



**01/15**

**NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

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### **Tree Health Scotland Bursary Award Scheme Announced**

The Scottish Forestry Trust is today launching a new fund specifically targeted at supporting postgraduate research on tree health issues in Scotland. Supported by a generous contribution from Forestry Commission Scotland, and funds from The Scottish Forestry Trust, the Tree Health Scotland Bursary Award Scheme will offer 50% support for research which addresses tree pest and pathogen issues which are of current concern or represent a future threat to trees, forests and woodlands in Scotland.

The scheme is available for applications now and full details can be downloaded from The Scottish Forestry Trust website. It is anticipated that the scheme will be able to provide support for five doctorates completing over the next four or five years.

In 2013, the Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Expert Taskforce noted that there remain significant knowledge gaps in epidemiology, surveying and surveillance and detection of tree pests and diseases and that there was a decline in scientific expertise and a need to build capacity to address these issues in the future.

Welcoming the launch of the new scheme, Guy Watt, the Chairman of The Scottish Forestry Trust said, "The launch of this scheme is a really important milestone for the Trust and we are very grateful to Forestry Commission Scotland for their generous support. Together we will be able to support important new research for Scotland and help in building capacity for future scientific expertise."

Commenting on the Scheme, Hugh Clayden, Forestry Commission Scotland Policy Advisor on Tree Health said "In the last few years we have seen the emergence of several new pests and pathogens in Scotland's trees, woodlands and forests and, unfortunately, many of them are capable of causing serious damage. Climate change may also be an important factor in these pests and diseases establishing and spreading. There is no doubt that we need to greatly improve our understanding of this important aspect of woodland management and I welcome the introduction of this new bursary scheme".

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors:**

**The Scottish Forestry Trust** is the leading Charitable Trust providing funds for research, education and training for Forestry throughout the UK. Established in 1983 by a gifting of share capital, the Trust is a registered charity and has a remit to provide private sector funds to support research and education across the whole forestry and woodland sector. Since 1983, the Trust has provided £2.2m to 160 projects ranging from supporting post graduate education through to contributing towards industry applied research and assisting policy formulation.

**Forestry Commission Scotland** is part of the Scottish Government's Environment & Forestry Directorate [www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland)

Further information is available from SFT Director, Bob Stubbs at <mailto:director@scottishforestrytrust.org.uk>

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