Friends of the Fal Waste Management Policy

Policy Creation Date	04/11/2025
Version	V1.0
Status	Approved
Policy Review Date(s)	November 2027

Introduction

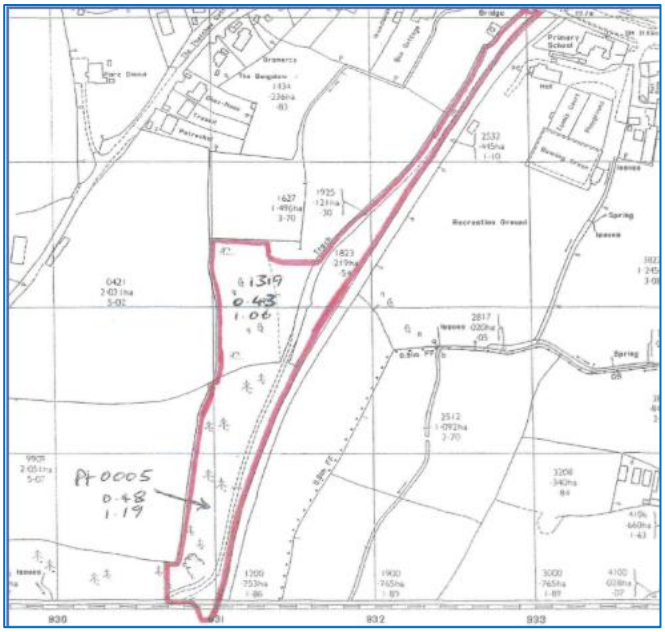
The UK Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) serves as the technical benchmark for sustainable forest management across the UK. It outlines the essential requirements and offers guidance to foresters on implementing sustainable practices. This policy aligns with UKFS principles, forming the basis for regulatory oversight and supporting enforcement processes. Additionally, it underpins quality assurance measures and helps assess compliance with environmental management standards.

Overview

Scope and Application

As per the UKFS, the minimum area of land classified as a forest is defined internationally as 0.5 hectares. Within the UKFS, the term ‘forest’ indicates all types and sizes of forest and woodland. References to ‘forest and woodland’ or ‘woodland’ are made only where needed for clarity or to reflect commonly used terms (e.g. woodland creation, native woodland, riparian woodland). It does not extend to the management of individual trees (arboriculture)



This policy applies to the Friends of the Fal within the given boundary leased from the Trewithen Estate bringing the total area to 1.25 hectares

UKFS Requirements for Forests and Soil

Country waste management regulations apply to sewage sludge and other waste materials (such as waste soil, bark, wood or other plant material) that may be applied to forest or other soils. Exemptions are applicable for the application of materials not considered to be 'waste', such as approved or acceptable use of brash and some composts, with the provision that these ameliorate the soil.

The EU Waste Framework Directive 2008 (2008/98/EC) (WFD) introduced a new exclusion from waste controls, namely "natural non-hazardous agricultural or forestry material used in farming, forestry or for the production of energy". It is important to note that the exclusion applies only where the material is to be used, not discarded, as in the practices adopted by Friends of the Fal.

Friends of the Fal uses the appropriate types and quantities of material for beneficial purposes such as habitat creation/restoration or soil protection, which are wholly justified and appropriate, particularly in the case of brash and tree lop/top. Materials are retained on the site to protect the soil from compaction or erosion, to avoid soil disturbance, diffuse pollution, and to facilitate the recycling of nutrients back into the soil. The retention of material may also be used to encourage the establishment of preferred vegetation and woodland species assemblages. Such practice is commonly used in a forestry context as part of brash management and referred to as 'felling to recycle'. It must be noted that the practice of creating 'dead hedges' is also to protect the public from the riverbank of the River Fal.

The main objective is to 'ensure that waste is recovered or disposed of without endangering human health and without using processes or methods that could harm the environment, and without

1) Risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals
2) Causes a nuisance through noise or odours
3) Adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest

Definition of waste

In general, waste must fit into the concept of discarding, disposing or getting rid of. The key question is: has the substance or object been discarded so that it is no longer of use? It is the responsibility of the Friends of the Fal to decide whether a substance or objects in their possession are waste and, in being so, to take the necessary actions relating to waste.

The following table defines waste produced during forestry operations.

Exempted wastes (from the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994)	
Wastes are exempt from disposal licensing if spread on forest, woodland, and agricultural land	
Waste soil or compost	Waste wood, bark or any other plant matter including brash

All waste plant material may be treated by chipping, shredding, cutting, pulverising, or burning. **Composting of forestry waste is an exemption**.

Third Party Responsibilities

Sub-contractors need to adhere to the Friends of the Fal policy on reuse, recovery, recycling or disposal of the waste produced. Friends of the Fal remain responsible for ensuring the waste is handled, recycled or disposed of safely and legally.

Categories and uses of Woodland Materials

Chipped material (mulch)

Chipped material will only be introduced by third parties through one of the following methods:

- Chipping on-site using external machinery
- Delivery of pre-chipped wood material by an approved supplier

1) Application Restrictions Based on Existing Vegetation

Where the existing ground cover already comprises the target vegetation type (i.e., the type being promoted through restoration), the application of chipped material is not permitted.

2) Application to Non-Target Vegetation Areas

In areas where ground cover consists of non-target vegetation types (e.g., bramble, nettle, or bracken), the use of chipped material must be justified, i.e. installation of a new permissive path.

3) Application in Bare or Sparsely Vegetated Areas

Where existing ground cover is absent or minimal, the application of mulch may be appropriate to help establish the physical conditions necessary for habitat regeneration. In these cases, the following conditions must be met:

a) Mulch must be applied lightly, ensuring it does not smother the soil's natural seed bank unless specific smothering is required (e.g., for surfacing woodland paths or playground zones).
b) Elsewhere, mulch application should allow a minimum of 25% light penetration to the soil surface to facilitate regeneration from seed and prevent suppression of emerging or existing vegetation.

Brash (e.g. branches) Management in Woodland Conservation

Brash consisting of branches and offcuts resulting from felling, pruning, or coppicing is an essential element of effective woodland management, particularly when tailored to the specific conditions of the site.

Use of Brash by Friends of the Fal

At Friends of the Fal, brash is carefully harvested and sorted for multiple practical and ecological uses. Sorted materials are repurposed into:

- Posts and infill for dead hedging
- Hibernacula (log piles) for wildlife shelter
- Woodland seating and path edging
- Brash piles to support biodiversity
- Hurdle fencing

This approach provides numerous benefits beyond waste reduction, including:

- Wildlife Habitat Creation: Brash structures offer shelter and breeding areas for insects, reptiles, small mammals, and birds
- Public Safety: Dead hedges and hurdle fences form natural barriers that prevent visitors from approaching hazardous areas, such as unstable riverbanks along the River Fal.
- Wayfinding: Brash features help guide visitors along defined routes, improving accessibility while protecting fragile habitats.
- Habitat Protection: Physical barriers discourage entry into sensitive areas, reducing the risk of disturbance from people and dogs.
- Management for Conservation and Community Engagement: By integrating traditional woodland practices with environmentally sensitive methods, Friends of the Fal utilises brash as a multifunctional resource that supports both conservation goals and community participation. As woodland tasks are carried out by volunteers, freshly produced material in the form of brambles, nettles, bracken is continually added to dead hedges, helping to maintain their structural integrity over time. This approach not only extends the lifespan and effectiveness of these natural barriers but also reinforces their role as valuable wildlife habitats and protective features within the woodland.

(Dead hedge created using discarded Christmas trees to protect the public from the riverbank

(Dead hedge providing habitat protection and public log pathway edging)

Brash can be piled and left to naturally decompose as well as to craft hurdle fencing and hibernacula. This will provide shelter and nesting opportunities for birds, hedgehogs and other small mammals. As the matter starts to break down, it will increase insect life, which will then help feed many other species up the food chain, such as fungi, slow worms, toads, mice, birds, voles, lizards and amphibians.

This approach is suitable for all types of hedgerows, brash, on the provision there is no sign of any tree disease visible. Brash piles provide an important refuge and therefore increasing the habitat structure of the Friends of the Fal Woodland. To create a brash pile, require logs and branches on the ground to create a heap, ideally from 2.0 to 8.0m long by 1.0 to 1.5m high. Reptiles also need access to humid environments to help them cope with climate change by delivering a structurally diverse habitat with more complex or dense vegetation, such as brash piles, can provide cooler and more humid retreats.

Tree stumps

Stump Removal Considerations in Woodland Management

1) Presumption Against Stump Removal:
Removing tree stumps can disturb soil structure, damage the forest floor, and negatively impact woodland ecology. Therefore, stump removal should not be carried out without a thorough site assessment.

2) Exceptions for Tree Health:
In certain circumstances, stump removal may be necessary to control tree diseases or pathogens, particularly: Heterobasidion annosum (Conifer root and butt rot), which can spread from infected stumps to surrounding trees, or other site-specific pathogens identified during woodland health monitoring.

3) Assessment Requirements:
Before removal, a site-specific assessment should evaluate:

- Soil type and susceptibility to erosion or compaction.
- Presence of sensitive flora and fauna.
- Risk of pathogen spread if stumps are left in situ.
- Potential impacts on hydrology and natural regeneration.

4) Best Practice:

- Minimise soil disturbance during removal.
- Consider alternative control measures (e.g., stump treatment, removal of infected material only).
- Follow guidance from forestry and plant health authorities.

River Pollution

All waste generated through woodland management tasks must be handled responsibly to protect both the woodland ecosystem and the connected river system. Under no circumstances should any organic or non-organic waste be thrown, swept, or allowed to enter the river.
Organic materials such as brash, branches, or leaf litter should be either composted on-site or incorporated into dead hedges, where they provide valuable wildlife habitat and support natural decomposition.

Any pollution, litter, or invasive plant material discovered within or along the river must be manually removed to prevent further spread and contamination downstream. Invasive species such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, or Rhododendron ponticum can be carried by flowing water, quickly colonising new areas and outcompeting native flora. These must be carefully extracted and disposed of

in accordance with UK invasive species regulations, ensuring no plant fragments are left behind or reintroduced elsewhere (see section invasive species for details)

To reduce risk, a minimum team of three people must be present during any in-river work:

- Two volunteers may enter the river to collect debris or pollution.
- One bankside safety person (banks person) remains on the riverbank to oversee safety, provide assistance, and help lift or haul waste up the riverbank.

All removed pollution and waste materials are to be collected and transported to an approved council waste disposal centre for safe and appropriate disposal.

Examples of pollution pulled out of the River Fal including Christmas decorations, tyres, carpet and furniture

Invasive, Toxic and Over-Dominant Species Management

The presence of invasive and over-dominant species poses a significant threat to the health, biodiversity, and safety of the woodland and connected river habitats. These species can outcompete native plants, alter soil chemistry, destabilise riverbanks, and, in some cases, present direct risks to humans and animals. Effective management is essential to maintain a balanced, resilient woodland ecosystem and safe public access.

Key Species and Control Measures

1. *Rhododendron ponticum (non-UK native)* 💀
    a. Forms dense, evergreen thickets that shade out native ground flora and suppress tree regeneration.
    b. All parts of the plant (leaves, stems, flowers) contain toxic grayanotoxins, which can cause illness or death if ingested.
    c. Management involves cutting back, stump treatment with appropriate herbicide where necessary, and ongoing monitoring for regrowth.
    d. Removed material are stacked in dry areas, bagged in a quarantined area to prevent accidental contact and regrowth. Volunteers/ contractors must wear gloves and protective clothing when handling this species.

2. *Yellow Archangel; Lamiastrum galeobdolon var. Argentatum* 💀
    a. Spreads rapidly forming dense ground cover that suppresses native wildflowers.
    b. The plant is poisonous to cats, dogs and horses.
    c. Small patches should be dug out by hand, including roots and runners.
    d. All plant material must be bagged securely and stored in the quarantined area until fully decomposed to prevent spread.

3. *Himalayan Balsam; Impatiens glandulifera (non-UK native)*
    a. Frequently spread by river flow; dominates riverbanks and contributes to soil erosion when it dies back in winter.
    b. Plants should be hand-pulled before seed pods develop (typically June or July) and either bagged for secure containment in the quarantine area or left to decompose away from watercourses.
    c. Regular monitoring upstream is essential to prevent reintroduction.

4. *Bracken; Pteridium aquilinum*
    a. Aggressively spreads via underground rhizomes, forming dense stands that suppress woodland ground flora and young tree regeneration.
    b. Control involves mechanical cutting or bruising twice during the growing season (mid-June and late July/August).
    c. Bracken litter can be composted or used as path surfacing once fully dried, ensuring spores are not spread into regenerating areas.

5. *Lesser periwinkle; Vinca minor* 💀
    a. Ground spreading Lesser Periwinkle can tolerate shade and poor soil to outcompete native plants and reduce species diversity. The plant is poisonous to cats, dogs and horses.

b. Small patches should be dug out by hand, including roots and runners.
c. All plant material must be bagged securely and stored in the quarantined area until fully decomposed to prevent spread.

6. *Sycamore; Acer pseudoplatanus*
    a. Regenerates prolifically and can outcompete slower-growing native trees such as oak, hazel, and holly, leading to a monoculture given the area of Friends of the Fal woodland.
    b. Management involves hand-pulling or cutting young saplings and selective thinning of established trees to maintain mixed canopy structure.
    c. Felled sycamore can be repurposed for habitat piles, or dead hedging, keeping valuable biomass in the woodland.

7. *Hemlock Water Dropwort; Oenanthe crocata* 💀
    a. Highly toxic to humans and dogs if ingested or enters via an open wound, though beneficial for pollinators in wild areas.
    b. For public safety, it is removed from areas accessible to visitors, especially footpaths and picnic areas.
    c. Plants should be dug out before seed pods develop and either bagged for secure containment in the quarantine area or left to decompose away from public areas.
    d. This species reinforces the importance of public staying on designated paths and areas.

Disposal and Containment

- All removed poisonous/ toxic plant material should be placed in heavy-duty black bags and stacked in the quarantined area within the woodland until fully decomposed.
- All other removed invasive or over-dominant plant material should be placed either in composting or used to build dead hedges, enhancing wildlife habitat
- The quarantined area is situated away from watercourses, compost heaps, and public access areas.
- No plant fragments, roots, or seeds should be left in areas where they could re-establish, enter the river, or be accidentally spread or ingested by volunteers or wildlife where the plant is toxic.

Volunteer Safety and Biosecurity

- Volunteers must wear gloves, protective clothing, and appropriate footwear when handling toxic or aggressive species.
- In-river or riverbank invasive species removal should only take place under safe water conditions, with a minimum team of three: two in the river collecting material, and one bankside safety person assisting and monitoring.

Pathogens and Pest Waste Management

Proper management of waste arising from woodland activities is essential to protect the ecosystem, prevent the spread of invasive species, pathogens, and pests, and ensure volunteer and public safety. All organic and non-organic waste must be handled according to these protocols.

Waste generated from infected or pest-affected trees/ plants must be handled differently to prevent the spread of disease and infestation.

1. *Identification and Segregation*

- Recognise affected material:
    - Diseased trees or branches (e.g., ash dieback, fungal infections)
    - Insect-infested plants
- Clearly mark and separate infected material from healthy woodland debris.

1. Handling and Safety

- Volunteers must wear appropriate PPE when handling infected material.
- Tools must be cleaned and disinfected between uses to prevent cross-contamination.

2. Containment

- Place all infected or pest-affected material in heavy-duty black bags or secure quarantine piles.
- Store in a clearly marked quarantine area, away from:
    - Public paths
    - Watercourses
    - On-site compost heaps

4. Transport and Disposal

- Infected or pest-affected material must be taken to an approved council waste facility or specialist composting site capable of handling diseased plant matter by a contractor.
- On-site composting is not permitted for pathogen or pest material.
- In some cases, controlled burning may be allowed if compliant with local regulations.

5. Biosecurity Measures

- Clean hands and tools after handling infected material.
- Avoid moving soil or debris from quarantine areas to unaffected parts of the woodland.
- Under no circumstances should a leaf blower be used in or around infected areas. The use of leaf blowers can disperse fungal spores, pathogens, and contaminated debris into previously unaffected zones, significantly increasing the risk of cross-contamination and disease spread.
    - Safe Alternatives used

      In areas affected by pathogens or pests, debris should be managed using low-disturbance, manual methods. Hand tools such as rakes, brushes, hand saws and

shovels are preferred, as they minimise the movement of air and soil that can spread spores or larvae. Collected waste should be carefully contained in designated bags or containers for safe removal by contractors or on-site composting in quarantined areas.

6. River-Specific Considerations

- Do not allow infected or pest-affected material to the river or other watercourses.
- Manual removal from rivers should be done only in low water conditions, with a minimum of three people:
    - Two in the river collecting debris
    - One banks person assisting and ensuring safety
    - Collected material must follow standard containment and disposal procedures as per the contractor elsewise collected and secured in the quarantine area

7. Record-Keeping

- Maintain a log including:
    - Date and location of removal by a contractor or volunteer
    - Type of pathogen or pest
    - Volume of material removed
    - Disposal method and destination

Other Woodland Waste

Proper management of waste generated during woodland maintenance is essential to protect the ecosystem, encourage biodiversity, and maintain volunteer and public safety through activities like litter picking, clearing, or emptying bins around the woodland.

1. Segregation of Waste

- Identify the type of waste before removal:
    - Organic materials: brash, leaf litter, small branches
    - Non-organic materials: litter, plastic, glass, rope, string, metal, wire, dog poo bags, dog excrement or other debris
- Segregate waste to ensure it is directed to the appropriate disposal or reuse method.

2. Handling and Safety

- Volunteers must wear gloves and appropriate protective clothing.
- Care should be taken when handling brash, sharp branches, or heavy loads.
- Avoid working in high-risk areas such as riverbanks during mid- to high-water conditions.

3. Reuse and Containment

- Organic material can be:
    - Composted on-site if free from toxic species, pests or pathogens in specified composting areas
    - Used to build dead hedges, enhancing wildlife habitat
- Non-organic waste should be bagged and removed to an approved disposal site.
- The onsite dog poo bins are emptied once a week by volunteers and decanted into the Cornwall Council public bins at the main entrance

- Recyclable litter such as glass bottles, aluminium cans, are taken back to the homes of volunteers and added to the regular household recycling by Cornwall Council.
- Metal is taken to recycling point for charitable purposes

Example of dog poo bins being emptied weekly by Friends of the Fal

4. Transport and Disposal

- All waste that cannot be reused must be:
    - Bagged or contained securely
    - Taken to an approved council waste disposal facility
    - Taken home for recycling
    - Placed in the public bins provided outside the main entrance of Friends of the Fal woodland
- No woodland waste should be left near rivers or paths to prevent pollution and blockages for public access.

5. Biosecurity and Monitoring

- Clean tools after working in different areas of the woodland.
- Maintain a simple log of waste removal, including type and quantity of waste, disposal method, and location.
    - Safe Alternatives. Debris should be managed using low-disturbance, manual methods. Hand tools such as rakes, brushes, and shovels are preferred, as they minimise the movement of air and soil that can spread spores or larvae. Collected waste should be carefully contained in bags or containers for safe removal off site or on-site composting/ added to dead hedges.


Friends of the Fal

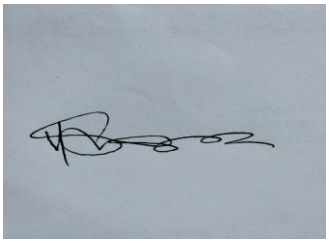
Friends of the Fal Representative 1:

Name: Fran Swanson

Position: Chair

Date: 05/11/2025

Signature:



Friends of the Fal Representative 2:

Name: Sarah Roberson

Position: Secretary

Date: 05/11/2025

Signature: