**For immediate release: XX date**

**Friends of the Earth reveals land to boost woodland cover in [local authority name]**

* Environmental campaigners launch with [map of local woodland creation opportunities across the country](https://takeclimateaction.uk/woodland-opportunity-mapping-england)
* Woodland cover in England can be doubled from current level of 10%, without impact on important habitats and farmland
* **[local authority name]** has potential to reach **[xx]**% tree cover

Friends of the Earth and mapping consultancy Terra Sulis, supported by players of People’s Postcode Lottery, have launched the first ever map of existing and potential woodland in every local authority in England.

This reveals that it is possible to double woodland cover in England from its current level of 10% without encroaching on high-value arable farmland, Priority Habitats, peat bogs or protected nature sites. Much of the opportunity land for woodland is low grade farmland, which means it’s crucial that government supports farmers to grow more trees on their land.

**[Local Authority name]** currently has woodland cover of **[xx]**%. Friends of the Earth’s analysis shows that this could be increased to **[xx]**%. **[detail on where the opportunities are]**. The environmental campaigners call on **[local council name]** to commit to boosting woodland cover, but it’s also crucial that central government support and funding is in place. Friends of the Earth say a national tree cover target should be included in the England Tree Strategy, which is expected this spring.

Use Friends of the Earth’s [online map,](https://takeclimateaction.uk/woodland-opportunity-mapping-england) enter your postcode and click the map to see existing and opportunity for woodland cover in your local authority area. You can also see a table showing the Local Authorities with the largest woodland creation opportunity. Download the full dataset [here](https://takeclimateaction.uk/download/woodland-opportunity-mapping-local-authority-full-dataset).

The map only covers potential woodland and does not include opportunities for trees in urban areas - such as street trees, public parks and gardens. Including these would highlight significantly more opportunities to grow trees in England. Indeed, several urban councils, including Blackpool, Bristol, Hackney, Leeds and Wigan have already committed to double tree cover within their local authority areas.

**[Campaigner name], [local group name] Friends of the Earth campaigner, said:**

“Having more trees in **[name of local authority]** would help us fight climate breakdown while enabling more people to access nature in their local area. We need **[local council name]** to step up and help us create more woodland, but it’s time that ministers in Westminster take the climate crisis seriously.”

**Laura Chow, head of charities at People’s Postcode Lottery, said:**

“This mapping research shows the game changing potential of local climate action. Trees are a highly valuable natural solution to address the climate crisis, so I’m delighted that players of People’s Postcode Lottery are supporting research into woodland creation and tree planting in communities across the country.”

**ENDS**

**For more information contact the Friends of the Earth press office on 020 7566 1649 / 07718 394786 (out of hours – please do not text this number) or by emaling** **media@foe.co.uk** **[change this to local contact details]**

**Notes to editors**

1. Use Friends of the Earth’s [online map,](https://takeclimateaction.uk/woodland-opportunity-mapping-england) enter your postcode and click the map to see existing and opportunity woodland cover in your local authority area.
	1. “NFI existing woodland” refers to the percentage of the local authority area that is already covered in woodland, as measured by the government’s National Forest Inventory (NFI).
	2. “Future opportunity” refers to the percentage of the local authority area identified in the study as potentially suitable for woodland creation.
2. Full local authority dataset, showing current and potential woodland in hectares and land percentage, can be downloaded [here](https://takeclimateaction.uk/download/woodland-opportunity-mapping-local-authority-full-dataset).
3. The data for existing woodland is sourced from the government’s National Forest Inventory, the most comprehensive survey of woodlands in England. This covers any woodland in Great Britain of at least 0.5 hectares in area with a minimum width of 20 m, and that have at least 20% tree canopy cover.
4. To calculate opportunity woodland, the study excluded:
	1. Good quality farmland (grades 1 – 3a).
	2. Priority habitats.
	3. Upland peat bogs.
	4. Protected areas designated for the conservation of habitats and species (such as SSSIs).
	5. Urban areas, non-agricultural land and water bodies.
	6. Pasture land that hasn't been ploughed for a number of years because some of these might be valuable for more diverse plant life.
	7. Existing woodland.
5. The data focusses on potential woodland creation and does not include trees in urban areas – such as street trees, public parks and gardens. Many urban areas however do have opportunities to grow more trees. Several urban councils, including Blackpool, Bristol, Hackney, Leeds and Wigan have committed to double tree cover within their local authority areas. The data also doesn’t reflect opportunities for agroforestry – planting trees on farmland.
6. Limitations in official data mean the woodland opportunity map has not comprehensively excluded all potentially sensitive sites. For example, the Government’s maps of species-rich grassland are incomplete, and more research needs to be carried out about the locations of these biodiverse meadows. Before starting a woodland creation program, it is vital to undertake an ecological survey. Important archaeological sites also need to be excluded, which may need to be done on a case-by-case basis.
7. Friends of the Earth wants to double tree cover as part of our [Climate Action Plan for councils](/node/203). Doubling tree cover could remove 10% of the planet-wrecking emissions in the UK annually.
8. About Friends of the Earth: Friends of the Earth is an international community dedicated to the protection of the natural world and the wellbeing of everyone in it. We bring together more than two million people in 75 countries, combining people power all over the world to transform local actions into global impact. For more information visit: https://friendsoftheearth.uk/ follow us at @friends\_earth, or like our Facebook page. **[Feel free to add details of websites and social media profiles for you local groups here]**