO	T1 birch - reduce height from 12m to 8.5m and spread from 5m to 3.5m. Crown lift by 4m. T2 birch – fell. T3 birch - reduce height from 10m to 8m and spread from 5m to 4m. Crown lift by 4m.	Approved
2024/1688	Oak Cottage, 113 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T2 & T4 birch, T6 cherry, T10 Acer drumondi, T11 holly and T14 wild cherry – fell. T3 cherry plum - crown lift to 2m. T5 yew - reduce western crown aspect from 8m to 6.5m. T12 sycamore - crown lift to 3m.	No objection
2024/1705	Hill House, Heydon Road, Aylsham	211	T1 sweet chestnut - height 18m, width 12m. Reduce longer laterals by 1.5m. T2 beech - height 20m, width 12.5m. Reduce longer laterals by up to 2m above 15m level. T3 Leylandii - fell. T4 purple beech - height: 25m, width 22m. Reduce laterals on west side by up to 3m. T5 cherry - height 26m, width 12m. Reduce height and width by up to 5m and shape appropriately.	No objection
2024/1730	2 Nelson Cottages, Back Street, Reepham	211	T1 holly - fell and root removal.	No objection
2024/1736	Langton Long, Heydon Road, Aylsham	211	T1 oak - reduce height from 15 to 13m and spread from 9m to 7m. Crown lift over road to 5m and remove deadwood over 40mm dia.	No objection
2024/1737	Birch Mead, 16 Rawlinsons Lane, Aylsham	211	T1 plum - pollard at 3m. T2 plum - dead. Remove branches over garden and <i>Thuja</i> hedge. T3 weeping birch - crown lift to 2.5m.	No objection

2024/1739	280 St Faiths Road, Old Catton	TPO	T1 beech - height 17m and crown spread 14m. 2 x decay pockets on main stem at 0.3 and 0.5m west. Reduce westerly most over-extended limb by 3-4m and reduce remainder of bulge in crown by 1-3m on western side of tree to shape.	Approved
2024/1743	Kingfisher, Aylsham Water Mill, Mill Row, Aylsham	211	T1 southern beech - reduce height from 18m to 12m and spread from 8m to 5m. Remove large limb. T2 horse chestnut – reduce height from 10m to 8m and spread from 5m to 3m. Crown lift to 4m.	No objection
2024/1755	1A Upper Street, Salhouse	211	T1 Norway spruce, T2 elder shrub & T3 pear – fell.	No objection
2024/1772	Blickling Hall, Blickling Road, Blickling	211	T1 oak – fell.	No objection
2024/1773	6 Saint Annes Close, Brundall	TPO	T1 oak - crown 9m to 7m. Crown thin by 10%. Reduce eastern lower laterals by 3m.	Approved
2024/1774	Woodland House, Salhouse Road, Sprowston	TPO	T1 oak - crown lift to 6m.	Approved
2024/1777	Burgh House, Burgh Road, Aylsham	211	T1 & T2 sycamore - fell.	No objection
2024/1779	91 Thunder Lane, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 yew - reduce height from 4.5m to 2m. T2 yew & T10 holly - fell.	Approved
2024/1785	The Hall School, St Faiths Road, Old Catton	211	FP1 & D1 yew & FP2 various - crown lift to 2.4m. T1 oak - remove lower 2 branches. CP1 oak - crown lift to 3.5m. T5 oak and beech - cut stems at base to 1m. T8 cherry - crown reduction by 1.5m and crown lift to 4m. T9 strawberry - crown lift to 4m. T15 yew - reduce back from building with 1.5m clearance. T16 elm - reduce extended crown by 2m. T17 horse chestnut - reduce by 3m to growth points. T18 redwood - reduce lower limb by 2.5m and other limb by 3m. T19 bird cherry - crown lift to 2.5m. O1 Scots pine, O2 & O6 sycamore, O7 lime, T13 elder, T14 ash and O8 silver birch – fell. O3, O4 & O5 oak – fell.	No objection
2024/1797	The Hollies, 43 Waterloo Road, Hainford	TPO	T5 Lawson cypress - reduce height from 40ft to 20ft and crown spread from 5m to 3m.	21/06/2024
2024/1806	5 Western Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew	211	G1 birch – fell. T2 holm oak - height reduction from 4m to 2m to pollard points. T3 beech - height reduction from 5m to 3m to pollard points. T4 sycamore - crown lift over Western Avenue to 5m.	No objection
2024/1811	37 Mousehold Lane, Sprowston	TPO	T3 Scots pine – fell.	Approved
2024/1812	28 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 birch - fell.	No objection
2024/1813	6 Sylvan Way, Taverham	TPO	T1 conifer - fell. T2 & T3 oak - crown lift by 3.5m.	Approved
2024/1822	27 Oakfield Road, Aylsham	211	T1 silver birch - fell.	25/06/2024
2024/1833	St Margarets House, 1 Staithe Way Road, Wroxham	211	Willow - dead. Fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/1860	UCP Zeller Plastik, Salhouse Road, Sprowston	TPO	T3 common beech & T4, T11, T14 common oak - remove. T6 Austrian pine & T8, T9, T10, T12, T13 silver birch - fell. T7 common oak - end weight reduction.	Approved
2024/1871	The Laurels, 9 Lower Street, Salhouse	211	T1 bay - reduce to coppice stool. T2, T3, T9 yew, T4, T5 Lawson cypress & T6 western red cedar - dismantle to ground level. T7 Eucalyptus - reduce stem on southern aspect to 2m. T8 cedar - crown lift to 4m.	30/06/2024
2024/1885	Daisy Cottage, 11 Upper Street, Salhouse	211	T1 & T2 horse chestnut & T3 Acer - crown lift to 2m. T4 Salix - fell.	No objection
2024/1920	43 Charles Close, Wroxham	211	Apple - fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dangerous trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/1921	22 Charles Close, Wroxham	211	Tree - fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dangerous trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/1925	18 Pond Lane, Drayton	TPO	G1 silver birch - 3 fell 3 and 3 height reduction from 17m to 14m.	03/07/2024
2024/1930	Annexe 260, Taverham Road, Taverham	TPO	T1, T3 & T5 sycamore, T2 sweet chestnut & T4 oak – reduce western spread by 2m and western limbs from 8m to 6m.	09/07/2024
2024/1939	Three Gables, Rawlinsons Lane, Aylsham	211	T1 holm oak - reduce height from 5m to 4m and spread from 4m to 3m.	04/07/2024
2024/1946	10A South Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew	211	T1 Scots pine - reduce south-west spread from 10m to 6m and north from 7m to 4m. T2 Scots pine - reduce height from 17m to 14m and western spread from 6m to 4m. T3 Scots pine - reduce western spread from 5.5m to 3m. T4 Scots pine - reduce northern spread from 6.5m to 5m	No objection
2024/1952	Dell Farm, Heydon Road, Aylsham	211	T1 sycamore - height reduction from 10m to 6m.	05/07/2024

2024/1957	Meadow House, Blickling Road, Aylsham	211	T1 fir - height reduction from 24m to 20m.	05/07/2024
2024/1960	47 Station Road, Reepham	TPO	T1 Scots pine - fell.	No objection
2024/1966	Bulwers Terrace, 27 Chapel Street, Cawston	211	T1 hazel - crown reduction, height and spread from 4m to 2.5m and crown lift to 2.5m.	No objection
2024/1977	26 Turner Crescent, Postwick	TPO	T1 oak - sever Ivy at base. Raise crown to 3m. Remove dead wood. Prune back over extended limbs over gardens from 7 - 8m to 1 - 2m.	19/07/2024
2024/1978	Bayfield House, 1 White Hart Street, Aylsham	211	T1 yew - reduce height from 14m to 10m and width from 10m to 6-8m	9/07/2024
2024/1983	46 Springfield Road, Taverham	TPO	T1, T2 & T3 silver birch - fell under an exception of the TPO restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/2002	1 Old Hall Terrace, Halvergate	211	T1 sycamore - crown raise to 6m and reduce retained crown on northern aspect by 2.5m leaving a 5m radial spread. T2 magnolia - reduce crown by 50% leaving a framework of branches at a height of approx 2.5m with a spread of 3.5m.	10/07/2024
2024/2010	Playground on St Michaels Avenue, Aylsham	TPO	T1 cherry - within boundary of small play area. Fell.	11/07/2024
2024/2014	Holly Cottage, 6 Chapel Street, Cawston	211	T1 silver birch - fell.	11/07/2024
2024/2020	15 Barberry Close, Taverham	TPO	T1 oak - fell.	10/07/2024
2024/2036	Hill House, Heydon Road, Aylsham	TPO	T1 laurel bush, T2 laurel tree & T3 yew - fell.	15/07/2024
2024/2040	Trees adjacent to 10 Loggers Drive, Hellesdon	TPO	T1 oak - fell.	10/07/2024
2024/2046	The Dell, 11 South Avenue, Thorpe St Andrew	TPO	T1 sycamore - dismantle leaving lower stump as a nature pole / standard. G1 ash x 2 - fell. Dieback.	15/07/2024
2024/2047	Field House, Heydon Road, Aylsham	211	T1 whitebeam - fell.	15/07/2024
2024/2054	Rear of 9 Kingswood Court, Taverham	TPO	T3 oak - reduce crown in accordance with Tree Care's report dated 2018.	11/07/2024
2024/2066	Woodland adjacent to Saint Michaels Avenue, Aylsham	211	O1, O3, O4, O5 & O7 pine, O2 sycamore and O6 larch - Fell under an exception of Conservation Area restrictions for dead trees.	Exempt tree works
2024/2068	Ghost Hill Wood, Shakespeare Way, Taverham	TPO	T1 oak - reduce lowest branch extending over 53 Shakespeare Way from 10m to 5m.	11/07/2024
2021/2081	68 Sandy Lane, Taverham	TPO	2 x rowan - fell.	18/07/2024
2024/2120	Heron, Aylsham Water Mill, Mill Row, Aylsham	211	T1 willow - reduce height by 6m to approx 8m. Raise/reduce lower limb over river to provide adequate clearance over water leaving remaining length of not less than 1.5m.	16/07/2024
2024/2182	4 Potters Meadow, Salhouse	TPO	Scots pine x 7, silver birch & cherry plum - fell under an exception of the TPO restrictions for dead trees.	29/07/2024

Explanatory Notes:

- 1) App No is the unique Broadland District Council Planning Application number allocated to the application to carry out work and is the number by which progress of the application may be traced. Any comment, objection, support or request for information should quote this number.
- 2) Address is the address to which the application for work relates. That is the address where the trees for which the application is made are located.
- 3) Cat (ie Category) denotes the type of application. TPO = works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order; or
211 = Section 211 Notifications for Works to Trees Within Conservation Areas
- 4) Species / Requested Works is the species of the tree(s) concerned and details of the work proposed. A reference such as T1, T2 or G1 may also appear and that is simply a reference to the tree(s) on the TPO, Conservation Order or simply on the application.
- 5) Decision is either the actual decision or the date on which the application was validated by Broadland District Council.
- 6) This is not intended to be a definitive list of all the relevant details. Readers should always refer to the specific application on the South Norfolk and Broadland District Council Planning website at <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application>.