

Summer 2011

Issue 1

Independent Panel on Forestry Newsletter

The Independent Panel on Forestry was set up to advise the government on the future of forests and woods in England. Welcome to their first newsletter which will give you a roundup of all their latest developments.

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Fresh from the Forest of Dean

The Panel are pleased to have enjoyed their thought provoking visit to the Forest of Dean.

During their visit they met with a wide range of representatives from organisations and communities in the Forest and from across the wider region.

Panel members hosted two workshops with around 100 representatives of the community and organisations. Small groups shared ideas and

thinking about the future of forests and woods in England and captured the key messages from the discussions.



The Panel also took part in a tour hosted by members of the local community and organisations working in the area. The tour saw the

Panel visit Fancy View for an overall introduction to the Forest; spend time at Woodgate Sawmill hearing about and discussing the working forest; and they met residents of The Pludds village to explore the community's deep connection with the forest.

During the course of the visit the Panel also heard about the privilege of grazing and also visited a free mine to hear about this long standing and unique practice.

The Panel want your views

The Panel has welcomed the great response they have had so far on their call for views which closes on 31 July.

So far more than 4,000 views have been received.

As the Panel wants to understand the widest range of views, interests and expertise, they remind all those who would like to share their views and make their voice heard to do so through the call for views.

So whatever your connection; whether you are a dog walker, environmentalist, forestry worker, wood processor, commercial forest owner, cyclist or family who love weekends at the forest - now is your first opportunity to get involved, share your views and make your voice heard to the panel.

The Right Reverend James Jones Bishop of Liverpool, who chairs the Panel, said: "There is no doubt that people care

deeply about the forests and their future. This subject has touched a nerve with the public and part of the Panel's work is to understand why. I therefore urge you to use this opportunity and share your thoughts, ideas and feelings with us."

Details about the Panel's call for views can also be found on the web pages.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/>

*Snapshots from the
Panels first visit to the
Forest of Dean*



Further visits announced

The Panel are delighted to announce that they will visit seven additional forest and woodland areas around England.

The Panel are grateful for all the very many kind invitations to visit forests all over England, and would have liked to have accepted them all. However, it is just not practical for the Panel to visit everywhere.

The Panel already has confirmed visits to Northumberland (including Kielder Forest) on July 26 and Woods in Kent on 16 September and have recently returned from their very successful visit to the Forest of Dean.

Following some very hard choices the Panel are now pleased to confirm their full programme of visits. They are likely to take

place from the autumn onwards and details, including dates and visit content, will be available later in the summer. The locations are:

- Nottinghamshire
- East Anglia
- Yorkshire
- Devon
- Lake District
- Wyre
- The New Forest



Key themes emerging say Panel

The Panel is still very much in listening mode in the run up to its Progress Report in November.

But even at this early stage some key themes are emerging, such as the multi-purpose nature of forests and the need to find better ways to increase woodland cover in England, particularly to help reduce carbon emissions.

Building on valuable inputs like the National Ecosystem Assessment and the Lawton Review, the Panel wants to explore how we can build on the contribution that woods and forests make to restoring our natural world.

They will look at how enhancing the competitiveness of the businesses which work

with wood can help drive demand, as well as support green jobs.

In thinking about the issue of access to forests and woods, the Panel also wants to look at how this links to the spiritual and cultural value of trees and the role they can play in community regeneration.



Get well soon Bishop James

The good wishes of the Panel members and secretariat are with their chair, Bishop James Jones as he recovers from a recent heart operation. We look forward to welcoming him back after the summer.

The Panel will continue its work through the summer, listening to people's views about forests and woods in England and making its scheduled visits to Northumberland and Kent.

For further information about arrangements for the Panel's work during the summer and Bishop James' progress please check the Panel's website regularly.
