

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 10 August 2012 15:44  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Note of meeting with Scottish Tree Officers' Group - 09 August 2012

## MEETING WITH SCOTTISH TREE OFFICERS GROUP (STOG) – 9<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2012

1. On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August [REDACTED] and I met with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (STOG) to discuss the progress of the High Hedges Bill and to seek clarification on a number of issues, both botanical technical.
2. Previously, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had met with STOG to discuss:
  - semi-evergreens
  - deciduous plants & single trees
  - Tree Preservations Orders
3. This meeting included discussions on:
  - Scope
  - Tree Preservation Orders
  - Conservation Orders
  - Notices on properties

### Scope

4. STOG were pleased with the narrow scope of the Bill, which is intended to cover only evergreen and semi-evergreen trees that act as a barrier to light. However, they were unsure of the inclusion of single deciduous trees if they make up 'part of the hedge'. In their opinion, the time of planting is crucial in determining whether or not a tree makes up part of a hedge. – for example, if a line of conifers were planted around a single deciduous tree, they would not consider that tree as being part of the hedge.
5. In any case, STOG believed that it would extremely unlikely that anyone would try to grow a hedge out of deciduous species, which are generally planted as single trees, as it would not perform the function intended (i.e. creating a barrier) – these types of tree must be planted further apart to be viable.

### Tree Preservations Orders (TPOs) & Valuable Trees

6. [REDACTED] explained the intention for some form of protection for valuable trees to be included in the Act. Following discussions with the Woodland Trust, this would include trees of cultural or historical significance, as well as hedges that provide a general amenity for the surrounding area.
7. Though it is unlikely that any hedge captured in the scope of the Bill would fulfil the cultural or historical significance test, it was explained to STOG that Mark McDonald MSP was keen to ensure that any potentially valuable trees were protected.
8. [REDACTED] described the current plans to place a requirement on local authorities (which practically means Tree Officers) to carry out a TPO-like test on any hedge that is subject to an application. We asked whether or not making such a judgement would be relatively straight-forward, or if this would place undue burdens on Tree Officers. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] thought that this would be a fairly simple judgement to make and would not significantly increase the burden on Tree Officers. In any cases, [REDACTED] agreed that it is unlikely that any such tree of value would be identified in the expected type of cases (i.e. urban conifers) they would encounter.

### Conservation Areas

9. [REDACTED] asked whether or not conservation areas legislation could pose any problems in relation to the Bill. [REDACTED] explained that it should not be too much of a problem since the legislation deals only with the height of a hedge. Since cutting back the hedge counts as 'hedge management', conservation area legislation should not effect any potential remedial action.

10. STOG thought that problems could arise if the Bill were to cover single trees, which cannot be maintained in the same way as a hedge.

**Notice on Properties**

11. [REDACTED] thought that the Register of Scotland would be the best place to list a High Hedge Notice on a property, as this is the method used for recording TPOs.

[REDACTED]