



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE

24th May 2019

LORD GARDINER OF KIMBLE, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR RURAL AFFAIRS AND BIOSECURITY VISITS YORKSHIRE ARBORETUM

Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, visited the Yorkshire Arboretum on Friday 24th May. Lord Gardiner met with director Dr John Grimshaw, staff, and arboretum trustees including Prof. Nicola Spence, Chief Plant Health Officer and Deputy Director for plant and bee health at Defra.

Following a tour of the grounds, Lord Gardiner was keen to discuss the arboretum's response to issues surrounding tree health and biosecurity, reviewing plans to build the UK's first Tree Health Centre, which will be a purpose-built facility to expand public awareness about the threats to our trees posed by an array of pests and diseases. He explained the importance of preserving our national biosecurity and upskilling to protect our trees, and how sites like the Yorkshire Arboretum contribute to raising awareness of these issues to the public, professionals, and volunteers.

Yorkshire Arboretum Director Dr John Grimshaw says: "Our trees are threatened by an unprecedented array of pests and pathogens. Protecting our trees has never been more important – everyone is a stakeholder in tree health, from private householders with a back garden tree to the Highways Agency and councils. All need to know how to maintain healthy trees, or identify and manage those affected by pests and disease. The government has identified a significant skills shortage in the field, and this lack of understanding around biosecurity has contributed to the current crisis. The Tree Health Centre is of vital importance in the promotion of healthy trees for a healthy future."

ENDS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lord Gardiner of Kimble, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, visited the Yorkshire Arboretum on Friday 24th May. He was appointed in July 2016, and reappointed for a second term in January 2018, and handles a variety of roles including Defra parliamentary business in the House of Lords, biosecurity and bee health.

The Tree Health Centre will offer training courses given by specialists and cater to all levels of expertise. The large and diverse collection of trees at the Yorkshire Arboretum, its location, reputation and connections with plant health professionals, make it ideal for this purpose. Following successful pilot courses held in 2018, the centre will offer training on a commercial basis mixing classroom, lab and outdoor learning settings, as well as a public outreach programme.

The Yorkshire Arboretum and Ray Wood are gardens of the Castle Howard Arboretum Trust, an independent charity (registration number 1044931) established to maintain and protect these unique collections. Founded in 1997 as a partnership between the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and Castle Howard, the Trust's patron is HRH The Prince of Wales.

The Yorkshire Arboretum is located opposite the entrance to Castle Howard and is open from 10am – 4pm every day from March – November, with extended opening at weekends from May – October. In addition to the 120 acre garden of trees there's a children's woodland playground, a café offering delicious home-cooked seasonal food and drink and a gift shop. Well-behaved dogs are welcome. Admission is £7 for adults, £3.50 for juniors (12-16) and £17.50 for families. Under 12s are admitted free. Find out more at www.yorkshirearboretum.org

The arboretum's annual event programme includes a wide range of family and outdoor activities, botanical and horticultural education, and arts and crafts workshops. Full details are available at www.yorkshirearboretum.org

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Jonathan Cridford, Communications Assistant

The Yorkshire Arboretum, Castle Howard, York, YO60 7BY

Tel: 01653 648598

Email: marketing@yorkshirearboretum.org