



WRF Position Statement on Tree Guards

To successfully establish new trees and woodlands, in most instances, trees will require protection from grazing, browsing and vandalism. The White Rose Forest (WRF) partnership will work with landowners to identify the risks on each site and work to identify the most appropriate form of protection.

For example:

- Controlling the grazing/browsing animal populations
- Appropriate fencing for the whole woodland
- Individual tree shelters.

Therefore, for all WRF funded projects we will complete a detailed analysis to:

- Assess the risks relevant to that site
- Consider current best practice (e.g. engagement with Forestry Commission, and across the forestry sector)
- Provide the landowner with the potential options to improve tree protection
- Consider their objectives and preferences and the likely effectiveness to agree a solution for each site.

Within budget limits, the WRF will seek the best value, not the lowest cost solutions.

Where tree shelters are to be used, WRF funded projects will include clauses that will require the removal of all plastic shelters from site to be either re-used or recycled, which typically takes place between year five and seven.

Current bio-degradable options are limited in availability and have not been extensively tested in Yorkshire conditions, however, the White Rose Forest partnership is committed to supporting current research to identify and test viable alternatives to plastic tree guards for large scale tree planting projects.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with manufacturers of biodegradable tree guards to test their durability in a variety of Yorkshire landscapes and support the vision of affordable and sustainable, plastic-free tree planting across our region as soon as possible. However, we are aware that there is still more work needed to deliver biodegradable tree shelters that are proven to significantly reduce environmental impact, are cost effective compared to the plastic alternative, and offer adequate protection over a number of years from animals such as deer and rabbits. In the short term, for WRF funded projects, we will continue to use plastic tree guards as set out above whilst continuing to trial the use of biodegradable alternatives where appropriate and ensure that they are then removed and reused or recycled.