**Countryside Stewardship 2019 – Open for new applications from 18th Feb.**

The new round of Countryside Stewardship applications opened for applications on 18th Feb 2019. The schemes on offer remain the same as those available last year. An overview and summary of all the schemes together with key dates is given in the document **Countryside Stewardship: An Overview**.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-an-overview](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-an-overview)

* **Higher Tier** – for land which requires complexagreements eg commons and SSSIs and the most environmentally important sites. Agreements are tailored to be site specific. Consult with a Natural England advisor before requesting an application pack. This is a competitive scheme. See the manual at:

[**www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-manual**](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-higher-tier-manual) **APPLICATION PACK REQUEST DEADLINE: 31ST March 2019**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 3RD May 2020** For an Agreement start date of 1st January 2020

* **Mid Tier –** is designed to deliver multiple benefits to enhance and protect the natural environment and includes Water Capital only grants which are agreements for capital works only, over a 2 year period. Mid tier is competitive.

The Countryside Stewardship: Mid Tier overview leaflet and the Mid Tier and Wildlife Offers Manual are both available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-mid-tier-including-water-quality-capital-items-manual>

Some options including “priority habitats” such as management of species rich grassland (GS6) require approvals, endorsements, consents and permissions. Details of these and what to do are given on Pages 30 – 32 of the Mid Tier Manual. To be eligible for GS6 in Mid Tier:

* Check to make sure the relevant GS6 parcels are mapped on NE’s Priority Habitat Inventory which can be viewed at [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)
* Then request an endorsement to use the GS6 option from Natural England via email: [enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk) or Tel: 0300 060 3900. The deadline to contact Natural England to request an endorsement for GS6 is 31st May 2019
* The completed and approved endorsement must be submitted with the Application.

**Do you have species rich land that you want to include as GS6 but the fields are missing from the Priority Habitats Inventory ? This is urgent - PLEASE ask us for help if in doubt.**

NE will consider requests from Herefordshire Meadows members to add Priority Habitat to the Magic map Inventory, if **eligible** parcels are not showing as mapped. Evidence (species surveys etc) needs to be provided to support mapping additions and changes. Requests to add field parcels to the map should be made via email to: [west.midlands.enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:west.midlands.enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk) and please also cc to your NE adviser and Herefordshire Meadows for information. This must be completed BEFORE an Endorsement is requested!

**APPLICATION PACK REQUEST DEADLINE FOR MID TIER: 31ST MAY 2019**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR MID TIER: 31ST July 2019**

For an Agreement start date of 1st January 2020

* **4 Wildlife Offer agreements** - these include:

Arable Offer

Lowland Grazing Offer

Mixed Farming Offer

Upland Offer

These are non-competitive with a quick and simple application process and provide

annual payments for 5 years. There are no capital items available with these offers

although the Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant (see below) which is a capital only

grant, can be combined with the Wildlife Offers.

**APPLICATION PACK REQUEST DEADLINE FOR WILDLIFE OFFERS: 31ST MAY 2019**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR WILDLIFE OFFERS: 31ST July 2019**

For an Agreement start date of 1st January 2020

* **Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant –** these are capital only grants for restoration of existing farm boundaries in order to benefit landscape and environment. These grants are competitive. This Grant can be combined with the Wildlife Offer agreements.

**APPLICATION PACK REQUEST DEADLINE: 31ST March 2019**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 3rd May**  **2019**

For an Agreement start date of 1st October 2019

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Herefordshire Meadows Group Members receive extra points score for Countryside Stewardship if they include options which meet the objectives of Herefordshire Meadows Group in their applications. Please ask Caroline Hanks to endorse your application before the application deadline. Endorsement forms are either sent with an application pack or can be downloaded from the Countryside Stewardship website.

**Ask for help if you need it!** There are local advisors who can help for a modest fee –details can be found on Herefordshire Meadows website [www.herefordshiremeadows.org.uk](http://www.herefordshiremeadows.org.uk)

Look out for details of clinics and workshops which may be run during the next few months. These can be very useful providing help and advice for applicants.

For information about all the schemes and relevant manuals see [www.gov.uk/rpa/cs](http://www.gov.uk/rpa/cs)

 

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