

Good morning,

I am writing to let you know that we will soon start forestry operations in parts of Blackborough woods managed by Forestry England.

We expect to start working around 27th July for several weeks, starting on the eastern side of the woodlands first. The public rights of ways will stay open. Work will commence during weekdays 8am to 5pm.

I wanted to let you know about what is happening in these parts of the woodland.

We are thinning across a large area of the woodlands. This means removing selective trees for timber products. This gives the remaining trees more light and space to grow to their full potential. It also lets more light onto the forest floor which helps the flora. This is part of our long-term sustainable management of Blackborough. There is more information about this work on our website at <https://www.forestryengland.uk/forests-lifecycle>

For certain parts of Blackborough, we are clear felling trees in a small area. This means we are removing all the trees at once because they have matured and are ready for timber extraction. The timber will be used furniture, fences, and building materials. Even the bark, wood shavings and sawdust are used. Nothing is wasted.

I have attached a map to explain where we will be working. In areas highlighted yellow we will be conducting routine thinning to maintain the health and quality of the trees. In areas highlighted pink, we will be clear-felling Spruce as it has reached maturity and is ready to be harvested for its valuable timber.

Some areas will be closed completely whilst operations are on site. Please follow all signs and instructions at all times. These are for your safety, whether or not you can see or hear us working. This will help us to finish working as quickly as possible.

Forestry work is very hazardous. A falling tree can weigh several tonnes and hit the ground at nearly 60mph. If a harvesting machine chainsaw snaps, it can fly through the forest like a bullet.

Before we start any forestry work, we conduct thorough ecological surveys to check for species such as birds, mammals, rodents, invertebrates, flora, and fungi. We consider these findings against complex factors including tree health, how the ground slopes, soil condition, and likely rainfall when planning work that will support our long-term management plan. Our working windows are dictated by site ground conditions too, so most of the Blackdown Hills work is preferred in the summer to minimise soil damage. There is not a single, perfect time of year for forestry work.

Thinning woodland will improve habitat for nesting birds but also wider ecological improvements in terms of biodiversity. We will retain any trees with nests. Presence of schedule one species will be checked prior to commencement and operations stopped if necessary. There is more information about this work on our website at <https://www.forestryengland.uk/blog/tree-felling-in-nesting-season>

We understand that residents may not be familiar with sustainable forest management, and we are keen to explain how this planned work supports the long-term health and resilience of the forest. Our climate is changing, bringing new threats to our trees, and we need to build

resilience within our forests. With this in mind, we are already planning how we will restock the area with a diverse range of tree species that will thrive in the climate conditions we expect in 2050 and beyond.

You can read our full forest plan for Blackborough online at

<https://www.forestryengland.uk/forest-planning/blackdown-hills-forest-plan>

I would be grateful if you would be able to share this information through your news channels or email distributions.

If you have any questions or have queries from residents, please refer them to

westengland@forestryengland.uk.

Kind regards,
Chris.

Chris Goode

Community Ranger

East Devon & Blackdown Hills

Forestry England

www.forestryengland.uk



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