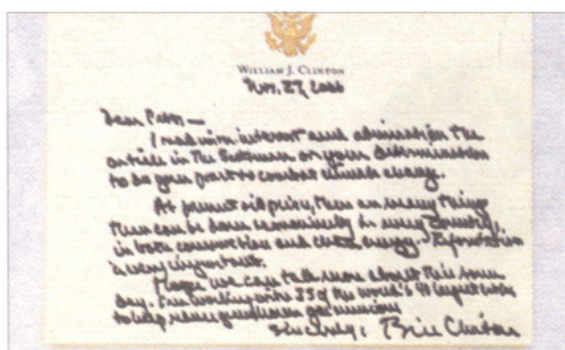


Environmental campaigner receives letter from former US president after reading of his work in The Scotsman

# Clinton asks tree tycoon to dinner



Bill Clinton: Former president spoke in Glasgow this year



The letter refers to the article that caught Mr Clinton's eye

BILL Clinton has asked a Scottish campaigner to dinner in New York to discuss global reforestation after the former US president read in *The Scotsman* of the businessman's environmental work.

Peter Grant will next Friday give a presentation to Mr Clinton, his friends and advisers, about Global Trees—a non-profit organisation he set up after hearing the former US president talk about climate change as the number one threat to humanity in Glasgow last summer.

Mr Grant, whose greatest ambition, until his conversion to the green cause, was to become wealthy enough to buy a Lear jet, received a handwritten letter in which Mr Clinton praised the Scots entrepreneur's work.

The letter said Mr Clinton

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"read with interest and admiration" about Mr Grant's determination to play his part in fighting climate change in an article in *The Scotsman* last month.

The former president added that he felt that reforestation was important and suggested they meet. Mr Grant was unsure about how serious the offer was until shortly after the letter arrived, when a member of Mr Clinton's staff called his property firm Grant Management in Edinburgh.

"I've been asked to go to New York for dinner with Bill Clinton, his board of trustees plus a select bunch of his best friends," Mr Grant said.

"I think it [Global Trees] has captured his imagination and I think he's up for helping in some way.

"Just the cache of Bill Clinton writing a letter will hopefully inspire others I am having difficulty with to engage a bit more. Without naming names, a number of people talk a good game in terms of what they are doing for the environment.

"I'm a little man in the street. I am slightly well known in the Scottish business community because of my day job, but for Global Trees to be successful we need to get lots of information to the public. And, with all these things, if there is someone famous involved, it gets more coverage."

The organisation, which asks people to donate money through its website to pay for trees to be planted, has already planted its first trees in Scotland and looks set to become truly global for the first time with a plan to plant 25,000 mangrove trees in Cambodia.

Mr Grant, 45, said "many tens of thousands of trees" were in the pipeline with one company, the Mears Group, pledging to plant 12,000 trees at a cost of £24,000 to offset the annual carbon emissions from its use of



Peter Grant will give a presentation to Mr Clinton Picture: Neil Hanna

transport. He is also planning to enlist the help of schoolchildren to campaign for more action.

"What I'm thinking about doing is asking every single school to write a report, commissioned by Global Trees, on either deforestation of the rainforest in general or planting of trees," Mr Grant said.

"My idea is if every single school produced at least one report and sent it to their local MP and the Prime Minister on the same day, that would make a big impact in its own right.


"It's absolutely the issue for these kids. There is this mis-

match between people over 30 paying lip-service to global warming and people under 30 being quite concerned about it. I also hope kids will go back and speak to their parents about it."

Alan Long, of the Mears Group, which maintains social housing for councils and other property firms, said the firm aimed to become carbon neutral and was carrying out a number of energy-efficiency schemes.

"Priority one is to reduce our emissions and the Carbon Trust is helping us to reduce the energy our buildings use," he said.

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