

Forestry Operations in Frith Wood

We will be timber harvesting in Frith Wood near Ledbury, from August 2026

The works will impact some of our trails and access points, this page provides more information about the work we are doing and why.

What is happening?

Some areas of woodland will be felled as part of a PAWS (Planted Ancient Woodland Site) restoration for the area, in line with the Frith Wood Forest Plan. This involves routine thinning of trees to favour native broadleaved species and maintain uneven age structure within the woodland, making it more favourable to wildlife.

Some areas of Sweet Chestnut will be coppiced, this traditional practice helps create a rich variety of habitats for wildlife, increasing biodiversity in the area. It allows more light to the forest floor which encourages different species of flora to flourish. Many of these species are food sources for butterflies and other insects, which in turn provide food for birds, bats and mammals.

The sustainably produced timber will go into the construction industry, pallet making, fencing, wood panel manufacture for furniture, and firewood. Some crown wood will be left on site as wildlife habitat, known as 'dead wood.' You will notice a significant operational presence in the woodland with banks persons, harvesting machinery, signage, and timber stacks. We do our best to use existing extraction routes to minimise the damage to the forest floor, which is inevitable with the scale of machinery that must be used. This will be reinstated where necessary on completion of the work.

Harvesting contracts can sometimes be quite drawn out and work may stop for some time due to the many constraints that we have to work around. So please bear with us as we carry out this work with the aim of minimising inconvenience to all site users.

Will you be replanting?

The areas to be thinned will be left to naturally regenerate from seeds from existing trees. The coppice stools of the Sweet Chestnut will be left to regrow. Coppicing is an ancient method of managing woodlands. Trees are cut back, then left to re-grow from their stumps. In time they will be coppiced again. Regular coppicing will keep trees healthy and alive for centuries.

Can I still visit this woodland?

At certain times throughout the operation some paths may be closed, the most important thing for us is to keep the public, our staff, and contractors safe. We will have safety and operational signage displayed, diversions, closures, and banks persons in position where needed. This is for your safety, whether you can see or hear us working, it is important you read and listen to all instructions very carefully and obey all instruction.

Forestry work is very hazardous. A falling tree can weigh several tonnes and hit the ground at nearly 60mph. If a harvesting machine chainsaw snaps, it can fly through the forest like a bullet.

What about the wildlife?

Well managed forests support more wildlife, and harvesting trees is an important part of a sustainable forest lifecycle. **Specific to this contract**, opportunities will be taken to remove ride side trees to provide more open space and habitat links. Good bat roost trees and trees with a future TSI potential will be retained and allowed space to develop.

The woodland is favourable to dormice, so the harvesting will work around them. There are several different protected bird species in the area; the work will avoid the breeding seasons. Frith Wood has a variety of woodland flora, including the rare spreading bellflower; works will avoid damage to these areas with careful planning.

Before we start any forestry work, we carry out ecological surveys. We also consider complex factors including tree health, how the ground slopes, soil condition, and likely rainfall, when planning work that will support our long-term management plan.

While working, we continue to check for wildlife and will adapt, pause or suspend work if we find any animal that must be protected.

Sustainable Forestry

Wood is a beautiful, strong and renewable natural material with endless uses. Forestry England are the country's largest supplier of sustainable timber grown in England. At the sawmill, the timber is cut into different pieces and used in furniture, fencing and building materials. Even the bark, wood shavings and sawdust are used. Nothing is wasted.

In fact, wood is one of our most sustainable materials. Wood is a low-carbon alternative to materials such as plastic, concrete and steel, and is often reused or recycled again and again. When you shop for wood and paper products, always make sure to look for the FSC® or PEFC logos. This means they come from forests, like ours, that are managed sustainably for the future.

If you would like any further information, please get in touch via westengland@forestryengland.uk

