

Julie James AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-911
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/07008/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
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18 December 2019

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 02 December concerning the recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group on Ancient, Veteran and Heritage trees and how these have been taken forward by the Welsh Government.

The Task and Finish Group on Ancient, Veteran and Heritage Trees was convened in 2014 and Reported in 2017; four recommendations were made to Welsh Government.

A broad focus of the recommendations made concerned monitoring and the need to fully understand the practical management frameworks for ancient, veteran and heritage trees. Within this context, Wales' Natural Resources Policy (published in 2017) sets out a commitment to carefully manage trees and woodland that have high environmental values, including ancient woodland sites, and ancient, veteran and heritage trees, which are an irreplaceable resource that provide a wide range of ecosystem services.

The monitoring of the condition of the management of ancient, veteran and heritage trees, and the need to promote information on their management has been highlighted as an area that needs addressing through the refresh of the Nature Recovery Action Plan. This refresh is due to be completed by the end of December 2019 for further action in 2020.

Welsh Government Officials are working with Natural Resources Wales in order to consider ways in which a number of amendments could be made to the Forestry Act 1967, including changes to the felling licence regime. However, it should be noted that these changes may be delayed due to priority given to wider regulatory changes that will be necessary as a result of Brexit.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Finally, Planning Policy Wales 10 (published in 2018) introduced for the first time a specific reference to ancient, veteran and heritage trees within the trees and woodland policy. Paragraph 6.4.26 sets out, “*ancient woodland and semi-natural woodlands and individual ancient, veteran and heritage trees are irreplaceable natural resources, and have significant landscape, biodiversity and cultural value. Such trees and woodlands should be afforded protection from development which would result in their loss or deteriorations unless there are significant and clearly defined public benefits; this protection should prevent potentially damaging operations and their unnecessary loss.*”

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie James". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie James AC/AM

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