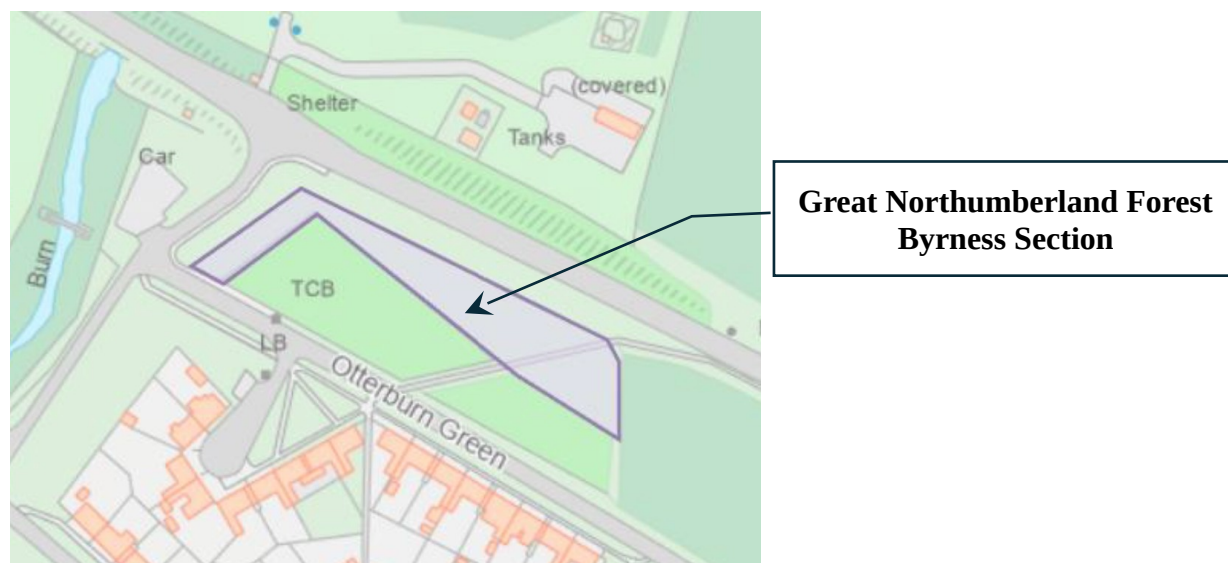


Parish Councillors Susan Chapman and Peter Softley met with Kirsten Johnson (NCC Woodland Officer) and Lee Hollins (Forestry England – FE) regarding the planned planting of the previously mentioned 220 trees in Byrness following the successful grant application to the Great Northumberland Forest.



Trees will be planted no closer than 10m to any road, and a 1.5m grassed strip will be maintained either side of the path from Otterburn Green to the path alongside the A68.

With more reported sightings of red squirrel and the presence of grey at Catcleugh, the woodland officer has reduced the number of hazel and increased alders to improve the future habitat for the reds.

FE will plant 190 trees on weekdays over the next couple of weeks by planting staff currently working above Catcleugh.

The extra 30 alder can be planted with Kirsten's assistance as a community event taking place on a Saturday to enable as many people as possible from the village to take part. Trees, stakes and biodegradable deer guards and ties will be provided. The stakes and ties will be removed by an approved NCC/FE contractor in the future. Tree species and numbers shown below:

Common name	Number	%
Common Alder	60	27
Silver Birch	20	9
Hazel	20	9
Hawthorn	40	18
Holly	20	9
Crab apple	30	14
Bird Cherry	20	9
Pedunculate Oak	10	5

Any Parish resident wishing to take part in the 'community' planting please contact the Parish Clerk at rochesterwithbyrnesspc@gmail.com

Further to the message on 9 September, 2025 the Parish Council is pleased to provide an update with the Great Northumberland Forest (GNF) to provide 200 trees to be planted on the wet grassed area that lies between Otterburn Green and the A68. The funding application has been successful and Forestry England are due to undertake the planting in early December, possibly sometime week commencing 1 December.

The trees that will be planted will be approximately 40cm in height and will be planted with guards. The grassed area where the planting will take place will not be cut but GNF advise this will not deter the growth of the trees.

Planting will be placed to allow and recognise the existing pedestrian route from Otterburn Green to the pavement on the A68. That grassed route will continue to be cut at regular intervals.

Depending on the weather and experience of the planting team there may be an opportunity for local residents to assist with the planting. Should anyone be interested in taking part please contact the Parish Clerk at rochesterwithbyrnesspc@hotmail.co.uk

More details will be shared when further information is received.

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council is working with Forestry Commission (FC) to develop and implement a Woodland Management Plan for the areas within Byrness that is the responsibility of the Parish Council.

It is understood Woodland Management Plans are long term projects and will require numerous applications for funding as this is a matter the Parish Council would not be able to fund from the precept.

The Parish Council is grateful for the expertise and guidance of the FC that will be vital as the project progresses. At this time the ideas are fairly fluid but against the overall project vision recorded below some proposals being suggested so far include:-

- Revitalise the community orchard area to improve the health of the trees as well as the productivity and repair the boundary fence.
- Remove the small number of larch in the area to avoid the disease identified in Kielder spreading
- To remove / reduce size of trees that are not healthy and potential danger to the users of the woodland and property neighbouring the area.
- To replant native, wildlife friendly trees where appropriate to increase biodiversity of the area.
- To introduce footpaths through the area with possible information boards to increase the experience for both local residents as well as visitors to the area.
- Potentially reduce the height of the trees that form the shelter belt to the village.

Byrness Woodland Management Plan vision

The Parish Council has the vision that the woodland within the Byrness community will be healthy, have improved biodiversity across the whole area as well improved access for people

to explore. There will be defined footpaths through the woodland and appropriate fencing as well as gates to allow access to all.

One aspect of the plan that it is hoped should be started shortly is the planting of up to 200 native, wildlife friendly trees by The Great Northumberland Forest (GNF) on the almost constant wet area between Otterburn Green and the A68. Again this is subject to a successful funding application but would help to reduce the amount of water seepage on the land near Otterburn Green as well as help as a sound barrier the traffic noise on the A68. The trees will be planted by GNF and will ensure that there is no impact on visibility for drivers. If all goes according to plan the planting of these trees should happen between November, 2025 and February, 2026.

As a separate project Tyne Rivers Trust are due to undertake further coppicing of the willow between Otterburn Green and the A68 this winter as part of an initial three stage plan to contain the growth of the willow.

As there are developments of the Woodland Management Plan the Parish Council will provide an update.

Rochester with Byrness Parish Council