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New Partnership provides welcome funding boost

The Scottish Forestry Trust has today announced a new research fund that will support projects to reduce insured risks in UK forests and woodlands. Funded by a partnership between QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry clients and delivered by The Scottish Forestry Trust, support will be available for postgraduate students to undertake applied research. Topics may include the prediction and mitigation of storm damage and fire in woodlands in the UK, as well as ways in which the quality or cost of restocking operations can be improved.

Managing Director of Tilhill Forestry, George McRobbie said “Damage to UK forests caused by windthrow, stem snap and degrade of timber is something which many forest managers have had to deal with in recent years and may increase in future and this has a consequential impact on the cost of insurance for forest owners. As managers we are keen to find new ways to combat such damage – for example, by improving the quality of the restocking operation, subsequent rotations may better withstand losses from wind and fire damage. We hope that through this new fund provided by QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry clients that research will identify new, practical steps that the forest industry can take”.

George McRobbie presented the Trust with a cheque for the first donation of £26,000.

Commenting on the announcement of the new funding, Scottish Forestry Trust Chairman Bob McIntosh said “I am delighted to announce the launch of this new fund and look forward to receiving high quality applications in this important topic area. It is extremely gratifying that QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry clients have put their confidence in The Scottish Forestry Trust to deliver this new initiative and we see it as a great example of private sector forestry investing in practical research for the future”.

Full details of the new scheme; guidance notes and an application form will be available on the Scottish Forestry Trust website www.scottishforestrytrust.org.uk from 15th October 2016.

Ends

Notes for Editors:

The total value of forest property currently insured via QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry is £300m.

QBE European Operations is part of QBE Insurance Group, one of the world's leading international insurers and reinsurers and Standard & Poor's A+ rated. Listed on the Australian Securities Exchange, QBE's gross written premium for the year ended 31 December 2015, was US\$14.7 billion. As a business insurance specialist, QBE European Operations offers a range of insurance products from the standard suite of property, casualty and motor to the specialist financial lines, marine and energy. All are tailored to the individual needs of our small, medium and large client base.

Tilhill Forestry is the UK's leading forestry and timber harvesting company, offering a broad range of market leading professional consultancy and contracting services to woodland and forestry owners. Forestry, timber harvesting and the emerging biomass sector draw on Tilhill Forestry's strong association with the forest industry in the UK. Established more than 65 years ago, Tilhill Forestry is a national company operating from a network of offices throughout Great Britain, with a turnover in excess of £125 million.

The Scottish Forestry Trust is the leading UK Charitable Trust providing funds for research, education and training in support of British Forestry. 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 throughout the British forestry industry. Since 1983, the Trust has provided around £25m to over 160 projects ranging from supporting post graduate education through to contributing towards industry applied research and assisting policy formulation.

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



Dr Bob McIntosh (left), Chairman of The Scottish Forestry Trust receiving the cheque from George McRobbie, Managing Director, Tilhill Forestry Ltd.