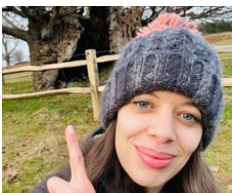


## Meet our 2024 Emerging Leaders



### **Megan Akerman** - Trees for Cities

Since October 2022 I have been serving as Youth Engagement Manager at Trees for Cities (TfC). With a background in Environmental Education I love working with young people and creating opportunities for youth to gain experience and insight into careers in the forestry and environment industry. My work at TfC has been to encourage children and young people to have a greater connection to trees, plants and nature. Whilst supporting educators to explore the curriculum beyond the classroom. This year I have aided a youth led research project focusing on accessibility of our green spaces, parks and woodlands in our cities and facilitated exciting discussions around how we can ensure these spaces are designed and maintained for everyone to enjoy. I'm an admitted nature nerd, a keen grower of flowers and food, and currently attempting to grow a miniature woodland on my London balcony.



### **Jess Allan** - The Tree Council

I work at The Tree Council as Science & Research Projects Manager, focusing on research that delivers a positive impact. From exploring ways to better protect heritage trees, to developing new approaches to monitoring tree survival rates, there is always important work to do and knowledge to gain and share. I previously worked in the wonderful world of waste and resources. Seeking to support nature's recovery, I then studied an MSc in Conservation, which opened my eyes to the powerful role of research. I also love music and am learning a new instrument – which is humbling but fun!



### **Dr David Armson** - The Mersey Forest

In 2021, I joined The Mersey Forest as a Community Forester working with schools, community groups, private landowners and the general public to create and manage woodlands. This role encourages me to look for new and creative ways to engage people to develop their understanding of the role that trees can play in improving their local environment for the benefit of their health and wellbeing alongside tackling climate change. My career started in heavy industry's such as printing and chemical processing before changing to academia where I achieve a PhD in Plant Sciences. Following this I worked in roles that focused upon engaging communities and have managed FabLab's, worked with schools to promote STEM careers and apprenticeship and also lectured in college. I have focused on these community roles as believe all people deserve an open opportunity to develop themselves and I love to see the spark in people as they feel empowered to improve themselves and others lives. I am a family man and enjoy spending time with my children, while also enjoying my own time to get away climbing and hiking around North Wales.



### **Kate Boddington** - Natural Resources Wales

Since spring 2023 I've been working at Natural Resources Wales as an HR Advisor. My work background is in the Third Sector where I've worked in charities focusing on disability, and sustainable transport. I moved to work in the environmental sector to support the alignment of my work with my values. Outside of work I sing in an LGBTQ+ community choir and recently finished a four-year period as Chair where my main achievements were bringing the choir through the pandemic and trebling our membership. I'm a keen cyclist, I grow fruit, flowers and vegetables on my allotment, and I love cooking especially with friends.



### **Jake Burton** - Natural Resources Wales

Since 2023, I have been part of the Forest Operations Team in Northwest Wales. I am responsible for the day-to-day delivery of Natural Resources Wales annual harvesting and re-stocking programme, across a diverse mix of upland forest within Gwydir Forest Park and the Eryri National Park. My career began in 2019, and within previous roles at NRW, I have been responsible with the delivery of ambitious and innovative programmes of protected site restoration, ecological monitoring and community and stakeholder engagement work at Newborough National Nature Reserve and Forest, Tywyn Aberffraw Site of Special Scientific Interest, Morfa Harlech and Harlech Forest Sites of Special Scientific Interest and lastly, Morfa Dyffryn National Nature Reserve. In my personal life, I volunteer weekly with the North Wales Wildlife Trust where I am a 'Livestock Health Checker'. I love spending time outdoors and I often spend time exploring and walking the coastal stretches on Ynys Môn; likewise, I enjoy growing numerous house plants, including several species of cacti.



### **Denise Camilleri** - Institute of Chartered Foresters

I joined the Institute of Chartered Foresters in November 2020 and oversee its finances, IT, daily operations, and administration. I started my career in hospitality before transitioning to finance in 2010. I love working in this industry, serving our members and the forestry sector. My role is to ensure that the Institute is a robust and resilient organisation so that our employees and members can focus on the promotion of professional status and standards within the industry. I do this through collaboration with the Executive Team on compliance, strategy implementation, and optimizing the Institute's operational capabilities. I grew up in Malta before moving to the UK in 2007. I live in East Lothian with my partner and my son. I love running. I also love socialising and being within and helping our community.



### **Caroline Campbell** - Woodland Trust

I joined the Woodland Trust as Urban Projects Officer in November 2023, and the majority of my role now focuses on tree equity advocacy and initiatives. Prior to this, I spent 12 years as a primary school teacher, where I developed a strong commitment to people and community engagement before choosing to move into project management. I am passionate about environmental and social justice, with a strong sense of 'justice sensitivity' and am driven by the need to know that what I do truly makes a difference. This is why I enjoy my role as much as I do; tree equity is the bridge between trees and people and the driver to ensure that we have vibrant, tree-filled urban spaces that are accessible to all and that benefit both people and nature. As someone who values the importance of neurodiversity, I bring a unique perspective to my work. I foster inclusive and innovative approaches to community engagement and project development. As a working parent of two young children, life outside of work is always an adventure. I love spending time outdoors with my family and our dog, exploring woodlands and appreciating nature. Recently, I have taken up running outdoors, which has further deepened my connection to the natural world.



### **Anne Mari Cobb** - Soil Association Certification

I had the privilege of growing up in Denmark, spending all my time outdoors, exploring nature and creatures big and small. I lived on a horse breeding farm and life was safe, fun and 'hyggeligt'. As human behaviour fascinates me, I studied social sciences. Later I enhanced my studies with an environmental focus and worked for different environmental charities. In 2019 I moved to England and had the pleasure of joining Soil Association Certification Ltd. As a certification manager for the Climate and Landscape department, I am passionate about promoting credibility within UK's voluntary carbon market, through advocating high-integrity carbon projects and supporting carbon scheme developments. I believe people is our greatest asset and key to unfolding greater advances within our sector. Outside work, most days are spent walking my rescue, Marvin, or paddle boarding on the River Hamble.



### **Rachel Cook** - Woodknowledge Wales

Since February 2024 I have been working for Woodknowledge Wales as Head of Networks. In my role I work with the Communities of Practice (CoPs) and support membership development, events and training. My background is in engineering and Project Management in construction. I worked for a South Wales contractor for 11 years starting as a trainee engineer and rising to Site Manager. With a passion for developing skills and training within the industry I later went on to work for Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) as a local manager gaining insight to industry needs across Wales. My most recent role was with Construction Wales Innovation Centre (CWIC) at University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) as a Net Zero Industry Support Manager working closely with WkW. I am a Mam of a fun, cheeky, two-year-old daughter and I love spending my free time doing family trips to the beach and outdoors. I am very lucky to work part time for WkW which allows me to balance home and work life.



### **Bryan Cosgrove** - City of Trees

Bryan joined the City of Trees team in 2015 and is passionate about the environment, wildlife and nature, bringing almost twenty years' experience in the environmental sector, in roles ranging from rewilding in the Scottish Highlands, to developing environmental policy and strategy in his hometown of Manchester. A qualified mountain leader, Bryan has a Master's degree in environmental modelling, and brings particular strengths in project management and GIS, having day to day responsibility for innovation and data management at Greater Manchester's Community Forest.



### **Ricky Dallow MICFor - Tilhill**

I cover a large majority of Mid Wales, as an Area Manager and have oversight of a small team who manage approximately 6,000 hectares of woodland. I work for a wide variety of clients, from landed estates, investment clients, farmers and utility companies. My role spans woodland creation, road construction, woodland management, maintenance and supporting in forest sales and acquisitions. The variety of the work I get to be involved with is part of the reason why I like forestry, and why I got into it in the first place. Initially starting my career with Tilhill in 2017 in Inverness working across North Scotland assisting the wider team before transferring back home to the Welsh Border in 2018. I achieved Professional membership of the Institute of Chartered Foresters in 2023, after being an associate since 2018. Outside of work, I have a young family which keeps me busy and when the opportunity arises I try get out on the trails in a bid to complete more ultra marathons.



### **Alex Donaldson MICFor - Zulu Ecosystems**

Since September 2023, I have worked for Zulu Ecosystems as Regeneration Programme Manager. During this time, I have achieved my ICF chartership and joined the ICF's South West Member Network as a committee member. With several years of experience in commercial forestry, I've built a strong foundation that I now apply to landscape-scale nature restoration, focusing on afforestation, ancient woodland regeneration, and peatland restoration. I'm passionate about multi-functional land management, cross-industry collaboration, and the importance of nature markets to achieve net zero and halt biodiversity loss. In my spare time, I enjoy playing hockey and green woodworking. I recently made a side table for my grandma's birthday. She's probably pretty fed up with all the wonky furniture I keep giving her!



### **Dylan Enoch - Natural Resources Wales**

My forestry career began 13 years ago when I became a chainsaw operator at the age of 19. I moved onto operating purpose built machinery. During this time, I specialised in steep ground working. At the time, I was only one of two operators utilising a Twinch traction assist system in the UK. I joined Natural Resources Wales four years ago and am currently a Grade 5 Harvesting Contracts Manager. I thoroughly enjoy being outdoors, whether that be hiking, cycling or taking my son on a forestry walk. I am passionate about promoting all that is good about forestry.



### **Martina Gorla - Forestry Commission**

I have been a Woodland Officer for the Forestry Commission since 2022 and have been recently promoted to Field Manager. In my role, I helped a good number of landowners to initiate management of their woodlands, and to create new biodiverse woodlands to benefit wildlife and people. My wellbeing also derives from the knowledge that the work I do benefits others in various ways, from helping farmers to diversify their income streams, to encourage wildlife and increase carbon absorption. I value cultivating deep and meaningful relationships, spend time observing nature, reading and growing vegetables. I also play volleyball at competitive level. I am keen to take part in the programme and learn as much as I can from my new connections!



### **Peter Hawking-Sach - Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest (Plymouth City Council)**

Since 2022 I have been Project Manager of Plymouth and South Devon Community Forest. I am proud to be contributing to the early-stage growth of such a wide-ranging initiative, with huge opportunities to benefit nature, people, and place. I have prior professional and academic experience in policy and planning, social enterprise and third sector development, and creative production, having worked on several programmes and applied projects across the UK and internationally. I often daydream of the west coast of Scotland, and love all time spent either up hills or in the ocean.



### **Katy Hawkins - Birmingham Tree People + Trees + Türme**

I work as Community Lead for Birmingham TreePeople, working in areas of low tree equity. With passions in co-production, asset based community development and community organising, methodologies are utilised with a view to enable communities to establish new trees for their places on their own terms. Alongside I have a freelance creative practice, focused on creating spaces for collectively exploring our connection with trees; with an interest in the power of embodied connection and ritual to regain our sense of kinship with them. My working background spans place-based socially engaged arts, green prescribing and participatory urban governance; with an Undergraduate in Art History (Goldsmiths) and Masters of Research in Interdisciplinary Urban Design (The Bartlett, UCL).



### **Bryony Hewetson Ward - Forestry and Land Scotland**

I have been a Business Change Manager at Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) since January 2023, where I work closely with our Innovation Manager to bring new ideas to life within the organisation. My biggest project in this role is currently in full swing: bringing FLS's only tree nursery up to 21st-century standards and setting it up for success well into the future. I love learning, and this role certainly provides plenty of opportunities for that! I joined FLS in September 2021, after more than 15 years in retail and art galleries. I barely knew a thing about forestry and trees, and now I sometimes surprise myself with the knowledge I've picked up. Beyond work, I always feel happiest near water and having recently moved to the Aberdeenshire coast, I'm building up the courage to brave the cold North Sea for a swim.



### **Danielle Hill - Treeconomics Ltd**

I've been working at Treeconomics for five years, joining the company as an Urban Forest Technician, now working as a Senior Urban Forest Consultant. I really enjoy my job, I find the world of trees and woodlands fascinating and feel very lucky to work in this sector! Before joining Treeconomics I studied Environmental Science and worked as a teacher. I work on a range of projects from strategies to research and especially enjoy those with a focus on communities, training and collaboration. I love to spend time outdoors walking with my family and two spaniels, running and learning to garden.



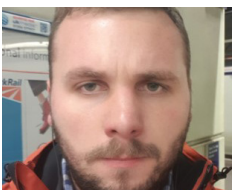
### **Christina Jackson Szczyrbowski - Small Woods - Coed Lleol**

I currently coordinate woodland conservation with Small Woods - Coed Lleol. My dedication to people and nature is unwavering with a focus on how we interact with the environment, ourselves, and each other. I look to find a balance of ecosystem and human needs whilst maintaining a deep commitment to environmental stewardship. Over 13 years, I've lived and worked in woodlands across the UK as a coppicing volunteer, food grower, horse logger, and academic. My career began by developing people through mentoring and engagement programs at Oxfam and universities. I work creatively and collaboratively across disciplines and with diversity of individuals.



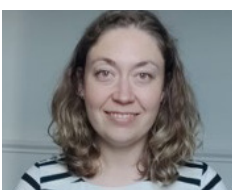
### **Natalie Meiklejohn - Woodland Carbon Code (Scottish Forestry)**

My background is in ecological science and management, with diverse experience in the fields of plant pathology, geospatial science, contaminated land, and renewable energy. Most recently, I moved to Scotland in 2022 to complete an MSc in Carbon Management at the University of Edinburgh. I joined Scottish Forestry in November 2023 as one of the Woodland Carbon Code Co-Ordinators, managing the flow of projects through various stages of the UK Land and Carbon Registry. Natural capital markets are a rapidly evolving space both in the UK and internationally, and I am passionate about ensuring that these schemes deliver the best outcomes for climate, nature, and local communities. Nothing makes me happier than being outdoors hiking, camping and trail running, although I am still trying to adjust to the Scottish winters!



### **Greg Packman - The Royal Parks**

I have worked with trees since 2009, starting as a volunteer in conservation before working as a gardener, tree surgeon, consultant and tree officer. I currently work for The Royal Parks, covering the tree management for Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, St James's Park and other locations. My job is very fulfilling and rewarding as I get to spend my days around trees and cover fascinating areas such as tree health, landscape and ecological management, pests and diseases, public engagement and more. Outside of work I spend a lot of time working with different organisations to promote trees and engage people with trees, delivering a large amount of tree walks and other tree education events.



### **Dr Kate Palmer - Pryor & Rickett Silviculture**

I joined the forestry industry in 2022, initially as a Forester at Pryor and Rickett, and was quickly promoted to Forest Manager. I started my current role as Key Client Manager in March, I am excited to improve our service provision for our clients with large portfolios by supporting our forest managers across the business. I am a career changer into the forestry sector, with a background in transport electrification. I am passionate about long term strategy and innovation. After completing a PhD in the effects of vehicle electrification on a city network, I developed local and regional transport decarbonisation strategy within my role as a Transport Innovation consultant. Living in the highlands, I love exploring the hills on my bike, and swimming across the lochs in all seasons.



### **Lamorna Richards - Tilhill**

Since September 2022 I have been working as an Assistant Forest Manager in South Wales for Tilhill Forestry. There is a great forestry network within the industry, and I enjoy meeting new foresters with varying backgrounds. I am currently an Associate member of the Institute of Chartered Foresters. I previously sat on the ICF Wales Member Network as part of the student role as President of the Bangor University Forestry Student's Association and I have now joined as a committee member. I love spending time outdoors, anywhere from the Cornish coast, where I grew up, to the Welsh mountains.



### **Charles Robinson MICFor - Robinson Forestry Ltd**

I have an honours degree from Harper Adams University in Countryside Management and a Masters in Forestry. I became a Chartered Forester in 2017 and sit on the Midlands Member Network committee. I established Robinson Forestry Ltd in 2022, which has expanded rapidly since its inception, and now lead a team of five capable foresters, delivering for clients across Central England. I have spent the last five years within the private forestry sector, leading on forestry management for a range of estates and landowners. Prior to this recent private sector experience, I worked for the National Forest as Head of Forestry, where I led large-scale forest creation and woodland management. This included facilitating grants for landowners, land acquisition and working with partners to deliver forest creation projects throughout the 200 square miles of the National Forest. I have had other roles with the National Forest Company (Woodland Management Officer), Natural England (Land Management Officer), Cotswolds AONB (Farm & Woodland Adviser) and the National Trust (Estates Forester).



### **Peter Roe - Tilhill**

Since joining Tilhill nearly four years ago I have worked hard to develop myself into a well-rounded forester in the Southern uplands of Scotland. Working in the area I have seen what forms the powerhouse of commercial forestry in the UK and understand the value and importance of strong leadership in the sector. I am passionate about responsible land management and silviculture that best meet the needs of society and the land itself. I believe in a diversified approach to commercial forestry in the UK; and as we try to move further away from a single productive species, we must consider the age-old adage of "the tree that pays is the tree that stays". In my free time I like to get out on my bike or in my running shoes and enjoy the mountains and gravel roads of Scotland.



### **Harriet Schiavone - Savills**

I joined Savills as a Forestry Manager in the South of England in 2021, after a ten-year career working in international development consultancy. I provide advisory services to landowners ranging from estate owners and farmers through to private institutions on woodland management and planning, grant applications and management of grant related works, timber harvesting and marketing, design and implementation of new planting and restocking, and woodland mapping and GIS. I am particularly interested in how woodland management strategically fits within multiple land uses and income streams. I am also a Trustee of the Royal Forestry Society.



### **Dr Helen Sellars MICFor - Scottish Forestry**

I am currently Head of Sustainable Forest Management in Scottish Forestry, leading on Forestry policy relating to climate change adaptation and resilience, the physical and biological environment and landscape. I am passionate about trees, woodlands and forests delivering on all aspects of sustainable forest management, and implementing positive change to meet future challenges. My career began in academia, followed by time in delivery of forestry grants and regulations, and land management in Forest and Land Scotland, with time also in strategic project management, and natural resource policy in Defra and the Scottish Government. I love spending time with family doing a range activities such as swimming, tennis and cricket, and also some old favourites of yoga and off-road cycling.



### **Orri Stevens MICFor - Forestry Commission**

My career began as a forestry contractor and consultant working across South West England. I then spent five years as a Forest Manager for a large private estate before moving to the East of England in August 2023. I now have a technical development role within the Forestry Commission working with Level 6 Apprentices and other Forest Services staff. Growing up on the North Devon coast, I have a love of the sea and a passion for wild places. I spent my childhood roaming woods and forests, now I get to do the same as an adult!



### **Dr Neil Strong MICFor - Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd**

I studied forestry and ecology as an undergraduate (Edinburgh) and a post-graduate (Portsmouth). After a brief foray in to the furniture industry managing European funded research projects, I joined the railway in 2001 as the its first arboriculturist. Twenty-odd years later I am biodiversity strategy manager providing expertise and support on sustainable management of the whole estate necessary to improve the safety and biodiversity of the rail network. My early railway roles worked on management of lineside assets including vegetation and boundary measures. My current focus is delivering guidance and tools to integrate the management of biodiversity on the rail network into existing practice. This work has to take account of environmental and social obligations on an estate where trains pass at up to 125mph. I am a cub scout leader in Buckinghamshire and take advantage of company volunteer leave to camp as often as possible – with my Cubs and any of the other sections given the chance!



### **Jacob Strutt - Richmond Borough Council**

Since January 2024, I have been serving as the Arboriculture Officer for the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames, assessing planning applications in relation to trees, defending Tree Preservation Orders at Planning Committee and overseeing the transition from Uniform to Agile for the Parks department. I am passionate about preserving trees in the urban environment for future generations. My career began as a Tree Surgeon, running my own business and eventually moving into surveying and consultancy before joining Richmond council in May 2023 as a Trees and Landscape Officer. I enjoy spending as much time as possible with my wife and young son and I love playing chess, playing guitar in bands and kickboxing to keep fit.



### **Gary Waters - Raise**

I am currently lead forester for Cumbria Community Forest, as a small team of two we have established and grown the charity since 2022 to deliver woodland creation with economically deprived communities in north and west Cumbria. I am proud of my role in kickstarting tree planting work in our charity. And have enjoyed the challenging transition to the NGO side of the industry. I began my career, with a tree surgery background, in South Scotland in commercial forestry working as a forest manager for forestry assets funds and high net-worth individuals. I pride myself in applying productive standards and a commercial mindset to community forestry in order to maximise Social, Economic and Environmental outcomes. Outside of forestry, I am a keen fell walker and boulderer with the occasional splash of SUP when the rain stops in Cumbria!



### **Dr Bertie Welch - Forest of Marston Vale**

I've always had a keen interest in trees and forests since childhood and have been in and around forestry for a while now. I completed a PhD in Forest Ecosystem Ecology before working in a range of industries as a data scientist. Like many people the pandemic made me reassess my career path and so I started the distance learning MSc in Forestry at Bangor. I now work part-time for the Forest of Marston Vale assisting the delivery of the Trees for Climate project. Outside of work, I spend much of my time outdoors hiking and exploring nature.



### **Jenny Wilson MICFor - Forestry England**

Over the last ten years I've worked in a variety of roles within Forestry England including woodland creation on brownfield sites, leading on recreation activities in the nation's forests and latterly steering the ship for the timber side of our business in the south of England. It's been a roller-coaster of a ride and I've enjoyed all the jobs to date. I moved south with my young family three years ago and love living in the South Downs. I've recently taken up running and completed couch to 5k and am trying to keep this up! I enjoy going to the theatre, spending time in nature with my children and walking my dog.