

Land, Life & Livelihoods

Facilitation Fund for the Clun Forest (updated June 2018)

A 3-year grant has been secured from the Natural England Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund to help farmers/land managers work together to find ways to improve farm viability, through action to conserve soil, water, wildlife and landscape¹. This draft statement sets out an initial vision that can now be developed by local farmers to decide what and how the project can deliver for them, their farms, and the environment.

Government is currently consulting on a post-Brexit future for food, farming and the environment and states that it “will incentivise methods of farming that create new habitats for wildlife, increase biodiversity, reduce flood risk, better mitigate climate change and improve air quality by reducing agricultural emissions.”

The intention is to provide opportunities for farmers to come together to find ways in which they can manage their land to conserve, enhance and join up valuable areas for nature. Funding will also provide specialist advice on farm practices that help to conserve soil, prevent water pollution and potentially benefit farm businesses. Small groups of farmers who wish to participate can meet to agree how best to manage land for the important special and endangered plants and animals of the Clun Forest. Free advice will be provided by specialists, working with, and led by, these farmers, to help with aspects which may attract future farm support, particularly in challenging upland areas like our own. This will include assistance with existing schemes and helping shape new schemes to combine high quality livestock and food production with environmental benefits, or, in the new jargon, “public goods”.

The Clun Forest Farmers group joins 97 others that have been grant-aided in England during the last 3 years, with almost 2000 farmer/land manager participants working together to improve the natural environment at a landscape scale.

By demonstrating the ability of our area to meet government’s aims, we may also help influence the development of future incentive schemes so that they are more suitable to our unique hill circumstances and could propose a local pilot.

¹ Application made by Land Life and Livelihoods, together with the Upper Clun Community Wildlife Group, with the support of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

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