

## Save Sherwood Forest Sherwood Forest Safe...For Now?

February 6, 2013



On Thursday the government delivered its response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's (IPF) report & recommendations on the future of forestry in England. The Panel was set up in 2011 after the government, in the face of huge public resistance, reversed its decision to sell-off part of the Public Forest Estate (PFE).

The campaign group Save Sherwood Forest welcomes the government's response, in particular the confirmation from Owen Paterson, Secretary of State for the Environment, that the proposed sell-off of 15% of the PFE has been officially rescinded. We are also delighted that there is a commitment to ensure that the PFE "will remain secured in public ownership for the people who enjoy it ...". The statement also suggests that there is scope for forest cover in England to be expanded to 12% of the total land area, an increase of 230,000 hectares over the next 46 years. While this is less than the 15% recommended in the IPF report the commitment to develop woodlands close to urban areas is welcomed.

Save Sherwood Forest are also pleased to see that the statement recognises the benefit that the PFE has in terms of health & wellbeing, carbon capture and wildlife conservation and the role that the Forestry Commission has played in managing this important resource.

A Save Sherwood Forest spokesperson Bob Thacker said "Taken at face value the Government Statement gives us much to celebrate. However, we are very disappointed that public funding of the PFE in 2013-14 falls well short of the £22 million recommended by the Independent Panel. They estimated that this level of investment in the PFE, less than £1.00 per household, brought around £400 million of benefits to society. It therefore seems irresponsible that the current amount allocated is likely to be over 30% less than is required. Although Mr. Paterson states "... we need to look after this precious resource," it will not happen without an equal commitment to provide the money. We might have won the argument to keep the Public Forest estate in public ownership, but we probably have an even greater fight to ensure that it is adequately funded".

Save Sherwood Forest are holding its annual Ramble In The Woods on 24 March at Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre, Edwinstowe. All are welcome, with details at [savesherwoodforest.org.uk](http://savesherwoodforest.org.uk).

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Campaign for Better Transport – Climate Alliance

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England – Friends of the Earth Nottingham – Nottingham Green Party  
Hands Off Our Forest – Health In Your Environment – Ramblers – Save Our Woods – Woodland Trust