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NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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Partnership funding forest research is going from strength to strength

The Scottish Forestry Trust's research fund is delighted to announce that since the Fund's inception in 2016, it has benefited from a total of £52,000 from Tilhill Forestry, the latest amount of which has just been presented by Managing Director, George McRobbie.

The Research Fund assists projects to reduce insured risks in UK forests and woodlands and is funded by a partnership between QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry clients and is delivered by The Scottish Forestry Trust.

The Trust supports postgraduate students to undertake applied research. Topics include the prediction and mitigation of storm damage and fire in woodlands in the UK, as well as seeking ways in which the quality or cost of restocking operations can be improved.

George McRobbie said "Damage to UK forests caused by storms, windthrow, stem snap and degrade of timber is something which many forest managers have to deal with 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 so that subsequent rotations may better withstand losses from storm damage. The remit of this fund, provided by QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry clients, is to identify new, practical steps that the forest industry can take".

Commenting on the announcement of the latest contribution to the Fund, Scottish Forestry Trust Chairman Bob McIntosh said "It is extremely gratifying that QBE Business Insurance and Tilhill Forestry clients have continued to put their confidence in The Scottish Forestry Trust to deliver this initiative. We see it as a great example of private sector forestry investing in practical research for the future".

Full details of the scheme; guidance notes and an application form can be found on the Scottish Forestry Trust website www.scottishforestrytrust.org.uk.

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 nearly 70 years ago, Tilhill Forestry is a national company operating from a network of offices throughout Great Britain, with a turnover in excess of £25 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

