

New Woodland at Navan, Armagh

Putting Down Roots

Changing the landscape by planting new woodland of ash, oak and beech

The Rural Development Programme enabled nature lover Ted Loughran to turn his cattle farm into woodland, creating a rich environment for wildlife and walkers alike. He explains how planting trees is an investment both for now and for future generations.

Ted Loughran used to farm cattle on his land at the edge of historic Navan Fort in Co Armagh.

But today that land has been planted as new woodland, with young ash, oak and beech trees as far as the eye can see.

A true nature lover, Ted is in his element among this growing environment that changes with every passing season. And it is a little piece of heaven for wildlife and walkers alike.

“The transition from farming cattle to woodland has been a very positive one for me. It’s been a great experience which I have enjoyed thoroughly.”

The **Woodland Grant Scheme** aims to expand the amount of tree cover in Northern Ireland by encouraging the creation of new woodland. The Scheme is open to anyone with at least 0.2 hectares of land on which they can plant trees.

Ted successfully applied to the scheme and he now receives annual payments for agricultural income foregone as a result of planting.

Ted explains: “Without the grants I couldn’t have attempted it. I still needed a source of income after I planted which I get from the annual payments. Without that it would just not have been possible for me to do this whole project.”

The woodland lies adjacent to the Navan Centre which welcomes some 30,000 visitors each year. Naturally, many of them take time out for a walk in the woods. With car parking already available, Ted had only to put up some signage.

“A lot of people express their joy to me at being able to walk around the woods.”

The trees have to be pruned to produce good quality wood and Ted also ensures the paths are safe for walkers.

Wildlife has flourished, although the wood is not yet at the stage of attracting woodland birds. It will be many decades before any harvesting of the ash or oak, as Ted concludes: “Future generations will get the real benefit.”



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For more information Tel: 0845 30 44 509 or Email: rdp@dardni.gov.uk