

Woodland Grant scheme feedback

108 responses were received by the Department

Option	Percent
Agricultural land owner	20.37%
Environmental Organisation	2.78%
Existing Woodland owner	4.63%
Industry Body	0.93%
Individual	63.89%
Other	7.41%
Not Answered	0.00%

- **Question 2 –**
 - **Do you have any comments regarding the Woodland type, suggested payments or eligibility?**
 - There were 59 responses to this question
- **Question 3 –**
 - **Do you have any comments regarding the additional financial support under the scheme?**
 - There were 35 responses to this question
- **Question 4 –**
 - **Do you have any comments regarding the Woodland Grant scheme 2021?**
 - There were 19 responses to this question
- **Question 5 –**
 - **Do you have any comments on the following General Eligibility?**
 - There were 36 responses to this question
- **Question 6 –**
 - **Do you have any further comments you wish to make about the Woodlands Grant scheme 2021?**
 - There were 61 responses to this question

A summary of the main questions asked have been answered below;

Questions	You Said	We Did
<p>Do you have any comments regarding the Woodland type, suggested payments or eligibility?</p>	<p>We need to get away from the mind set of growing quick “conifer”.</p>	<p>We have removed conifer and diverse conifer woodland types from the scheme, however conifer can still be used to support (nurse) the establishment of broadleaved woodlands (up to 25%) where appropriate.</p>
	<p>Will there be any covenant to protect the woodland beyond 5 years.</p>	<p>The scheme protects woodlands up to 30 years.</p>
	<p>The scheme will support timber production.</p>	<p>The scheme will not support woodland establishment for the purpose of commercial timber production.</p>
	<p>The payment rates are too low.</p>	<p>The rates have been reviewed and have now been adjusted accordingly in light of our carbon and biodiversity aims.</p>
	<p>With the aim of reducing the carbon footprint of the island, promoting species diversity and creating habitat is key. Biodiversity is incredibly important to re-stabilise our earth's environment, looking solely at carbon footprint alone is somewhat limited</p>	<p>The Scheme has been amended to ensure that biodiversity net gain and the provision of ecosystem services are reflected in its purpose.</p>
	<p>Definition of Native should imply native to the Isle of Man</p>	<p>The Scheme will include the definition of native to mean ‘native to the Isle of Man’ and will clearly define the native species.</p>
	<p>Replace the term ‘native broadleaf’ to include the conifer juniper.</p>	<p>The term ‘Native Woodland’ will now be used.</p>
	<p>Include an allowance for a non-native conifer component in mixed broadleaf woodland.</p>	<p>An maximum allowance has been included.</p>
	<p>Amend the ‘native low-density broadleaves’ aim to recognise woodland and scrub habitat.</p>	<p>The aim of woodland type has been amended.</p>
	<p>Redefine the ‘native woodland’ category to ‘near native woodland’</p>	<p>Native woodland category remains but inclusion of ‘near-native’ specimens suitable for the site has been included in the scheme.</p>

Do you have any comments regarding the additional financial support under the scheme?	I do believe that financial support should only be given to those that need it.	By having a wide eligibility for the Scheme it is intended to also widen the area of land available for tree planting in order to maximise carbon sequestration and biodiversity net gain.
	It is unclear what will happen at the end of 5 years when these payments stop - as the purpose of the scheme is to do with sustainable environmental change, is there a risk that once these payments cease the trees will be stripped again or neglected? What safeguards are included to prevent that from happening after the initial 5 years?	Payments stop at 5 years. However contractually the woodland needs to remain in place for a minimum of 30 years. Under the Scheme the Department can seek to recover any grants in certain circumstances, such as trees being destroyed.
	Is vole guard a generic term for a wider function than just excluding voles	This is a generic term for a product that can deliver multiple benefits to tree establishment and maintenance in some situations even without the presence of voles. ,
	Gorse can be an important habitat for stonechats and other nesting birds. This needs to be assessed before removal.	European is the non-indigenous variety; no support to be offered for control of the native Western Gorse. Each site will be individually assessed considering existing habitat values prior to any grant approval.
Do you have any comments regarding the Woodland Grant scheme 2021?	There should be mandatory or the introduction fines	The Scheme allows the Department to withhold or recover grants in certain circumstances, such as if trees are destroyed without the Department's permission. In addition, providing false information in connection with an application will be an offence punishable by a fine.
	75% seems very high bearing in mind the normal rate of mortality in saplings, and does not follow a dense planting and thinning out approach to promote healthy mature trees. Also, if the survival rate drops below 75%, can the applicant restock with new trees?	75% is best practice, yes an applicant can re-stock however this would be at their own cost.

	<p>Coppicing and pollarding are important woodland and woodland pasture management techniques that involve the removal of parts of a tree</p>	<p>If these practices are properly carried out, they should not result in the destruction of a tree and they would be accepted practice under the Scheme.</p>
	<p>I don't feel there should be a Maximum planting area per application.</p>	<p>The Scheme does not prevent an applicant applying separately for support for different tranches of land</p>
<p>Do you have any comments on the following General Eligibility?</p>	<p>Are there sufficient incentives to prevent landowners from reverting land in the short/medium term?</p>	<p>The scheme requires the trees to be established for a minimum of 30 years. If trees are removed before this period the Department can seek to recover the grant support.</p> <p>The Tree Perseveration Act 1993 will also apply to trees that have reached the required size.</p>
	<p>The current purpose wording only mentions carbon sequestration. If this is the stated main aim, it might give preferential treatment to cheap, fast growing conifer plantations rather than native woodlands that are good for wildlife. The stated purpose should be slightly changed to something like 'increasing the island's natural capital and carbon sequestration'.</p>	<p>The Scheme has been amended to make reference to biodiversity net gain and the provision of ecosystem services.</p> <p>Grant support for establishing conifers as a predominant component has been removed.</p>
<p>Do you have any further comments you wish to make about the Woodlands Grant scheme 2021?</p>	<p>I have concerns about the sufficiency of your powers to 'get your money back' should the recipient not meet requirements or stick to them over the required period. This is the case mainly where a grant is made to a company. It is very easy for a company to fold, and then start up again as a different legal person, and your grant would be lost with that folded company</p>	<p>The Scheme allows the Department to register a charge on the land. In the circumstances above, if a charge was registered, the obligation would pass to the new company.</p>

	<p>By definition in relation to an applicant, does the scheme give provision for multiple applicants? For an example similar to that of a syndicate where multiple applicants all contribute to cover initial cost and is then pulled together into one financial figure and is then subsequently supported by the scheme? This being the case for all applicants wanting to support and apply for the grant to which will cover the same area of land.</p>	<p>Only individuals, charities or companies are potentially eligible for the Scheme. However, there is nothing to prevent simultaneous applications by individuals for adjacent tracts of land, and reference to the other applications can be made.</p>
	<p>Allowing tree shelters up to 1.2m in height.</p>	<p>The scheme will be amended to 1.2m</p>
	<p>Will ecological assessments be required to ensure net biodiversity gain?</p>	<p>Yes, an assessment of the site prior to any grant approval will be mandatory.</p>