



Chair of Petitions Committee
Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd
CF99 1NA

Date: 21st June 2013

By e-mail: angharadevans@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Dear William Powell AM,

We are very grateful to the Petitions Committee for their pursuing of this important issue, which has been given added urgency by the sad loss of the Pontfadog Oak earlier this year.

For us, as the petition makes clear, an absolutely key element is that the system needs to recognise the unique value of ancient and veteran trees as a habitat for a whole range of extremely rare species and to provide some positive support for their care and management. This, of course, goes beyond mere reform of the Tree Preservation Order system.

For this reason, we have been disappointed to hear that it has been decided not to include better protection of ancient, heritage and veteran trees in the forthcoming Environment Bill, but to deal with it in the Planning Bill instead. As stated in the June E-Bulletins for Natural Resources Management Programme, The purpose of the Environment Bill is to:

- provide Natural Resources Wales with a legislative framework that means it can manage Wales' natural resources in a joined up way; and
- amend and better join up key areas of the legislative framework so it improves Wales' environment whilst also having wider economic and social benefits.

Isn't the first bullet point, in particular, very relevant to ancient and veteran trees? Our concern is that, if the issue is dealt with purely as a planning issue, it will presumably relate only to restrictions on landowners, rather than positive support for management or recognition of their importance as a unique wildlife habitat.

Could we therefore ask, if this issue is indeed to be dealt with in the Planning Bill, will this preclude the establishing of a system to support the positive care and management of our ancient, veteran and heritage trees? Will it preclude recognising their importance as a wildlife habitat?

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Angharad Evans
Swyddog Ymgyrchoedd / Campaigns Officer

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