



Institute of
Chartered
Foresters

2023

Our year in review



A message from our President

In April 2023, I succeeded Sharon Durdant-Hollamby FICFor as President of the Institute of Chartered Foresters and I want to offer my sincere thanks to Sharon for all the time and boundless energy that she committed to the Institute, which had such a positive impact during her tenure as President.

It is a great privilege for me personally to take on this role and, since April, I have been amazed at how much is being delivered to our members by the small but immensely talented and devoted Institute team, led by Louise Simpson; I want to offer my heartfelt thanks, and that of the wider membership, for their dedication and achievements.

I became President at a very successful National Conference in Birmingham where the focus was on 'Connecting Trees, Farmers and Foresters'. In total there were 65 events in 2023, with over 2,700 delegates, representing another annual increase in activity. Other events included the National Study Tour in Norfolk with the theme of 'Diversity in Lowland Private Estate Management', the Early Career Professionals Conference, the National Tree Officers Conference and the popular bimonthly #MembersHour series.

Other highlights from 2023 include the exciting work of the four Special Interest Groups and, significantly, the Emerging Leader Programme, where 34 carefully chosen individuals built their leadership potential through the Institute and Clore Social Leadership. Of particular interest to me, the Institute is now regularly engaging with like-minded Institutes in Australia, Canada and New Zealand; in 2023 we participated in an international Virtual Study Tour, with more planned for the future.

In terms of membership, I am delighted to say that the Institute now has over 2,200 members, with 327 new members joining in 2023. There were 37 applications for chartered status and 13 new Fellows recognised.

We continue to deliver our Strategic Plan 2022–2026 and 2024, the third year of the plan, will be another incredibly busy year with all the usual activity plus some exciting new initiatives, for instance an International Study Tour in Germany.

It is a great honour to be the President of this illustrious organisation and I look forward to serving you during the coming year and to, hopefully, meeting many of you at some of our events.

Geraint Richards MVO FICFor
President of the Institute of Chartered Foresters

27

Members obtained
chartered status



2,236

Members and
growing

180+

Hours of CPD on
the Members' Area

65

Events

8

Consultation responses
submitted to influence
UK-wide policy

4

New Special
Interest and
Steering groups

Our year in numbers

Our highlights of 2023



New President
Geraint Richards MVO FIGFor



New Vice President
Andrew Sowerby FIGFor



Staff Away Day to Shenmore Estate in Herefordshire

34 Emerging Leaders complete leadership programme funded by the Trees Call to Action Fund, Scottish Forestry and the Welsh Government.



Our team



Get in touch with us at
icf@charteredforesters.org



Louise Simpson
Executive Director



Dr Stuart Glen
Member Services Director



Denise Camilleri
Finance Director



Jo Fox-Evans
Head of Policy & Partnerships



Mark Goodwin
Marketing & Communications
Manager



Shona Smyth MICFor
Technical Policy Manager



Dr Rob Hawkins
Senior Education & Outreach
Officer



Ella Smith
Senior Events Officer



Alice Hancock
Marketing & Communications
Officer



Craig Docking
Member Services Officer



Dawn Elliot
Member Services Officer



Kelly Dudley
Finance & Governance Officer



Michelle Hayman
Project Coordinator



A strong profession

We will help our members engage with the challenges and opportunities of a changing world, lead and support the highest professional and ethical standards and facilitate collaboration, research and innovation.

We will ensure that our profession thrives by attracting and retaining people from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, by providing access to the education, knowledge and skills to succeed.

Events

52 Events
in 2022



65 Events
in 2023

2,700+

Delegates attended
our events in 2023

18

#MembersHour
sessions in 2023



Early Career Professionals Study Tour
Trees, Regeneration, and Communities

National events

In April, more than 300 delegates attended our **National Conference 2023: Connecting Trees, Farmers, and Foresters** in Birmingham and online. This was the first time we directly engaged with the farming community and we plan on continuing to work with them on future events such as our Farming for Foresters event series in 2024.

We also held three study tours in 2023.



National Study Tour: Diversity in Lowland Private Estate Management



Early Career Professionals Study Tour: Trees, Regeneration and Communities



Global Virtual Field Trip for Young Foresters

All of these events were well attended and engaged a different audience within the forestry sector. The success of the 2023 study tours has inspired us to run even more tours going into 2024.

Partner events

In 2023, we ran eight events with partners, collaborating with organisations like Focus on Forestry First, Landscape Institute, Forestry Commission and Scottish Forestry. Some highlights from these collaborations include the six-part series with Focus on Forestry First that covered various topics, from pests and diseases to stakeholder management. In November, the **National Tree Officers Conference** took place in Reading and was our most well-attended partnership event.

Awards & Honours



The Hugh Miller Award for Excellence

Three members received an award for their Professional Membership Entry submissions.

Jack Delaney MICFor
Woodsage Consulting Ltd

Dr Thomas Ovenden MICFor
Forest Research

Dr Ed Turner MICFor
Forestry and Land Scotland

Student Award

Five graduates from Institute-accredited forestry and arboriculture courses were presented with an Institute Student Award in 2023.

Tristan Burrow
UHI Inverness

Samarth Koul
Bangor University

Helen Lord
Myerscough College

Tom Moss
Harper Adams University

Ben Wilson
University of Cumbria

Institute's Medal

The Institute's Medal is given to individuals who demonstrate a continued commitment to professional excellence and service in forestry. It is presented to those whose work reaches beyond the profession and is recognised UK-wide.

Peter Wilson FICFor CEnv
Wilson Applied Consultancy



The President's Award

The President's Award recognises outstanding services to the Institute, either at regional or national level.

Shireen Chambers MBE FICFor
Future Woodlands Scotland

Steve McCartney FICFor
Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council



Professional Forester of the Year 2023

This award recognises Chartered members for their outstanding service to the profession of forestry and for furthering the principles of the Institute in the past three years.

Jonathan Callis MICFor
Network Rail



Fellowship

We welcomed 13 new Fellows of the Institute in 2023.

Dr Sallie Bailey FICFor
Scottish Government

Mike Cresswell FICFor
Natural Resources Wales

Steve Drysdale FICFor
Mendip Forestry Ltd

Tim Hall FICFor
Woodland Trust Scotland

Gareth Hare FICFor
Cannock Chase District Council

Sonia Lorenzo Martín FICFor
Woodland Trust

Alex Murray FICFor
Glennon Brothers (UK) Ltd

Duncan Park FICFor
Greenbelt Holdings

Gordon Pfetscher FICFor
Woodland Trust

Simon Pryce FICFor
Independent Arboricultural Consultant

Dr Victoria Stokes FICFor
Forest Research

John Tucker FICFor
Woodland Trust

Joe Watts FICFor
Forestry Commission

Honorary Fellowship

Honorary Fellowship of the Institute is reserved for those who may not be eligible for professional membership of the Institute, but who have made a notable contribution to the advancement of arboricultural/forestry knowledge or for any other reason consistent with the objectives of the Institute.

Professor Cecil Konijnendijk FICFor (Hon)
Nature Based Solutions Institute



Emerging Leader Programme



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Heritage
Fund



Forestry Commission



Scottish
Forestry
Coilltearachd
na h-Alba



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales

Our six-month **Emerging Leader Programme**, developed in partnership with Clore Social Leadership, concluded in July 2023. Funded by the Trees Call to Action Fund, Scottish Forestry and the Welsh Government, the programme saw 34 Emerging Leaders build their leadership potential, strengthen their networks and drive the social and organisational change that is needed, supporting the effective delivery of planting targets, climate change mitigation and the biodiversity crisis.

The programme was designed for those leading teams, projects, volunteers, and/or departments, and offered access to a wealth of leadership development activities, with six months of online learning, two residentials and a final Peer Innovation Challenge.



Michelle Whalley-Palmer
Emerging Leader
Development Manager at The Mersey Forest

All of the reflections, learnings and most importantly connections I have made will enable such amazing collaborations across the UK and beyond going forward. I'm feeling well and truly blessed to work in such a forward thinking and positive environment.





**Our 2023
Emerging Leaders**



A strong voice

We will ensure that tree professionals are understood and valued by policy-makers, the media and society. We will do this through the expertise of our members, our leadership, advocacy and engagement with stakeholders at all levels. We will base our decisions and policies on sound evidence.

Policy

We remain focussed on working with key decision makers to influence policy in the areas of **skills** and **professional standards**, ensuring an evidence-based approach and working with partners where relevant. In 2023, we continued to have regular dialogue with Defra, Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales and DAERA, covering a broad spectrum of topics on behalf of our multidisciplinary membership across all four nations.



Institute of
Chartered
Foresters



CIEEM

Management of Existing UK Woodlands An Opportunity for Green Prosperity

In August, we published a joint position paper with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) on bringing more woods into sustainable management. As we jointly represent the full breadth and depth of professional expertise in forestry, ecology and environmental management, this paper called on governments and agencies across the UK to bring about an urgent step change to enable our woodlands to deliver for nature and people.

We took part in the **UK Forest Horizon Scan**, funded by Forestry England and led by Chartered Forester, Dr Eleanor Tew MICFor. The study, published in the Institute's scientific journal, *Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research*, identified the multiple emerging threats to woodlands, including tree disease and extreme weather, in the next 50 years.



The next 50 years will bring huge changes to UK forests: the threats they face, the way that we manage them, and the benefits they deliver to society. We hope the results from this horizon scanning exercise serve as an urgent call to action to build on, and dramatically upscale, action to increase forest resilience.

Dr Eleanor Tew MICFor Head of Forest Planning at Forestry England

We responded to consultations on a range of topics including:



Levelling-up &
Regeneration Act



Strategic
framework for
biodiversity
in Scotland



Forestry
(Felling of Trees)
Regulations 1979



Future forestry
grant support



Net zero skills
in Wales

Scotland's Woodland Creation Summit

Scottish Forestry invited us to manage this event, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, that brought together industry leaders directly involved in woodland creation in Scotland to discuss opportunities for growing more trees and overcoming any associated barriers.



Institute representation

Our Chartered members continue to represent the Institute on groups, panels and committees across the sector and beyond. They are a crucial link between our staff, Council and membership.



Between our members and staff we contribute to 28 standing groups, including those directly advising governments.

Institute members

Applicants Focus Group (Forestry Commission England)	Scottish Forestry Customer Representative Group
British Standards Institute B/213 Committee	Scottish School of Forestry - Forestry Advisory Committee
Arboriculture & Forestry Advisory Group	Scottish Tree Health Advisory Group
Defra Tree Health Policy Group	Society for the Environment Board
Defra ELM Engagement Group & Advice Satellite Group	UKWAS Steering Group - Economic, Social and Environmental
England Woodland Biodiversity Group	Woodland Carbon Code Advisory Board
FISA Steering Group	UK Squirrel Accord - England Red Squirrel Action Plan
Forestry Climate Change Partnership	UK Squirrel Accord - Research Subcommittee
Green Infrastructure Sounding Board	London Urban Forest Partnership

Institute staff

Apprenticeships Trailblazer Group
Defra Nature Skills Roundtable
Environmental Policy Forum
Forestry Skills Forum (England & Wales)
National Forestry Stakeholder Group for Scotland
Nature for Climate Trees Programme (England)
Plant Health and Biosecurity Alliance
Scottish Forestry Timber and Technology Skills Group
Trees & Design Action Group
Forest Plastics Working Group

Our groups

Our new Special Interest and Steering groups aim to represent the needs and interests of different areas in the sector and facilitate increased knowledge exchange. They work to provide relevant CPD for members around their areas of expertise, while working towards a shared understanding of what professionalism means across forestry and arboriculture. We have recently developed three Special Interest Groups (SIG), **Nurseries**, **Harvesting & Marketing** and **Environmental**, and one **Arboriculture & Urban Forestry** Steering Group.

Knowledge Exchange

#MembersHour

NURSERIES Cell to Sale: An Introduction to Container-Grown Tree Production - **Lea Brandes**

ENVIRONMENTAL Veteranisation: Using Tools Instead of Time - **Vikki Bengtsson**

HARVESTING & MARKETING The Wood Properties of Broadleaves & Alternative Conifers - **Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis**

Visit to Delamere Nursery

Our **Nurseries** Special Interest Group hosted the first in-person SIG event in June 2023 at Delamere Nursery. Delegates were immersed in the production process with a tour of the nursery, an afternoon of presentations, interesting discussions and a Q&A session.



TREES magazine

NURSERIES Alternative Thinking: Matching Supply and Demand for the Creation of Resilient Forests (Spring)

NURSERIES The Complexities of Producing Standard Trees in a Changing Market (Summer)

HARVESTING & MARKETING Sale Details: Help us Ensure the Harvester cuts the Mustard (Summer)

ENVIRONMENTAL Stronger Together: Meet the Forest Canopy Foundation (Winter)

ARBORICULTURE & URBAN FORESTRY Trees over Time (Winter)

Nurseries SIG

Raises the profile of forest nurseries, from commercial to amenity and everything in between, to the wider Institute membership through internal promotion and partner organisations.

Chair - Lea Brandes, Forestry England

Harvesting & Marketing SIG

Represents the needs and interests of the timber sector and facilitates increased knowledge exchange.

Chair - Iwan Lloyd-Williams MICFor, DSHwood

Environmental SIG

Raises the issue of polarisation within the woodland sector as it has never been a more important time for jobs and our roles within nature and climate.

Chair - John Deakin MICFor, National Trust

Arboriculture & Urban Forestry Steering Group

Increases the voice of arboriculture and urban forestry and promotes arboriculture as a career path.

Chair - Amelia Williams MICFor,
The Arboricultural Company

Growing influence

Job Board

Following the introduction of the new two-tier vacancy service towards the end of 2022, increased activity in the promotion of the Institute's Job Board in 2023 has seen a significant rise in revenue generated through this channel – revenue that will be reinvested in providing the best membership experience possible for our valued members.

Directory of Consultants

A focus on external promotion of the refreshed Directory of Consultants service drove increased amounts of organic traffic to the website, raising its value for (and the profile of) our Registered Consultants. The number of members signed up for the Directory of Consultants increased in 2023, a trend we intend to continue in 2024.

TREES magazine

Our membership magazine continues to go from strength to strength, with another four issues published in 2023. *TREES* continues to deliver a wide range of sector news, opinion pieces, latest research, updates from Institute Representatives and Regional Group activities. We remain extremely grateful to those members who contribute relevant and thought-provoking content for the magazine.



Website engagement



66,522 unique visitors



115,160 sessions



214,619 page visits



X
followers

8,570
in 2022



8,703
in 2023



LinkedIn
followers

3,161
in 2022



3,933
in 2023



Instagram
followers

887
in 2022



1,000
in 2023



Facebook
followers

2,397
in 2022



2,484
in 2023

A large, moss-covered tree in a forest with a path leading through it. The tree is the central focus, with its thick trunk and sprawling branches covered in vibrant green moss. The forest floor is a mix of dark brown soil and patches of green moss. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of green leaves, creating a dappled light effect. A dirt path winds through the forest, leading the eye from the foreground towards the background. The overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

A strong organisation

We will grow our membership base and ensure that our business model supports our vision, purpose and strategy. We will do this by engaging talented and committed staff, enhancing the value of our offer to members and others, generating diverse and sustainable sources of income and striving for operational excellence.

The Examinations Board

In 2023, 35 Associate members presented for Professional Membership Entry (PME) and two others presented through the Assessed Professional Competence (APC) route. In total, 27 individuals were promoted to Professional membership, with three applicants recommended for the Hugh Miller Award for Excellence - Jack Delaney MICFor (Woodsage Consulting), Tom Ovenden MICFor (Forest Research) and Ed Turner MICFor (Forestry and Land Scotland). These three individuals demonstrated a level of professionalism above and beyond that normally expected of an Associate member.

We could not manage the assessment process without a pool of 90 dedicated assessors prepared to give something back to ensure professional standards and a thriving Institute. They represent an impressive bank of knowledge the Institute can call upon.



Some of the assessors and moderators involved in the second day of the professional interviews. Back rows (left to right) Peter Wharton MICFor, Paul Dann MICFor, Amelia Williams MICFor, Phil Brophy MICFor, Abi St Aubyn MICFor, Nick Mottram FICFor CEnv, Mark Townsend MICFor, Angus Mackie FICFor; middle row (left to right) Karen Russell MICFor, Sonia Lorenzo Martín FICFor, Jo Ellis MICFor, Dr Victoria Stokes FICFor, Chris Hardy MICFor; and front row (left to right) Helen Kirk MICFor and Alex Murray FICFor.

Twenty years of the PME process



The PME process was introduced in 2003

Despite constantly evolving through applicant feedback, we employed an external consultant to review the PME process to ensure that the process was rigorous, robust and inclusive.

This 2023 review praised the Institute's PME process and those involved in the support of the process.



Alex Murray FICFor, Forestry Manager at Glennon Brothers (UK), was appointed Chair of the Examinations Board in January 2023.

Our membership



81.1%



18.9%

2,236

Members at the end of 2023

=

6.3%

Membership growth in 2023

89.5%

Annual member retention rate

88%

CPD compliant Chartered members

Our membership by age

Under 25 4.5%

25 - 35 19.3%

35 - 44 23%

45 - 54 22.2%

55 - 64 20.4%

Over 65 10.4%

Our members work in:

Arboriculture	18%
Biodiversity & Wildlife Management	4.3%
Forest Engineering	0.2%
Forestry and Arboriculture Research	2.3%
Forestry and Woodland Management	47.3%
Harvesting, Marketing and Utilisation	4.5%
Inventory and Mapping	1.2%
Land Use Appraisals and Landscape Design	2.4%
Management and Administration	5.4%
Public Policy	3.5%
Recreation Management and Planning	0.7%
Timber Processing	0.7%
Training and Education	1.8%
Tree Nursery Management	1.2%
Tree Surveys and Reports	2.1%
Urban Forestry	1.9%
Utility Arboriculture	0.9%
Woodland Investment and Valuation	1.7%

Regional Groups

16 Regional events
in 2023

521 Attendees
in 2023



Provide networking & knowledge exchange opportunities



Are the face of the Institute at a regional level



Act as ambassadors for the industry



Promote the benefits of membership

There was a well-rounded mix of regional events across the country in 2023. Here is a small taste of the interesting and varied activities that our groups conceive, organise and run each year.

Growing Trees for Tomorrow's Needs

The Wales Regional Group attracted the highest number of attendees of the year at the region's annual conference which is now a very well received and established event in the country's forestry calendar. Held at Bangor University, it explored creating a forestry-based economy and was opened by Siân Gwenllian from the Welsh Government.

Forestry Management & Timber Processing in Remote Rural Scotland

A ferry crossing to the Knoydart Peninsula was needed for this North Scotland Regional Group event in September. Hosted by the Knoydart Forest Trust, delegates explored the practicalities of managing forestry and processing timber for local use in an area with limited road infrastructure, their approach to deer management, and more.

Timber Strength & Silviculture

The South Scotland Regional Group held the first event of the year at Napier University in Edinburgh with host Dr Dan Ridley-Ellis. Exploring timber strength, speakers from Forest Research discussed the impact of silviculture and there was live destructive testing carried out in the lab.

Birds for Foresters

This North England Regional Group event was such a success, selling out soon after it was announced. Keith Buchanan, renowned naturalist and expedition leader, hosted the training course in Northumberland visiting several habitats. We look forward to holding more training on woodland birds, waders and their habitat requirements in the future.



Without the dedication of members who volunteer, the Institute's regional events would not be possible so thank you to all involved. If you are interested in joining your local regional committee, contact your Regional Secretary for more information.

Forestry: An International Journal of Forest Research

Another exciting year full of interesting research has flown by and, even after several years of involvement in our scientific journal, I cannot help but be amazed by the diversity of studies that come across my desk. All of them trying to further our understanding of forests and ultimately contribute to the sound and sustainable management of these fascinating ecosystems.

In 2024, we saw numerous excellent studies on the continuously improving remote sensing and biometrical work-flows and methods that allow us to obtain quantitative and often spatially explicit information about trees and forests on scales reaching from individual tree elements, via trees and tree groups, over forest stands, up to entire countries. Obtaining this information is particularly important to ensure that we are using our forest resources sustainably. In this context, examining how stakeholders perceive and use ecosystem services of forests is highly relevant and we published some interesting work on this topic, including also on resources that may not immediately pop-up in our minds when thinking about forestry, such as mushrooms. If you are interested in what the related 'mycosilviculture' is about, I highly recommend Institute members make use of the free subscription to *Forestry* and look at the April issue of 2023. We also continue to improve the outreach of *Forestry*. Our Social Media Editor, Sara Middleton, has done a fantastic job to increase the visibility of the journal on X, resulting in a constantly growing number of followers. You may have followed our 'Meet the Editor' campaign or have come across a teaser for one of the exciting new studies published in *Forestry*.

Another highlight of 2023's published research was the special issue on natural disturbances as tipping points of forest ecosystems under climate change. In the special issue, seven case studies present findings on the effect of increasingly accelerating disturbance dynamics in forests worldwide. While the presented studies show that forests worldwide so far have shown an impressive resistance and resilience to climate change effects, some of the studies also indicate that tipping points may be reached in the near future if we fail to slow down the ongoing climate crisis. At *Forestry*, we hope that some of the research published in our journal will contribute to ensure that we will have healthy, biodiverse and productive forests also in the future.

I would also take a moment to acknowledge the tremendous work of our international team of scientific editors and members of the editorial board of *Forestry* who invest an incredible amount of time and effort into keeping our journal up and running. I am deeply grateful for your support and I look forward to collaborating with you in many years to come!

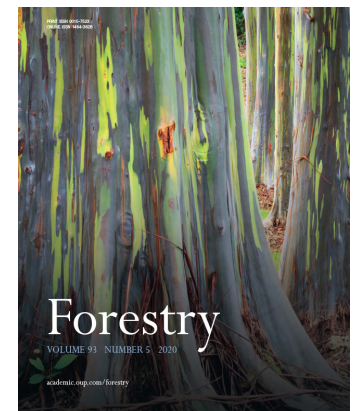
Dr Fabian Faßnacht
Editor-in-Chief



56 articles
published in 2023



Institute membership
includes a free
Forestry annual
subscription





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