

# Giles Wheeler-Bennett

CHARTERED SURVEYORS & LAND AGENTS

## Countryside Stewardship Scheme Key Points and Dates

With the introduction of the new Mid Tier Wildlife Offers in 2018, there are now four main elements to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme being the Mid Tier Standard Scheme, Mid Tier Packages, Higher Tier Scheme and Capital Grants. The important dates for ordering forms and applying for each of these schemes are set out below but please note that Higher Tier applications are more likely to be successful where an applicant is in early contact with Natural England and is on the NE 'pipeline':

### MID TIER STANDARD SCHEME

Apply from: 15 January 2018  
Last date to order forms: 31 May 2018  
Closing date: 31 July 2018

### HIGHER TIER SCHEME (More complex agreements)

Apply from: 15 January 2018  
Last date to order forms: 9 March 2018  
Closing date: 13 April 2018

### NEW TO 2018 - MID TIER PACKAGES

#### On-line application for Arable Offer:

Apply from: 20 February 2018  
Last date to order forms: N/A  
Closing date: 31 July 2018

#### Paper application for Lowland Grazing,

#### Mixed Farming & Uplands Offers:

Apply from: 15 January 2018  
Last date to order forms: 31 May 2018  
Closing date: 31 July 2018

### CAPITAL GRANTS

Capital grants are made up of just capital items. Agreements are competitive, last for two years and are available for hedgerows & boundaries outside any Mid or Higher Tier Scheme, for woodland support and for the planning of special projects (including feasibility studies and management and implementation plans) for more complex Higher Tier agreements.

#### Hedgerows and Boundaries' Grants

Apply from: 15 January 2018  
Last date to order forms: N/A as forms downloaded from internet  
Closing date: 30 April 2018 (on-line and postal)



For more information contact  
Penelope Stokes  
MSc MRICS FAAV CEnv



West Court, Lower Basingwell Street, Bishop's Waltham, Southampton SO32 1AJ

T: 01489 896977 F: 01489 896985

E: penny@gileswheeler-bennett.co.uk www.gileswheeler-bennett.co.uk

Grant level: No minimum but applications to a value of less than £1,000 have 10 points deducted when assessed.  
Maximum = £10,000

### Woodland Support

This is divided into four specific areas:

- Woodland Creation (apply from 2 January to 16 February 2018)
- Woodland Management Plans (apply all year round)
- Woodland Tree Health (apply all year round)
- Woodland Improvement Grants (apply from 15 January to 13 April 2018 via Higher Tier)



As well as the four elements above, additional funding support is periodically available under CS for the following:

### Facilitation Fund

Applications to this fund closed on 14 November 2017. The fund supports people/organisations that bring farmers, foresters and other land managers together to improve the local natural environment at a landscape scale. This landscape scale approach can cover land under existing agri-environment and forestry/woodland agreements, common land and land not currently covered by a scheme. It builds on the principles of partnership working to deliver environmental benefits, as demonstrated by various initiatives, including farm clusters and the farmer-led Nature Improvement Areas. The facilitator can be a local professional conservationist who can advise on improvements, offer training in monitoring techniques, law and other practicalities, liaise with Natural England, bring in experts for assistance and training and otherwise support the project.

Funding is awarded to successful applications through a competitive process and priority is given to those which show partnership and a collective approach across holdings to deliver shared environmental outcomes that go beyond what could be delivered by individual holdings acting in isolation. Within Hampshire there is the Winchester Downs Cluster Group, the Selborne Landscape Partnership and the North Hampshire

Downs Cluster Group and on the East Hants/West Sussex border, the new Rother Valley Group has just been formed. If you would like to find out whether your farm is located within one of these areas please contact the office for further details.

### Catchment Sensitive Farming

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) raises awareness of diffuse water pollution from agriculture by giving free training and advice to farmers in selected high priority areas for water quality in England. The aim of the advice is to improve the environmental performance of farms and these areas will contribute most to meeting Water Framework Directive objectives.

CSF is a project run by Natural England in partnership with the Environment Agency and DEFRA. It supports farmers applying for Countryside Stewardship to improve water quality and biodiversity and to reduce flood risk. Funding to improve water quality is available through the Countryside Stewardship Mid Tier application process and some capital items require written support from a CSF officer as part of an application's evidence requirement.