

Countryside Stewardship 2021



The Countryside Stewardship scheme will shortly be open for applications with new Agreements starting on 1st January 2022. Why should Island farmers consider joining the scheme?

With the Government's new policy on farming '[The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024](#)' land management will be strongly focused on the environment alongside food production. As the Basic Payment Scheme is phased out, late 2024 will bring the start of Environmental Land Management (ELM). For many, perhaps most, farm income from ELM will go some way towards replacing BPS. The message is clear. To bring Island farms in line with the 'sustainable farming' policy, agri-environment schemes will become the norm.

Should farmers delay joining the Stewardship scheme this year and wait for ELM? The short answer is no unless the farm's finances can forego environmental payments for several years. Defra will want the roll out of ELM to be successful so those farmers already in Stewardship will be obvious candidates. It is important to note that Defra has stated that when the ELM begins...

'...we will make sure there is a smooth transition for those in existing agri-environment schemes.' and

'...Anyone in a Countryside Stewardship agreement that starts after January 2021 who secures a place in the Environmental Land Management scheme will be able to withdraw and transfer to the new scheme with no penalty at agreed exit points.'

But what can a Stewardship agreement offer in 2021? Details have yet to be released but it will be an upgrade of the 2020 scheme. As a guide, Mid-Tier in 2020 offered:

26 options for arable fields, from £84/ha for overwinter stubbles to £640/ha for unharvested cereal headlands.

14 options for grasslands, from £95/ha for grasslands receiving very low inputs to £440/ha to buffer watercourses. Supplements could add up to a further £85/ha (e.g., haymaking).

Hedgerow management offered £8/100m for each side.

Numerous capital works, from hedgerow restoration (up to £12.80/m) and planting (£11.60/m) + fencing to 30 items related to safeguarding watercourses, upgrading slurry stores, management of pesticides and improving the farmyard e.g., concrete yard renewal (£27.14/m²).

Various payments were also offered for ponds, trees, and orchards.

The Higher Tier extended the number of land management options and capital works. Below are extracts from last year's manual.

Sample of arable options

| Code | Option Name | Option Payment Rate |
|------|--|---------------------|
| AB1 | Nectar flower mix | £511/ha |
| AB2 | Basic overwinter stubble | £84/ha |
| AB3 | Beetle banks | £573 |
| AB4 | Skylark plots *(£9 per plot, minimum 2 plots /ha) | £18/ha *1 |
| AB5 | Nesting plots for lapwing and stone curlew | £524/ha |
| AB6 | Enhanced overwinter stubble | £436/ha |
| AB7 | Whole crop cereals | £495/ha |
| AB8 | Flower-rich margins and plots | £539/ha |
| AB9 | Winter bird food | £640/ha |
| AB10 | Unharvested cereal headland | £640/ha |
| AB11 | Cultivated areas for arable plants | £532/ha |
| AB12 | Supplementary winter feeding for farmland birds ** (for every 2 ha of winter bird food) | £632/tonne *2 |
| AB13 | Brassica fodder crop | £100/ha |
| AB14 | Harvested low input cereal | £266/ha |
| AB15 | Two year sown legume fallow | £522/ha |

Sample of Grassland options

| Code | Option Name | Option Payment Rate |
|------|---|---------------------|
| GS7 | Restoration towards species-rich grassland | £145/ha |
| GS8 | Creation of species-rich grassland | £267/ha |
| GS9 | Management of wet grassland for breeding waders | £264/ha |
| GS10 | Management of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl | £157/ha |
| GS11 | Creation of wet grassland for breeding waders | £406/ha |
| GS12 | Creation of wet grassland for wintering waders and wildfowl | £310/ha |
| GS13 | Management of grassland for target features | £90/ha |
| GS14 | Creation of grassland for target features | £253/ha |
| GS15 | Haymaking supplement | £85/ha |
| GS16 | Rush infestation control supplement | £73/ha |
| GS17 | Lenient grazing supplement | £44/ha |

If you are considering joining Stewardship this year and have questions about the scheme, or just need some general advice as to what might fit your farming operation, please call Mark Simmons on 07851 093532 or email mark.simmons@iow.gov.uk Why wait?

February 3rd Important Update from
National Association
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

(Note, the Isle of Wight AONB covers 191 sq. km, approximately half of the Island.)

Agri-environment workshop for farmers and land managers

You are invited to attend a free online workshop to find out more about the changes to agri-environment schemes that are happening over the next few years. The workshop will be run 3 times – to book your place, go to <https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/workshops> to register. The programme is the same for each, but we'll have different farmers speaking at each session.

We look forward to seeing you at a workshop soon - please note the following.

- You only need to attend one of the three workshops.
- The workshop will be held on [Zoom](#), so reasonable internet access is required.
- Feel free to tell your farming friends and neighbours so they can register as well.

Agri-environment schemes and the future:
How to get the best for your business

- Introduction
- Hear from farmers already in agri-environment schemes: The benefits and pitfalls
- Countryside Stewardship: What has changed in this year's scheme?
- Farming in Protected Landscapes: An update
- Question and Answer session

Monday 22 February, 5:00-6:30pm

Programme as above with insight from our farmer speakers:

Andrea Meanwell, who farms beef and sheep in the Lake District National Park.

Second farmer to be confirmed

Thursday 4 March, 5:00-6:30pm

Programme as above with insight from our farmer speakers:

George Young, who manages a zero tillage and zero insecticide farm in Essex.

Second farmer to be confirmed

Tuesday 23 March, 1:00-2:30pm

Programme as above with insight from our farmer speakers:

Farmer speakers to be confirmed