

# Jardine congratulates forestry prize winner

Christine Jardine, Liberal Democrat MP for Edinburgh West, joined her constituent David Pelly, to celebrate his success in a writing competition to highlight the vital role trees can play in a sustainable future society.

David is a young forester from South Queensferry working as an Investment Forester for Tilhill Forestry in Dunblane.

Christine joined David to collect the third place prize for his essay, £100 and a certificate, at a parliamentary reception in Westminster.

The event was organised by Confor, a trade body based in Scotland which represents more than 1500 forestry and wood-using bodies across the UK.

David said: "I'm really delighted with the prize and it was brilliant to meet my fellow winners and so many forestry professionals at Westminster to discuss the exciting future of this great industry."

Christine Jardine MP said: "It was a pleasure to help celebrate David's success and hear more about the bright future for the forestry industry, especially the major role it can play in tackling climate change. Impressive young people like David and his fellow winners are thinking carefully and intelligently about the future – as this competition has shown – and the industry clearly has a very bright future in their hands."

The judges said David's essay was bold and challenged conventional thinking, making "a very strong case for a fresh approach to sustainability".

The event was organised to celebrate the contribution of young professionals and students to the profession. They were asked to write on 'How can forestry and wood processing help deliver a Green Brexit and a more sustainable society in the UK?'

A succession of reports have highlighted tree planting and timber construction as a "simple, low-cost option" to help meet climate change targets – but the UK Government is well behind its long-term aspiration of planting 7,000 hectares of new forests in England (just over 17,000 acres) every year to 2042, as laid out in the 25-Year Environment Plan. Latest figures show less than 1500 hectares are being planted annually.

Stuart Goodall, Chief Executive of Confor, said: "We were delighted with the response to the competition and there could have been many more winners from the entries received. It was fantastic to see all four winners at Westminster to receive their prizes. They were excellent young ambassadors for our industry – thoughtful, articulate and passionate about the future of forestry."