

Hedgerow management supplementary information requested at the Open Floor Hearing Amy Wheelton 01/08/2024

Please see below a list of obligations and management guides which apply to landowners and farmers with respect to hedgerows, this list is not exhaustive. It is noted currently, that the NSIP Oaklands project states that the Oaklands farm will continue and farm sheep amongst the solar panels, so these guides should apply, with appropriate management plans drafted and adhered to for the implementation and maintenance of hedges, fences and ditches. It is noted some of these rules are only binding if you enter Environmental schemes which is now expected of farmers and landowners. However, under the DEMP the land must be returned to agricultural use and the landscape restored so it is therefore practical to follow these guidelines for the full duration of the project. Hedgerows are the sole mitigation for Glint and Glare, Landscape and Visual Impact, and yet there is no management plan to ensure they will do what is expected and stated in the applicant's documents, the timelines to achieve this mitigation are also potentially unrealistic. It is also noted in these guidelines under their benefits, the aim is to increase biodiversity and wildlife which is another requirement of the project.

At least 8 metres (m) would be required on the inside hedge to allow for the new 2m buffer and then 6 – 8 m to allow work such as hedgecutting, laying, ditching, this ground is usually put into crops, grazed or wildlife grass buffers for which there are additional prescriptions not listed. Current proposals have the 2.1m steel fencing and 3.5m security camera poles far closer potentially against the newly planted hedges.

Please note similar guidelines are present for woodland management, in field and boundary trees, these are not detailed below but can be viewed on the links. The same options or similar are also available under the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) which will replace Countryside Stewardship (CS) they are both currently operating along with other similar government schemes.

Links have been used as the documents are very long:

- Hedgerow management rules: cutting and trimming [GOV.UK](#)
- Hedgerow management rules: buffers these are new rules that came into force 23 May 2024 and must be followed if you have hedgerows on or next to land use for agriculture. Green cover must be maintained on land 2 meters of the center of a hedgerow on both sides. [hedgerow management rules on buffer strips](#)
- The hedgerow management cycle nearly all the prescriptions refer to this (this leaflet is attached)

http://www.hedgeline.org.uk/cms/cms_content/files/78_hedgeline_a5_12pp_leaflet_7.pdf

- Hedgerows and boundaries grant manual 2020 Countryside Stewardship
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hedgerows-and-boundaries-grant-countryside-stewardship>
- Hedgerow and Boundaries grant manual 2020
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60db299fe90e0771784b98b9/C_S_Hedgerows_Boundaries_2020_cs53_v3.0_.pdf
- Options, supplements and capital items 2020
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/604a18ddd3bf7f1d10e5055e/FULL_Options_2020.pdf
- SFI scheme link <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfi-handbook-for-the-sfi-2023-offer>
- It should be noted under this link and Derbyshire County Council document dates January 2023 page 5 Riparian Landowners and Estate Owners are noted as key stakeholders who have a vital role managing flood risk
<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/council/have-your-say/local-flood-risk-management-strategy-consultation/roles-and-responsibilities.pdf>

I will summarise the management below, but in effect it is under the following prescriptions, payments are less than half the cost of the work often a third (payments are not listed but may prove relevant to the management/DEMP regime):

- BN3 Management of hedgerows
- BN5 Hedgerow laying
- BN6 Hedgerow coppicing
- BN7 Hedgerow gapping up
- BN8 Hedgerow Casting up
- BN8 Hedgerow Supplement – substantial pre-work
- BN10 Hedgerow supplement – top binding and staking
- BN11 Planting new hedges
- FG1 Fencing
- FG2 Sheep Netting
- WBD2 Manage Ditches under SFI scheme

I have just summarised the management of the prescriptions verbatim below for full prescriptions please see the links above on the Defra site.

BE3: Management of hedgerows

How this option will benefit the environment

This item increases the availability of blossom for invertebrates. By allowing fruit and berries to ripen it provides food for overwintering birds. It also improves the structure and longevity of hedgerows.

If successful there will be:

- taller and wider hedges, with gaps forming less than 10% of the hedge length
- a mix of hedges of different heights and width across the farm
- production of 2 to 4 times the weight of berries when compared with hedges cut every year
- an increase in the blossom available to insect pollinators
- dense cover, which is important for successful breeding for a variety of wildlife
- an improvement in overall hedge condition to maintain them as distinctive and historic landscape features

Requirements

You must:

- maintain a hedge at least 2m tall and 1.5m wide by year 2, except for sections gapped up, laid or coppiced during the agreement term
- cut hedgerows:
 - either no more than 1 year in 3 between 1 September and 28 February - leave at least two-thirds of hedges untrimmed each year
 - or no more than 1 year in 2 between 1 January and 28 February - leave at least one-half of hedges untrimmed each year
- gap up any length of hedge with more than 10% gaps within the first 2 years If you need to fell trees, check if you need a felling licence from the Forestry Commission. If you do, make sure it is in place before you start to fell, otherwise you may be prosecuted. Do not:
 - remove any tree limbs, including lower limbs, or mature ivy growth from hedgerow trees
 - remove any standing deadwood
- supplementary feed livestock within 2m of the centre of the hedge

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this option

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item. Pick the right hedge If you do not have management control of both sides of a hedge then only enter 1 side into the option. If there is no parcel number listed under your SBI for the land on one side of the hedgerow, for example where it is a road or track verge, or the land belongs to a neighbour, you cannot enter that side of the hedgerow into BE3 on your application.

Select hedges that:

- are connected to other hedges or habitats (such as woodlands and ponds)
- have other components such as hedgerow trees, bases or banks rich in flowers, or an adjacent ditch or margin

Use the option to improve the condition and longevity of hedges which are of particular historic interest, such as parish boundaries, or are especially important in the landscape.

Managing the hedges

If you use the correct rotor and forward speeds, well-maintained flails are effective for cutting 2 to 3 year-old growth of most woody species.

You may need to use heavier duty flails or more powerful cutting heads on fast growing species, such as ash or willow. Alternatively, use a circular saw or leave hedges uncut. There is no requirement to trim hedges at all during the agreement. Instead, leave them to grow and manage in a coppicing or laying rotation.

Cutting incrementally, rather than trimming back to the same point, allows hedges to increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut, this encourages a dense, healthy hedgerow.

Use native shrubs species that already occur in hedgerows in the local area to gap up. A gap is a complete break in the canopy. Where a tree canopy overlaps the hedgerow canopy it is not counted as a gap.

Further information

You can find more information on hedgerows in the following:

- hedgerow management cycle
http://www.hedgeline.org.uk/cms/cms_content/files/78_hedgeline_a5_12pp_leaflet_7.pdf
- common questions on hedge cutting
http://www.hedgeline.org.uk/cms/cms_content/files/76_ne_hedgecutting.pdf

BN5: Hedgerow laying

How this item will benefit the environment

Lengths of hedgerow will rejuvenate with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirement

You must:

- carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- remove old fencing and wire
- cut and pull-out bramble, clematis or other scrambling plants
- cut out elder plants and prevent re-growth of stumps
- partially cut through stems near ground level, laying the pleachers (cut stems) over at an angle from horizontal to form a stock-proof barrier
- remove the uncut heel from each pleacher
- keep pleachers in position by crooking, staking, or staking and binding
- keep all existing hedgerow trees
- remove all cut material from the immediate site after completion of the work
- control weeds during the first growing season after laying
- prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- trim the hedge for 3 years after laying, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut

If you need to fell trees, check if you need a felling licence from the Forestry Commission. If you do, make sure it is in place before you start to fell, otherwise you may be prosecuted.

Do not:

- lay hedges downhill
- obstruct or block access to open access land
- disturb breeding birds

Pick the right hedge

Use the hedgerow management cycle to help decide what management is needed.

Choose a hedge which:

- has few gaps and enough stems to lay to achieve a continuous length of hedge
- has stems between 5 centimetres (cm) to 15cm in diameter - however, it is possible to cut larger stems with a chainsaw
- is tall enough to lay (at least 2.5m, and ideally 4m) Hedge laying

To undertake hedge laying successfully:

- only cut using hand-tools (including chainsaws)
- lay the hedge in the regional style
- cut each stem as low as possible (no more than 10cm from the ground)
- choose stems which when laid do not leave large gaps
- protect the newly laid hedge from damage by grazing animals - rabbit fencing may be needed if local populations are high
- leave as much side growth on the branches as possible
- lay stems at an angle of about 35 to 45 degrees from horizontal
- keep any existing trees and leave the occasional 'standard' hawthorn or other species if this fits in with the local landscape
- keep deadwood where possible
- plant up gaps using native species to improve the continuity of the hedge

Fencing may only need to be temporary and in place for as long as it takes the hedge to grow sufficiently

Hedge management

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the re-growth rate of the laid stems by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light.

Encourage dense bushy growth of the newly laid hedge by:

- trimming lightly for 3 years
- never cutting back to the same point, but allowing the hedge to gradually increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut

In following years, you can leave the hedge to grow unchecked until it requires laying or coppicing, or be managed by trimming.

BN6: Hedgerow coppicing

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow rejuvenated with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirements

- carry out work between 30 September and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- remove old fencing and wire
- cut and pull-out bramble, clematis or other scrambling plants
- cut out elder plants and prevent re-growth of stumps
- encourage vigorous re-growth from the base of the plant by cutting the stems down to ground level (less than 10cm)
- angle cuts so that water can easily run off
- keep all existing hedgerow trees
- cuttings can be placed over newly coppiced stools to prevent browsing by livestock or wild animals, or to leave dead wood for wildlife; however, they must not prevent new growth
- remove all unused cut branches from the immediate site after completion of the work
- control weeds during the first growing season after laying
- prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
- trim the hedge for 3 years after coppicing, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut

Do not:

- obstruct or block access to open access land
- disturb breeding birds

Pick the right hedge

Use the hedgerow management cycle to help decide what management is needed.

Choose a hedge which:

- is gappy and has too few stems to lay
- has stems too large to lay (more than 15cm diameter)
- is too short to lay (less than 2.5m tall)

Most woody species coppice well, stimulating dense growth from the cut stems, apart from:

- holly
- mature beech
- mature hawthorn which is showing signs of rot Hedge coppicing

To undertake hedge coppicing successfully:

- keep any existing trees and leave the occasional 'standard' hawthorn or other species when this fits in with the local landscape
- keep deadwood where possible
- plant up gaps at the same time as coppicing to improve the continuity of the hedge - plant native species that already occur in hedgerows in the local area
- protect the newly coppiced hedge from damage by grazing animals - rabbit fencing may be needed if local populations are high

Fencing may only need to be temporary and in place for as long as it takes the hedge to grow sufficiently.

Hedge management

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the re-growth rate of the coppiced stems by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light.

Encourage dense bushy growth of the newly coppiced hedge by:

- trimming lightly for 3 years
- never cutting back to the same point, instead allowing the hedge to gradually increase in height and width by several centimetres at each cut.

In following years, the hedge can either be left to grow unchecked until it requires coppicing or laying or be managed by trimming.

BN7: Hedgerow gapping-up

How this item will benefit the environment

Lengths of hedgerow with gaps planted up will create a continuous length of hedge.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between 1 November and 31 March when the hedge is still dormant
- prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible
- apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting 132 make sure plants are:
 - 2-year-old transplants
 - at least 450 millimetres (mm) to 600mm high
 - native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
 - planted in a staggered double row 40 centimetres (cm) apart with a minimum of 6 plants per metre
 - kept clear of weeds until they are established
 - prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible
 - remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
 - replace all failures in the following planting season

Do not:

- obstruct or block access to open access land

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

When to plant

November is generally the best time to plant; however, if planting into clay soils wait until March. Do not plant in freezing weather or on waterlogged ground. If planting into a newly restored earth bank, plant the following autumn.

Planting

To undertake hedge gapping-up successfully:

- prepare the ground so the soil becomes friable (has a crumbly texture) and is free of other growth
- plant native species that already grow in the local area
- take care of roots before planting by keeping them covered at all times, especially when it is sunny or windy
- avoid opening more than one bag of plants at a time

Consider planting new hedgerow trees if they are characteristic of the local landscape.

Control weeds

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the growth rate of the new plants by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light. Avoid using a strimmer as these can damage the plants.

Protect the plants

Fence off the plants if sheep, cattle or horses graze the land. Keep fences far enough away so the hedgerow can grow at least 1.5m in width.

If there is a known problem with rabbits or hares you may need rabbit netting, either on its own or with stock fencing.

Avoid using spiral guards as they limit the amount of dense growth at the base of each plant, are unsightly and difficult to remove.

BN8: Hedgerow supplement - casting up

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow which have been re-profiled and had slipped soil replaced.

Requirements

- cast up the bank to reflect the local style and build it back to its original profile (this must be established by reference to other banks in good condition nearby)
- rebuild the bank using the original soil that has slipped from it
- build each face of the bank so that it slopes inwards (approximately 0.3m for every 1m in height), to create a 'batter' (slope)
- make the base of the bank wider than the top by roughly 45cm to 60cm on each side
- ensure the top line of the bank is level with the ground
- make sure that no healthy mature trees are disturbed
- restore any stiles and gates to their original construction
- remove any surplus earth-fill and stones from the site after completion of the work and restore the ground around it

Do not:

- cast up between 1 March and 31 August
- remove soil from other banks, even if they are derelict
- bury newly laid or coppiced material in deep earth
- damage the roots of trees growing on the bank with machinery

BN9: Hedgerow supplement - substantial pre-work

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful, lengths of restored hedgerow which required substantial prework or were located on difficult sites will be restored.

BN10: Hedgerow supplement - top binding and staking

How this supplement will benefit the environment

If successful there will be lengths of hedgerow rejuvenated with new growth to form a continuous hedge.

Requirements

- use stakes made of straight and clean lengths of hazel, ash or sweet chestnut
- use binders made of straight lengths of hazel, ash or willow, with no side shoots

This item is to strengthen layed hedges. It should only be used where the local style of hedge laying includes top binding and staking. These include the Midland and South of England style and Welsh Border styles which include stakes (or crops) and binding. It is not typical of Lancashire/Westmorland styles of hedge laying in the north of England.

BN11: Planting new hedges

How this item will benefit the environment

There will be new lengths of hedgerow planted with locally occurring native species.

Requirements

You must:

- carry out work between 1 November and 31 March
- prepare the ground along a 1.5m wide strip to provide good soil conditions and as little competition from other vegetation as possible
- apply any herbicide to the 1.5m strip in the August or September prior to planting only plants must be:
 - 2-year-old transplants
 - at least 450 millimetres (mm) to 600mm high
 - native species, with no one species making up more than 70% of the total
 - planted in a staggered double row 40 centimetres (cm) apart with a minimum of 6 plants per metre
 - kept clear of weeds until they are established
 - remove individual guards and tree shelters once the plants are established
 - replace all failures in the following planting season
 - trim the newly planted hedge in at least the first 2 years to encourage bushy growth, allowing the hedge to become taller and wider at each cut
 - prevent livestock and grazing animals from damaging the hedge by setting fencing at least 1.2m from the centre of the hedge, or, if there is a bank, as close to the base of the bank as possible

Do not:

- obstruct or block access to open access land Keeping records You must send the following with your application:

- historic map or other records to show that the proposed location of the hedge planting is on an original footprint or extends existing hedges or contributes to the reduction of soil erosion and run-off - this can be marked on any map including the Farm Environment Record (FER)

Advice and suggestions for how to carry out this item.

The following advice is helpful, but they are not requirements for this item.

When to plant November is generally the best time to plant; however, if you are planting into clay soils wait until March. Do not plant in freezing weather or on waterlogged ground. If you are planting into a newly restored earth bank, plant the following autumn.

Planting To plant a hedge successfully:

- prepare the ground so the soil becomes friable (has a crumbly texture) and is free of other growth
- plant native species that already grow in the local area
- take care of roots before planting by keeping them covered at all times, especially when it is sunny or windy
- avoid opening more than one bag of plants at a time.

If the landscape is characterised by a single-species hedgerows then the planting mix should reflect this. If not, then one of the following species should make up at least 70% of the planting mix:

- hawthorn
- blackthorn
- hazel

Use other native shrub species intermixed randomly with the main species, rather than planted in a block or blocks.

Consider planting new hedgerow trees if they are characteristic of the local landscape.

Control weeds

Control competitive weeds (including brambles, nettles and grasses) during the first growing season. These weeds reduce the growth rate of the new plants by competing for soil moisture, nutrients and light. Avoid using a strimmer as these can damage the plants.

Protect the plants

Fence off the plants if sheep, cattle or horses graze the land. Keep fences far enough away so the hedgerow can grow at least 1.5m in width.

If there is a known problem with rabbits or hares you may need rabbit netting, either on its own or with stock fencing.

Avoid using spiral guards as they limit the amount of dense growth at the base of each plant, are unsightly and are difficult to remove.

FG1: Fencing

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful, this item will help control livestock and protect environmental features. It will also help to manage habitats.

Requirements

- remove all old fencing material before putting up the new fencing
- use softwood timber that is fully peeled, coated with wood preservative and pressure treated, or treated with an approved preservative - untreated durable timber can be used as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing
- put up a fence at least 1.05m high
- use strands of galvanised 4mm mild plain steel wire or 2.5mm barbed wire
- use enough strands to control the livestock
- use straining posts that are at least 125mm by 125mm square (or have a 100mm top diameter) and are at least 1.87m long
- set the straining posts at least 750mm into the ground and no more than 150m apart
- place a straining post at every change of direction (horizontal or vertical) and at each end of the fence
- use struts that are 75mm by 75mm square, or have a 65mm top diameter, and 1.87m long
- set the struts at least 450mm into the ground and mortise them into the straining post
- use intermediate posts that are 75mm by 75mm square (or have a 65mm top diameter) and 1.75m long

- set the intermediate posts at least 600mm in the ground and no more than 3.5m apart
- make sure that all the materials meet the relevant British Standards - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- attach the fence to trees or hedgerows
- block or restrict access to open access land

FG2: Sheep netting

How this item will benefit the environment

If successful there this item will protect environmental features from livestock. It will also help manage habitats.

Requirements

- remove all old fencing material before putting up the new fencing
- use softwood timber that is fully peeled, coated with wood preservative and pressure treated, or treated with an approved preservative - untreated durable timber can be used as set out in the Forestry Commission guide to forest fencing
- put up a steel wire mesh fence at least 1.05m high
- use additional strands of galvanised steel wire (plain or barbed) if you need extra height
- use straining posts that have a top diameter of at least 125mm, or are 100 by 100mm in cross-section when sawn
- make sure the straining posts are 1.85m long if set in concrete and 2.15m long otherwise
- place the straining posts no more than 150m apart if using mild steel line wire, or 300m apart for high tensile wire
- use a straining post at every change of direction (horizontal or vertical) and at each end of the fence
- use struts that have a top diameter of at least 80mm, or are 75mm by 75mm when sawn
- make sure the struts are 1.6m if set in concrete and 1.9m long otherwise

- notch struts into the straining post at an angle of no more than 45 degrees
- use intermediate posts that have a top diameter of at least 65mm, or are 75mm by 75mm when sawn
- make sure the intermediate posts are 1.7m long and space them no further than 3.5m apart
- make sure that all the materials you use meet the relevant British Standards - examine copies of the most up-to-date standards for guidance

Do not:

- attach the fence to trees or hedgerows
- block or restrict access to open access land Keeping records

WBD2 Manage Ditches

<https://www.gov.uk/find-funding-for-land-or-farms/wbd2-manage-ditches>

Action's aim

This action's aim is that there are ditches with:

- varied bankside and aquatic vegetation
- undisturbed wildlife habitat

The purpose of this is to:

- maintain vegetation that's typical of wet ditches
- provide habitats for wildlife

Where you can do this action

An eligible ditch for this action must:

- form part of the boundary of a land parcel that's located below the moorland line
- be a man-made, long and narrow linear channel that's cut into the ground for the purpose of draining the land or managing water levels
- have vegetated banks
- regularly contain standing or flowing water

You can only do this action on both sides of the entire length of an eligible ditch. This means you must have management control of both sides of the ditch. You can choose what length to enter.

You can enter both sides of a ditch that borders a neighbour's land if you meet both of the following conditions:

- you have a legal right or obligation to manage the ditch
- you can meet this action's requirements

The following features are not eligible for this action:

- ditches located in a severely disadvantaged area (SDA) below the moorland line
- culverts or underground drains
- natural watercourses, such as streams
- non-linear water features, such as ponds, lakes or reservoirs
- grips, gutters and foot drains

What to do

You must manage the ditch in a way that can reasonably be expected to achieve this action's aim, including:

- cutting vegetation at the top of the ditch bank in rotation, so you only cut up to half the length of the ditch bank in any year of this action's 3-year duration
- carrying out in-channel management on any section of the ditch no more than once during this action's 3-year duration – this includes cleaning out silt or vegetation and cutting vegetation in the ditch channel

To minimise disturbance to wildlife, you must only manage the ditch during the autumn, winter and early spring (usually September to late March).

You must not re-profile or increase the width or depth of the ditch.