



## Market Leader Takes Toyotas On Forest Roads

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The UK's leading forestry company has begun switching its 266-strong fleet of cars and light commercials to Toyota - following a review sparked by the issue of clearance heights over uneven ground.

Tilhill, established for more than 50 years, provides services to the owners of some 200,000 hectares of British woodland. It specialises in forest management, timber harvesting, landscape contract services and utility arboriculture. In April the company, a subsidiary of the Finnish UPM Group, received the Queen's Award for Enterprise for its international trade achievements - notably, major exports of timber to timber-producing countries!

Tilhill has its head office in Stirling, and operates from 13 district offices across Scotland, England and Wales. It employs some 400 staff, many of them forest managers, who carry out their work in cars, vans and, for more challenging off-road operations, 4x4 vans. The company was prompted to review its fleet policy when it became clear that the new low-slung Peugeot 407 could not offer the clearance heights required to negotiate forest roads. Tilhill settled on the 2.0 litre diesel Toyota Avensis and Corolla, with both being supplied in Verso and estate versions catering for the company's four-band grading structure.

"The Avensis and Corolla fitted our requirements, and Toyota Fleet provided a further push for our business by offering us an attractive deal on rationalising our commercial vehicle fleet," said Tilhill's Fleet Manager Douglas Baptie. "Instead of a variety of makes, we are now moving to Hilux Double and Single-Cab 4x4s and, where appropriate, 4x2s.

"The general feedback about the move is very positive," said Mr Baptie, speaking shortly after the first three cars had been delivered. "Drivers like the idea of having Toyotas." He added that the brand's reliability had been another factor in Tilhill's decision to switch, as it was keen to avoid any future problems with protracted downtime and slow provision of parts.

The Toyotas are supplied on contract hire through Lex Leasing, which Tilhill has used since 1997. Drivers working in a single region may cover 20-25,000 miles a year, and their Toyotas will be leased over four years, while a three-year cycle is applied to cars with higher annual mileages up to around 35,000. Rather than using different dealerships up and down the country, Douglas Baptie has opted for a single Toyota Business Centre, in this case local dealership Arnold Clark Glasgow of Bishopbriggs. "It's far better for me to deal with the same person when it comes down to all the little things such as positioning of towbars and so on."

"This is an excellent contract to add to our expanding portfolio of business customers," said Scott McPhail of Arnold Clark Glasgow. "We look forward to working with Toyota to provide a one-stop

solution for all Tilhill's fleet and servicing requirements." And Toyota Fleet's General Manager Jon Pollock added: "This is a good example of Toyota's ability to provide fleet solutions through the breadth and adaptability of its vehicle ranges, and the close attention to detail which its Business Centres can provide."

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