



The Woodland Trust
1 Dufferin Court
Dufferin Avenue
Bangor
County Down
BT20 3BX
Telephone
028 9127 4787
Facsimile
028 9127 5942
Website
www.woodland-trust.org.uk

Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Chair of the Environment Committee
Room 245
Parliament Buildings
Upper Newtownards Road
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3XX

21 June 2010

Dear Mr Boylan,

RE: NIA Bill 15/09 High Hedges Bill

Thank you for the invitation to submit evidence on the High Hedges Bill. The Woodland Trust welcomes the bringing forward of legislation to control high hedges in Northern Ireland. The Bill should be administered by District Councils and empower them to impose controls on the height of hedges in particular evergreens such as Leyland Cypress and Castlewella Gold.

The High Hedges Bill should however clearly define what we mean by hedge and seek to avoid the possibility of the legislation being used as a means of including for the cutting of ancient and long-established woodland and ancient trees. Ancient and long-established woodland covers a mere 10,000 hectares in Northern Ireland, 0.08 per cent of the landscape, and once lost its cultural and ecological features cannot be recreated. An exemption for any site on the Ancient Woodland Inventory or any tree on the Ancient Tree Hunt would help ensure that the legislation is not enforced inappropriately. The Forestry Bill NI recognises the 'desirability to maintain' the 'special character' of ancient woodland, and this duty must not be undermined by any other legislation being passed by the Assembly.

I look forward to working with you and your Committee should you wish us to assist the process.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Cregg

100% recycled paper

The Woodland Trust was founded in 1992 by Kenneth Watkins, o.b.e. Registered Charity NO 291444. A non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Registered in England NO 1982873.
Registered Office: Autumn Park, Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.
The Woodland Trust logo is a registered trademark.