

DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD
DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

USING SUSTAINABLY
GROWN WOOD

GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARISHES

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Fifth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Church is “To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth”. As part of the Church’s commitment to sustainability set out in the Fifth Mark, parishes and others will be concerned to use sustainably grown wood.
- 1.2 When we are repairing churches, constructing something new or purchasing new furnishings, very often wood will be used. Typically when concerned about sustainable wood, people think of tropical hardwoods often used for outdoor furniture in churchyards, but even ‘ordinary’ wood for building or indoor furniture (even if not seen by anyone once it has been installed) may still have been harvested in ways that damage forests. Parishes will want to do their best to avoid contributing to forest destruction, but may wonder how to do this. Fortunately there is a certification scheme that can be relied upon to indicate that the timber has been harvested sustainably.
- 1.3 Everyone is aware these days of the threat to forests around the world. Tropical rain forests are often in the news, but so are the temperate ‘rain forests’ of the Pacific North-West of America. The area of semi-natural forest all around the world is rapidly diminishing through logging and fires. Even where the forest is left standing, timber can still be extracted unsustainably, removing some species selectively, or planting alien species. All this has severe impacts on the other forest creatures, from big mammals to obscure insects.

2. CERTIFICATION SCHEMES

2.1 Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)



The FSC
logo

This is the main international certification. It was launched in 1993 and governed by representatives of social, economic and environmental interests. The FSC certification of timber covers not only environmental and biodiversity issues, but also community relations, the human rights and land rights of indigenous peoples, workers rights and conditions, and future management, maintenance and monitoring of future operations. About 23,000,000 hectares of forest around the world have been certified by the FSC to date. Many UK shops, eg B&Q and Homebase, source all their wood from FSC suppliers. For the latest information on what shops and brands carry FSC wood, it is best to check out their UK website: www.fsc-uk.demon.co.uk (Phone 01686 413916). You will find there many helpful lists of suppliers and products as well as advice sheets.

2.2 UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)

The Woodland Assurance Scheme is the British variant of FSC. Again it is led by a group representing both timber growers and environmental groups, with the Forestry Commission in a key role (all their forests are certified by UKWAS). The principles are the same as FSC, but the administration is simpler as it dovetails in with the Forestry Commission's existing regulations and policies. The UKWAS details on the web are found under the Forestry Commission;

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/Oldsite.nsf/ByUnique/HCOU-4UFP7F>

Further advice can be obtained from the Forestry Commission. Normally UKWAS wood is marketed with the FSC label and it is of equal standing.

- 2.3 A third certification system is PEFC (Pan-European Forest Certificate). Unfortunately the standards of this certificate are not as high as the FSC and UKWAS. The PEFC is not recognised by environmental charities such as RSPB and the Woodland Trust. The DAC does not recommend PEFC as a satisfactory alternative to the FSC/UKWAS certificates.

3. PRACTICALITIES OF SPECIFYING AND PROCURING FSC TIMBER

- 3.1 An example of an appropriate specification that architects might choose to use for FSC timber would be:
All timber used must carry the Forest Stewardship Council's trademark or other label from an equivalent internationally recognised, globally applicable, independent certification scheme for good forest management.
- 3.2 PCCs should ask their architects to include a text similar to the above in all specifications and should require their architect to ensure that contractors have been able to comply.
- 3.3 Not all FSC timber has the logo on it, but it all has a Chain of Custody certificate number, for example SA-COC-1022, or SGS/COC/0755/6525/0184. If the invoice does not provide a code number ask your supplier to provide the relevant information and to give it on future invoices. As certified timber is not always as readily available as uncertified, it is wise to order the wood well in advance. Remember that the purchaser of the timber needs to know that FSC timber is only available from certain merchants.

3.4 The FSC UK Working Group Helpline (01686 413916) can provide:-

- (a) Free factsheets for Architects and Specifiers Lists of companies dealing in certified timber, boards and building materials.
- (b) Directories of certified forests, suppliers and of certified products world wide are available at a small cost and are updated every 6 months.
- (c) Assistance in searching for a particular timber or product.
- (d) A website can be found at;
<http://www.fsc-uk.demon.co.uk> which has all the factsheets available, the latest news and links to other sites. Among them FSC recommend these two sites to put purchasers in touch with suppliers.

<http://www.forestworld.com/>

<http://www.timberweb.com/>

<http://www.goodwoodguide.com>

4. POLICY

- 4.1 To encourage parishes and architects to use timber from one of these certified sources whenever possible.
- 4.2 For parishes to instruct their architects and builders to do the same.

Diocesan Advisory Committee
Diocese of Chelmsford
53 New Street
Chelmsford
CM1 1AT