

Subject: Re The Hillyfield Woods - Mr Doug King-Smith: Woodland Management

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From: Mark.Prior@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

To: dougkingsmith@yahoo.co.uk

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To whom it may concern

I am writing to confirm that Mr King-Smith has an English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) agreement on Hillyfield Woods with the Forestry Commission to enable him to bring his woodlands into sustainable management, through creating management access to the woodland and thinning and felling/restocking where appropriate in line with his agreed management plans. The Forestry Commission is supportive of the sustainable management of these woodlands in line with the UK Forest Standard. Managing woodland sustainably means an ongoing commitment to tending and maintaining the woodlands and where there is also the benefit of onsite added value and community involvement there is a recognised need to be in attendance.

The Government published its response to the 2012 Independent Panel's Report on Forestry in January 2013 and agreed to many of the recommendations, and in particular agreed on:

- The need to develop a new woodland culture and a resilient forestry and woodland sector,
- The importance of protecting our woodland assets,
- The need to bring more woodland into active management and increase the extent of woodland cover in England,
- The importance of preserving and maximising the social and environmental benefits provided by trees and woodlands,
- The scope for developing new markets based around a better understanding of the value and potential of our trees, woods and forests,

The Government have recently published its 25year Environment Plan which echo's many of the ambitions of the Response to the Independent Forestry Panel in relation to forestry and the Forestry Commission's priorities remain to promote the following objectives:

- Protecting the nation's trees, woodlands and forests from increasing threats such as pests, diseases and climate change,
- Improving their resilience to these threats and their contribution to economic growth, people's lives and nature,
- Expanding them to increase further their economic, social and environmental value.

The Government's response saw that if we are to develop a new wood culture then it "needs to be built from the ground up and must be based on the needs, interests and enthusiasm of local people". The activities planned at Hilly Field Wood appear to be addressing this need, however it is not the Forestry Commissions remit to comment on the specific planning issues raised in the case, but can only clarify the importance of bringing and maintaining woodlands in

management; and the added benefit in this case of locally adding value to the woodland resource, as well as creating benefits of social enterprise working with the local people.

Mr King-Smith's enterprise fits well with these aspirations, which is why the Forestry Commission is supporting his woodlands through the EWGS. In addition to the production of woodfuel, which provides an outlet for coppice and lower quality material, he will also be producing sawn timber from the better quality stems. Mr King-Smith's proposals for woodfuel and timber drying, as well as machine storage appear to be appropriate and consistent with the woodlands he is managing. In terms of drying, it is crucial to the quality of the woodfuel that it is properly seasoned, which means at least a year or more covered, and for significantly more than this, if air drying sawn quality hardwood timber.

Yours sincerely

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*Protecting, improving and expanding England's forests and woodlands,  
and increasing their value to society and the environment*



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