

FORESTRY GRANT SCHEME (FGS)

Woodland Creation: Designed Open Ground

This note should be read alongside the guidance for woodland creation mapping and the eligibility details of the woodland creation option(s) you are applying for.

Definition of Designed Open Ground

Designed Open Ground (OG) is an important feature of woodlands and is defined as designed areas left unplanted as part of good forest practice. The purpose of OG is to improve:

- woodland design;
- enhance environmental/conservation value and
- assist general woodland management.

Rules on Designed Open Ground

1. Defining Designed Open Ground

- In order to be eligible to be considered towards the required percentage of OG, each area of OG claimed must be of a 'mappable' (measurable) size of 0.25ha or more.
- Subject to the above mapping requirement, OG can be made up of planned internal open space within your proposed new woodland planting design. OG can potentially include any of the features in **Table 1** provided they are appropriately landscaped designed for that particular site.

2. Maximum allowances

- Grants will be paid on OG up to a maximum percentage for each woodland creation option. The percentages you proposed to claim should be clearly shown as "Open Ground" on the Woodland Creation Components Table.
- Applications may include higher percentages of OG but in such cases, where this exceeds the maximum allowed under the woodland creation options, these excess unplanted open areas will not be included within the payable area and, therefore, you should indicate any excess percentage as "Other Land" (OL) on your supporting Woodland Creation Components Areas Table. (ie. Line C)

The Woodland Creation Components Areas Table is available on the Woodland Creation webpage of the Forestry Grant Scheme.

<https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-creation/>

3. Unplantable land within your woodland creation area

- Unplantable areas, such as those listed in **Table 2**, which are greater than 0.25 ha (and are therefore 'mappable') are not eligible as OG. If these areas are within the proposed woodland creation perimeter boundary, they should be classed as Other Land on your woodland creation components table (ie. Line B).
- Small unplantable areas less than 0.25ha ('unmappable') can be incorporated within the woodland creation planting area boundaries. To take account of any such areas, plant spacing within these areas needs to be adjusted (ie. trees planted slightly closer together) to ensure average stocking densities meet the minimum specification. Other operational unplanted areas such as drain sides,

internal ATV tracks or areas adjacent to fences / roads, etc. would also require the plant spacing adjustments to ensure that the average stocking densities of the claimed planted area meets the minimum specifications.

- Small unplanted areas of less than 0.25 ha ('unmappable') can also potentially be included as a component of OG where such areas are adjacent. The total area which results from such must be of at least 0.25 ha in size (i.e. the total area created must meet the "mappable" requirement).
 - Example: a small rock outcrop of 0.07 ha could be added to the adjacent 0.2ha area of OG to create a total area of OG that can now be defined as a component of your proposed woodland creation area.

Additional Information:

- You must submit the woodland creation components table with your application (and subsequently thereafter, amended as necessary, with every planting capital claim you submit). By completing this table, you will allow us to confirm that the overall areas and percentages of tree species and of Designed Open Ground within each individual woodland block in your application are within the permitted percentage criteria for each of your chosen woodland creation options.
- Please refer to both the Forestry Grant Scheme generic mapping requirements <https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/forestry-grant-scheme-full-guidance-menu/general-mapping-guidance/>

and the Woodland Creation Mapping Requirements guidance on the [Woodland Creation](#) webpage of the Forestry Grant Scheme.

https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite-rest/fscontent/repository/portal-system/mediadata/media/resources/fgs_woodland_creation_mapping_guidance_october_2016.pdf

Table 1

| Potential areas for Designed Open Ground (OG) |
|--|
| Forest/woodland rides and tracks |
| Archaeological sites |
| Deer control areas |
| Riparian corridors |
| Landscape areas |
| Power lines and wayleaved corridors |

Table 2

| Unplanted Other Land (OL) |
|--|
| Existing roads |
| Scree |
| Rock outcrops |
| Small lochs |
| Extensive areas of deep peat (>50 cm deep) |