Rural Payments Agency

Countryside Stewardship: How to apply for a Woodland Management Plan Grant

Contents

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This guidance explains how to apply for a Woodland Management Plan grant, including how to complete any maps and annexes.

Be aware of fraud

Fraudsters may target farmers who receive subsidy payments and we're aware that in the past some customers have received emails, texts and telephone calls claiming to be from RPA or Defra.

Links to a fake website designed to look like an authentic RPA or Defra online service are sometimes included in the message. We do not send emails or text messages with links to websites asking you to confirm your personal details or payment information. We strongly advise anyone who receives such a request not to open the link and delete the item.

As fraudsters may target farmers who receive subsidy payments, remember:

- never discuss your bank account details with someone you do not know
- we will not ask you to make a payment over the phone
- delete any emails or texts you do not believe are genuine, and do not open any links – our main email addresses are:
  - ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk
  - rpa@notifications.service.gov.uk
- be cautious about what information you share externally, particularly on social media.

If you suspect an attempted fraud or feel you have been the subject of fraud, you can contact:

- RPA's Fraud Referral Team on 0800 347 347 or FraudInConfidence@rpa.gov.uk
- Action Fraud (the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime) on 0300 123 2040.

Introduction

This guidance explains how to apply for a Woodland Management Plan grant, including how to complete any maps and annexes.

Search for '[Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan grant'](#) on GOV.UK.

Read this guidance carefully and use it to help you complete your application form in full (including any supporting documents). This will help us and the Forestry Commission (FC) make decisions about your application as quickly as possible.

Please put your Single Business Identifier (SBI) on everything you send to the RPA.

If you do not have access to the internet or if you read this guidance and are still unsure how to complete your application please contact us on 03000 200 301.

When to apply

You can apply for a Woodland Management Plan throughout the year.

Before you start your application

It's important that you do the following in the order we've listed them:

1. Register or sign in to the Rural Payments service

To receive Countryside Stewardship (CS) payments you must be registered in the Rural Payments service. To find out how to do this, read 'Rural Payments service: registering and updating your details' on GOV.UK.

2. Check and change

Check that your personal details, business details, and digital maps are up to date, and update them if needed.

You must register all of the land on your application in the Rural Payments service.

To find out how to do this read 'Rural Payments service: registering and updating your details' on GOV.UK. (You may also find the Rural Land and Entitlements (RLE1) guidance useful, which is also on GOV.UK.)

If you do not have access to the internet, you can call us on 03000 200 301.

3. Check your permissions

To submit an application, you must have the Countryside Stewardship (Applications) 'Submit' Permission level. You can find more information on the Permission levels screen in the Rural Payments service (https://www.gov.uk/claim-rural-payments). This lists what is permitted at each level.

If you prefer, you can authorise an agent to fill in and submit your application for you. For an agent to act for you, you must give them the appropriate permission levels in the Rural Payments service (https://www.gov.uk/claim-rural-payments) on GOV.UK. This applies even if you have previously authorised the agent using the paper agent authorisation form.

Read 'Give someone else permission to act on your behalf' on GOV.UK for more information on the different levels of permission.

4. Read the scheme manual and other guidance

All the guidance and information you need for CS in 2021 is on GOV.UK.

- For the Woodland Management Plan requirements, search for the Woodland Management Plan grant manual.
- For information about options and items available, search for Countryside Stewardship grants.
- For information about what evidence is needed for your application, and whether you need to submit it with your application or keep it until you're asked for it, search for Countryside Stewardship grants.
- For guidance about other agri-environment agreements and BPS, search for Agri-environment schemes (CS and ES) and BPS.

If you cannot access GOV.UK, you can email or call us to request a paper copy of the Woodland Creation and Maintenance manual.

Remember, it's your responsibility to make sure that:

- you meet the scheme rules
- all the eligible land included in your application is correct, to the best of your knowledge.

5. Get the application form and annex

You can download the Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan Application Form from GOV.UK. Search for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan Grant Application Form. If you cannot access GOV.UK, email us at ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk, or call us on 03000 200 301, to request a copy.

You also need to fill in a Woodland Management Plan Annex and send this to us with your application form. Email ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk, or call us, to get a copy of this.

6. Apply for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan grant

Continue to the 'How to apply' section.

How to apply

Before you apply, you must check and update any of your information in the Rural Payments service.

Check that you have the following:

- Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan Application form
- The Woodland Management Plan Annex
- An application map - see Step 2 for details of how to get this.

If you’ve downloaded the application form from GOV.UK or have received it by email

Save it and the Woodland Management Plan Annex to your computer and fill in the form and annex on your screen. Complete the relevant maps and scan them into your computer. Once complete, email your completed form, annex and maps to us. Read Step 6 for more information.

If you’ve received the application form by post

Fill in the application form, annex and maps and either post them to us, or you can scan them into your computer and send them to us by email. Read Step 6 for more information.

Complete your application form, maps and annexes

This section tells you how to fill in your Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan Application form, maps and annexes.

Step 1 – Your application form

Complete your application form on paper or electronically, as described above.

Step 2 – Your map(s)

Prepare a map to accompany your application

You must provide map(s) showing the full area of the woodland you are including in your proposed Woodland Management Plan and send this with your Woodland Management Plan grant application. The map needs to be clear, readable and meet the standards set out below.

We suggest you complete the annex and your map(s) alongside each other. This means you can add your capital item in the annex then immediately mark it on the map as you go along.

How to create a map

You can create the map associated with a Woodland Management Plan application yourself, as long as it meets the standards set out below, or you can request one through the Forestry Commission map request service.

Maps you supply should be based on ordnance survey (OS) maps and/or Geographical Information System (GIS) generated digital maps. Maps should be based on a scale of 1:2500 or 1:5000 or for large schemes 1:10000. If you are using a GIS based map at a non-standard scale, add a scale bar to the map so that this can be used to measure lengths.

You should mark the land parcel references and the SBI clearly on the map.

If you're sending your supporting documents to us by email, send us your map as a PDF file.

Minimum mapping standards

If you create your own agreement map, or are marking up a map you've received from the Forestry Commission map request service, you must make sure they meet the following rules:

- The map(s) must show whole land parcels with land parcel references and a clear boundary for the extent of the Woodland Management Plan

- The map(s) must have a number (1, 2, 3, and so on). Include this map number and also the total number of maps, for example, 1 of 3
- Write your Single Business Identifier (SBI) – consisting of 9 digits, the application year and agreement title (as detailed on the application form) on the top right of the map
- Write the name of business or applicant – this should be the name that is registered with us for the SBI, on the right-hand side of the map
- If there are no numbered OS grid lines, write a 6 figure OS grid reference for the centre of the map on the bottom left of the map
- Please use black ink when you write on the Agreement Map. If you make a mistake do not use correction fluid - strike through the mistake instead.

Step 3 – Woodland Management Plan Annex

The Woodland Management Plan annex has been designed to capture all the information needed to complete your Woodland Management Plan application. Please fill in this annex with as much detail as you can.

Email ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk (or call 03000 200 301) to get a copy of the annex. This is available in electronic or paper format.

You must begin with the ‘START HERE’ tab, then complete Annex A and then Annex B. This order is important because the information you enter pre-populates the other annexes where relevant, to save you time.

If you can, you should fill in the Woodland Management Plan Annex electronically so that your Forestry Commission Woodland Officer has access to your self-calculating document.

If you’re completing a paper annex, it does not contain any pre-populated information, so you need to write all the information into it.

START HERE worksheet

Start your application by completing this worksheet. The information carries through to the other annexes as you complete them, so this information must be accurate. Enter all information in the yellow cells.

Name of lead applicant

Enter the lead applicant’s full name. This must match a named applicant on the application form.

This information carries through into Annexes A and B as you complete them unless you are using a paper form.

Single Business Identifier

Enter the application SBI. This must match the application form.

This information carries through into Annexes A and B as you complete them unless you are using a paper form.

Name of Woodland

Enter the name you want the woodland to be known by (maximum 20 characters).

Which Forestry Commission area team will be advising you?

Click into the box in this column, then click the small dropdown arrow that appears. Then select the Forestry Commission area team who cover the area where your woodland is located.

Use the Forestry Commission Area and Woodland Officer boundaries map on GOV.UK to check which team to select. Search for 'Forestry Commission area offices' on GOV.UK.

What is the grid reference of the centre of your woodland?

Enter the six figure grid reference of the centre of your woodland.

Do you intend to apply for a Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier Agreement following the approval of the plan?

Confirm either 'Yes' or 'No'.

Annex A: Land summary

Use this annex to list all the land parcels being used in your application. Only include the land parcels being used in your woodland management plan application, not all the land parcels linked to your SBI.

Complete Annex A in full with all relevant land parcels before you complete Annex B.

Name of lead applicant/SBI

This pre-populates when you enter the information in the 'START HERE' tab unless you are using a paper form.

You cannot edit this cell.

ID

This ID number is generated automatically and carries through from Annex A to Annex B.

You cannot edit this cell.

OS Map Sheet ref/National Grid no.

Enter the land parcel reference number from the Rural Payments service for each land parcel in the format LP1234 5678. Do not enter the grid reference number.

IMPORTANT: You must leave the space in the land parcel number, or an error message will appear. You need to check you've included the space if you copy and paste land parcel numbers into the annex.

You can only enter one land parcel number on each line. Only include land parcels being used in your Woodland Management Plan application and only enter each land parcel once in this annex.

Is this parcel registered on the Rural Payments service?

Confirm whether the land parcel is registered in the Rural Payments service. Click into the box in this column, then click the small dropdown arrow that appears. Then confirm either 'Yes' or 'No'. Sign in to the Rural Payments service on GOV.UK and search for 'make or update a rural payments claim'.

Parcels that are not registered in the Rural Payments service cannot be included in a Countryside Stewardship agreement.

Annex B: Area & Grant Amount

Use this annex to declare the area of woodland included in your application and to calculate the area eligible for financial support. Only include the land parcels that you use in your Woodland Management Plan application, not all the land parcels linked to your SBI.

Complete this part of the annex in full with all relevant land parcels before you complete the rest of the annex.

Name of lead applicant/SBI

These pre-populate when you enter this information in the 'START HERE' tab.

You cannot edit this cell.

Total area of woodland in your application (ha)

Enter the total area (in hectares) of woodland you want to include in the Woodland Management Plan you are applying for. The total area must be larger than 3ha.

Total area of newly planted woodland under 10 years old in your application (ha)

Enter the total area (in hectares) of any newly planted woodland under 10 years old you want to include in the Woodland Management Plan you are applying for.

This area should not include natural regeneration.

% of total woodland in your application under 10 years old

This calculates automatically using the information you entered in Annex A.

You cannot edit this cell.

Total area of woodland eligible for payment (ha)

This pre-populates from the information you entered in previous annexes. It calculates the total area of your woodland eligible for payment, based on the fact that only up to 20% of the funded area can be comprised of newly planted woodland under 10 years old.

You cannot edit this cell.

Total grant amount

This is the total value, based on the areas given. The minimum payment is £1000.

You cannot edit this cell.

Q1. Is there an existing FC-approved Woodland Management Plan on any of the woodland in this application?

Confirm whether there is an existing FC approved Woodland Management Plan on any of the woodland in your application. Click into the box in this column, then click the small dropdown arrow that appears. Then confirm either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

Q2. Is all of the woodland on your holding included in this application?

Confirm whether all the woodland on your holding is included in this application. Click into the box in this column, then click the small dropdown arrow that appears. Then confirm either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’. Your answer must be ‘Yes’ for your application to be eligible.

Q3. Are these the only woodlands that are owned under this SBI?

Confirm whether the woodlands included in this application are the only woodlands linked to this SBI. Click into the box in this column, then click the small dropdown arrow that appears. Then confirm either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

Q4. If you have answered ‘NO’ to question 3, do you plan on applying for Countryside Stewardship support for a Woodland Management Plan on any of these other woodlands?

Confirm whether you plan on applying for support through Countryside Stewardship for another Woodland Management Plan on any of these woodlands. Click into the box in this column, then click the small dropdown arrow that appears. Then confirm either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

Step 4 – Continue your application form

Fill in Section 2: Declaration and undertakings to confirm that you have read and understood the requirements of the CS scheme and the undertakings that you are making in submitting your application.

Read the declaration, undertakings and warning carefully.

If you are submitting your application by post, sign Section 2 and enter your name in block letters, your capacity (for example sole trader, company director, agent and so on) and the date of your signature.

If you are submitting your application online, you do not need to sign the declaration.

Step 5 – Checklist

Use the checklist below to make sure that you have completed your application in full and attached any required supporting documents and evidence including maps, photographs, briefs, specifications or consents before sending it to us.

Make sure that:

- you have completed all relevant Parts of the application form, including signing and dating Section 2
- all your land and business details are up to date and correct on Rural Payments
- you have arranged for ‘Submit’ permissions in Rural Payments, if you’re acting as an agent
- you have completed map(s) showing the land parcels in this application. Go to Step 2 for details on how to do this
- you have attached any applicable supporting documents or evidence
- you have attached any continuation sheets you’ve used in your application.

For the capital item descriptions, search [Countryside Stewardship grants] on GOV.UK. You can also read Countryside Stewardship: Record keeping and inspection requirements on GOV.UK.

Step 6 - Submit your application

By email

Send us all parts of the completed form, together with maps and other supporting documents and remember to include the Annex with your application.

A signature is not needed if you send your application by email.

Email your application and supporting documents to us at: ruralpayments@defra.gov.uk and put ‘Countryside Stewardship, Woodland Management Plan grant application, 2021, [SBI] as the title.

You must also put your SBI in your email and check they’re on everything you send to us.

You’ll receive an automated email to confirm we have received your application. Check your spam mailbox if you don’t receive this.

By post

If you prefer, you can post them to us at our address in the ‘Important information about your application’ document attached to your application form. Put your SBI on everything you send to us.

If you are sending the form to us by post you must sign your application and any supporting forms.

For any documents you send us by post, we recommend that you get proof of postage. You’re advised to keep a copy of your completed application form and maps.

What happens next?

This section tells you what to expect after you’ve submitted your application.

When we receive your application we’ll check that:

- you meet the eligibility requirements
- all the necessary details have been entered on your application form and annexes and
- all of your maps have been completed.

If your application fails any of the above checks, we’ll contact you to explain what is wrong and how the failed check(s) can be corrected (if relevant).