

For the Attention of Hana Loftus,

Thank you for consulting the Forestry Commission on the village design guides. Our points are general points which might apply to more than one village design guide.

Some of the villages have said they want to plant trees and have listed that they want native tree species and have listed which ones, one of these we looked at included ash. It should be noted that ash is no longer available as an option for planting as there is a moratorium on the movement of ash due to ash dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* which causes a lethal disease of ash in a number of ash species. Sycamore is an accepted substitute for ash as this species provides a similar ecosystem for the many species found on the ash tree and is an honorary native species. The other tree which has been listed in one village is cedar, for clarity this is not a native species, but then many very attractive trees are not native.

What is more important going forward one of the main criteria which needs to be considered in species choice will be climate change. The key concern is the right species for the soil and climate conditions. The Forestry Commission recommends that to address the issue of resilience to climate change there is a need to look at the provenance of species, which means there is a need to use, for example, oak trees sourced from 2-3 degrees south e.g. (south of Paris). There is an online tool available to choose the right species for the soils and site conditions called Ecological Site Classification tool <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/esc4.jsp>. This tool can suggest suitable species with the right inputs.

Our second main point is regarding Ancient Semi Natural Woodland. Where villages have Ancient Woodland in close proximity, the design guides need to refer to the government policy set out in the Joint Standing Advice of Natural England and the Forestry Commission <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>, this advice also covers Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and veteran trees. We also note that though Natural England is mentioned at the end of some design guides with regard to Ancient Woodland and that they need consulting, this relates mainly to a SSSI whereas the Forestry Commission is a non-statutory consultee for any planning proposed within 500metres of any Ancient Woodland or PAWs, however reference should be made to the Standing Advice in the first instance.

Lastly, going back to the theme of climate change we hope that all the villages will consider how they can use trees to reduce the impact of climate change and also reduce their carbon footprint trees can be a significant asset to a community both in terms of shade, pollution absorption and place setting. I have attached a research paper which gives more information. Mainly its about urban areas but it will also apply to large new developments.

If there is an option a community woodland <https://www.communitywoodland.org/why/> can also add a significant asset to a village for health and in terms of carbon footprint and natural capital.

I hope you find this useful.

Yours sincerely

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Please note my new shorter week working pattern is 8-4.30 pm Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.



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