

FWP 12

Ymateb gan : Continuous Cover Forestry Group (CCFG)
Evidence from : Continuous Cover Forestry Group (CCFG)

[Continuous Cover Forestry Group](#)

About the Continuous Cover Forestry Group and Continuous Cover Forestry

1. The Continuous Cover Forestry Group (CCFG) is a membership organisation founded in 1991 with the objective to promote the transformation of even-aged plantations to structurally, visually and biologically diverse forests, in which sustainable production of quality timber is undertaken with the application of the principles of continuous cover management.
2. Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) is an approach to forest management which emphasises adapting the forest to the site, adopting a holistic approach, maintaining forest conditions and avoiding clear felling, and managing the growing stock to promote the growth of preferred individual trees rather than creating stands of trees with uniform spacing and average stem characteristics. In most cases, following these principles will result in stands with irregular structures. For more information, see the [CCFG principles](#).
3. The CCFG is affiliated to Pro Silva along with 26 other member countries. Pro Silva promotes CCF internationally.

CCF and delivery of *Woodlands for Wales* by Welsh Government

4. We are pleased that *Woodlands for Wales* recognises the need to diversify woodlands and to reduce reliance on clear felling in order to deliver against its four strategic themes, and that CCF is explicitly mentioned as an approach to achieving these aims.
5. The adoption of CCF in both public and private sector woodlands has already helped to deliver the aspirations of *Woodlands for Wales*, and has the potential to do much more, in terms of all four strategic themes:
 - a. Responding to climate change: CCF is a key tool for achieving structural diversity in woodlands, one element of increasing forest resilience. By preserving the forest microclimate, it can protect vulnerable young trees from climatic extremes and create conditions suitable for a greater variety of species. By minimising ground disturbance, it can help to maintain soil carbon stocks.

- b. Woodlands for people: CCF avoids the sudden landscape changes associated with clear felling which so many recreational users of forests find objectionable, and can create visually diverse stand structures. It also creates continuity of demand for skilled forest managers and workers.
 - c. A competitive and integrated forest sector: CCF promotes efficient growth of quality timber, rather than the mass production of lower grades of timber. This creates economic opportunities, as well as potentially storing carbon in longer lived forest products. We recognise that public subsidy of forestry in both public and private sectors is likely to be constrained in future. Contrary to received wisdom, [research has shown](#) that in suitable conditions CCF need not be more costly than clear fell management. CCF approaches seek to use natural regeneration, thus avoiding the significant direct costs and management overheads associated with cultivation, replanting and pesticide application.
 - d. Environmental quality: CCF ensures continuity of diverse woodland habitat, without the sudden dramatic changes in conditions and disruption of habitat connectivity associated with clear felling. CCF mitigates the impacts of forest operations on water quality and soils. The combination of cost-effective working and environmental protection ensures that delivery of timber benefits enhances biodiversity and permanence in the landscape.
6. We are concerned, however, that the *Woodlands for Wales Action Plan* and the Welsh Government update on progress make the barest mention of CCF and, indeed, silviculture in general. There is a brief mention in the update on progress to NRW guides on structural diversity and tree species diversity; given the obvious role of CCF in achieving this diversification, we are disappointed that the CCFG was not invited to contribute to this guidance.
7. There is tremendous potential for CCF in Wales, both on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE) and in private woodlands. It is disappointing that Welsh Government has not done more to promote CCF, particularly when Natural Resources Wales (NRW) manages the exceptionally valuable demonstration site at Clocaenog; while this exemplar site has been used for Forestry Commission training on CCF for many years, it seems that NRW has done relatively little to promote it internally or externally. This is an area where the CCFG would be delighted to offer assistance.
8. We would like to see a stronger commitment to CCF in *Woodlands for Wales*, and therefore we would like to see clearer recognition by Welsh Government, both through the management of the WGWE by NRW and through support and advice to private woodland owners, of the contribution CCF can make to the delivery of the strategy.