

AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY 2019-29 ISLE OF MAN DETAILED PRINCIPLES

Sustaining a vibrant Agriculture sector, enabled to deliver a reliable and profitable food chain, while maintaining and enhancing the Island's natural environment and capital



Key Objectives



The Environment



Supporting Active Farming



Productivity



Investment



The Creation of Desirable Permanent Habitats

The provision of new areas of desirable habitat which protect and/or enhance the sustainability of habitats and the Islands biodiversity.

– **Maximum Rate 100%**



The Creation of Desirable Permanent Habitats

Examples of eligible works, but not exclusively include;

- **Generic habitats – Blanket bog, acid grassland etc.**
- **Native woodland**
 - to extend and create new broadleaved woodland which is 100% composed of species likely to be native to the Island. These species have greatest value to native birds, moths and other insects and are capable of developing a diverse natural ground flora.
- **Dubs, ponds and scrapes**
 - to extend and create new dubs, ponds and scrapes. These features have great value to native birds, small mammals and invertebrates and are capable of developing a diverse natural ground flora.
- **Hedges**
 - To join other hedges and areas of habitat in localities where the network of field boundaries is fragmented and has been replaced by fences. This benefits birds, bats and invertebrates.
- **Walls**
 - To create, maintain and replace dry stone walls in parts of the Island where these are an important landscape feature. Walls also provide a nesting habitat for wheatears and wagtails, give warmth and shelter to lizards and butterflies such as the wall brown, and shelter livestock.



The Creation of Desirable Permanent Habitats

Planting native broad-leaved woodland

Purpose: to extend and create new broadleaved woodland which is 100% composed of species likely to be native to the Island (see list in [Appendix 6](#)). These species have greatest value to native birds, moths and other insects and are capable of developing a diverse natural ground flora.

Eligible land: improved, semi-improved, unimproved or un-productive land ideally but not exclusively adjacent to existing woodland which is 80% or more made up of species likely to be native to the Island.

Management conditions:

- Fence and exclude all stock.
- Rabbit proofing or individual tree guards used if rabbits or hares are present at the site.
- If available plant only Manx native trees grown from Manx seed.
- Undertake effective weed control of new planting (only non-chemical control such as mulch mats should be used within 10 m of watercourses).
- Planting may be spread over 2 or 3 years, but minimum number of trees finally planted must be 450 per ac - replacing dead trees to keep this density.
- Area payments are paid on the basis of the area which has been fenced.
- Woodland may contain up to 30% un-planted ground and up to 15% shrubs.

Loss of farmland payment (where land has been grazed regularly)

Area payment will be retained for 10 years

Capital payment rates to be confirmed

- Native tree species only
- Tree shelters (such as net-tubes) where necessary.

- rabbit proof and stock proof fencing
- scrub clearance where necessary
- Mulch mats for weed control.
- Traditional boundary construction.

New hedge planting

Purpose: To join other hedges and areas of habitat in localities where the network of field boundaries is fragmented and has been replaced by fences. This benefits birds, bats and invertebrates.

Eligibility: For new hedges on a bank or at ground level,

Specifications

- The shrubs must be planted in a double row at a minimum of 6 shrubs per metre.
- The shrubs should be mixed, no more than 75% one species.
- Use DEFA Approved species.
- Cut no more frequently than every third year.
- Hedges should be trimmed between 1st December and 1st March.
- Pesticides should only be used to help shrub establishment, or to spot treat injurious weeds, with DEFA approval.
- Avoid spray drift or fertilisers and manures affecting the hedge.
- Protect hedge with a shockproof fence.
- Protect shrubs from rabbit or hare damage.

Capital payment rates to be confirmed

Capital payment

£6/m

Maximum length for new hedge 100m/year review max length

Rabbit guard for hedge plants £0.50 each

Rabbit-proof fencing £1.70/m

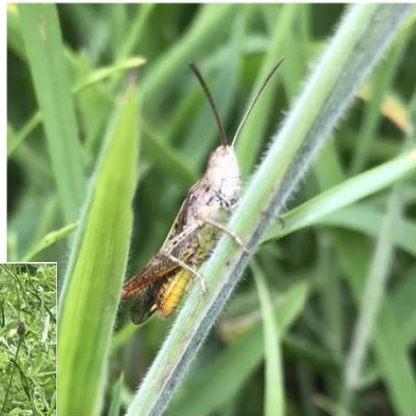
Note: rabbit-proof fencing is preferable to the use of individual plant protectors.



The Creation of Desirable Transient Habitats

This initiative covers the provision of new areas of desirable habitat which protect and/or enhance the sustainability of habitats and the Island's biodiversity

– ***Maximum Rate 100%***



The Creation of Desirable Transient Habitats

Examples of eligible works, but not exclusively include;

- **Winter stubble**

- to provide foraging and feeding areas for birds such as grey partridge, yellowhammer, skylark, flocks of finches and tree and house sparrows.

- **Winter stubble cover crops**

- to provide cover and feeding areas for birds such as partridge, yellowhammer, skylark, and flocks of finches, including linnet. These areas may even benefit corncrakes.

- **Arable field margins**

- to encourage growth of a number of broadleaved weeds and hence the insects which feed on them. The weed seeds and insects in turn are vital food items for game birds, yellowhammers and skylarks as well as encouraging predators of aphids and other crop pests (such as ground beetles). Conservation headlands can be a refuge for rare and declining arable plants. This option is best suited to crops on light lowland soils. Avoid creating these headlands where there are difficult weeds.

- **Biennial wild bird seed mix strips**

- To provide a year round habitat for wildlife such as pollinators and birds.

- **Hedge management (Biannual trimming)**

- To enhance existing hedges



The Creation of Desirable Transient Habitats

Eligible land: Any fodder / cereal growing land in grass/crop rotation or where crops have been grown continuously.

- Seed mix of at least 3 small- seed bearing plant chosen from, barley, triticale, kale, and quinoa. Linseed. Millet, mustard. Fodder radish & sunflower
- No ploughing, cultivations and spreading of fertiliser before 1st March;
- No insecticides can be used;
- No herbicide except pre-emergence herbicide which is acceptable;
- If the chosen mix fails to establish, re-establish with seeds from the list
- Re-establish the mixture every 2 years to maintain seed production
- Create blocks at least 6m wide, at least 1 acre at most 10 acres in area
- Fertiliser application must not exceed 40 units of nitrate, 20 units of phosphate and 20 units of potash per ac, equivalent to a total application of 2 cwt per ac of a 20:10:10 compound; and
- Field margins must have at least 1m uncultivated or rough grass strip between crop edge and fence/hedge/base of sod hedge; if the hedge is very wide and/or overgrown, and hence more than 3m wide in total, the 1m strip can include part of the hedge overhang.

To provide a year round habitat for wildlife such as pollinators and birds.



The Creation of Desirable Transient Habitats

Winter stubbles

Purpose: to provide foraging and feeding areas for birds such as grey partridge, yellowhammer, skylark, flocks of finches and tree and house sparrows.

Eligible land: Any cereal growing land in grass/crop rotation or where crops have been grown continuously. The area can be moved from field to field with rotations but not under sown. It may be necessary to exclude a field from the winter stubble option for a year if under sowing is essential.

Management conditions:

- a) After cereal crop has been harvested stubble must be kept until 1st March the following year;
- b) straw must be removed immediately after harvest;
- c) do not burn residues;
- d) do not under sow;
- e) light grazing by sheep allowed, up to 1 ewe per 2 acres;
- f) do not use herbicides, pesticides or fungicides between harvest and ploughing (i.e. while in stubble);
- g) spread no more than 10 tonnes/ac of farm yard manure, if necessary, but only from February onwards;
- h) no slurry to be applied from harvest until after 1st March; and
- i) It is acceptable to store manure on the field, but such middens must be more than 100m from ditches and watercourses.

Biennial wild bird seed mix strips

Purpose: To provide a year round habitat for wildlife such as pollinators and birds.

Eligible land: Any fodder / cereal growing land in grass/crop rotation or where crops have been grown continuously.

Management conditions:

- Seed mix of at least 3 small- seed bearing plant chosen from, barley, triticale, kale, and quinoa. Linseed. Millet, mustard. Fodder radish & sunflower
- No ploughing, cultivations and spreading of fertiliser before 1st March;
- No insecticides can be used;
- No herbicide except pre-emergence herbicide which is acceptable;
- If the chosen mix fails to establish, re-establish with seeds from the list
- Re-establish the mixture every 2 years to maintain seed production
- Create blocks at lets 6m wide, at least 1 acre at most 10 acres in area
- Fertiliser application must not exceed 40 units of nitrate, 20 units of phosphate and 20 units of potash per ac, equivalent to a total application of 2 cwt per ac of a 20:10:10 compound; and
- Field margins must have at least 1m uncultivated or rough grass strip between crop edge and fence/hedge/base of sod hedge; if the hedge is very wide and/or overgrown, and hence more than 3m wide in total, the 1m strip can include part of the hedge overhang.



The Enhancement of Existing Habitats

This initiative covers the enhancement of areas of desirable habitat to improve the sustainability of habitats and the Island's biodiversity.

- ***Maximum grant 100%***



The Enhancement of existing Habitats

Whole farm management agreement

Examples of eligible works, but not exclusively include;

- **Specific habitat management agreement/capital works**
 - to protect watercourses, ponds, dubs and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) from adjacent intensive agriculture - e.g. effects of fertiliser runoff.
- **Peat management**
- **Acid grassland**
- **Blanket bog**
- **Wall/sod hedge renewal**
 - To create repair or replace Manx sod hedges (stone faced earth banks) in parts of the Island where these are an important landscape feature. These banks provide a nesting habitat for many birds including robins and wrens, give warmth and shelter to lizards and butterflies such as the wall brown, support particular wildflower species such as harebell, primroses and sheep's bit scabious, and provide good shelter for livestock.
- **Eligibility:**
 - For new sod hedges: any site where a new sod hedge can be successfully created and where it links two other sod hedges. For repair or rebuilding: the existing sod hedge must have gaps of more than 5m.
- **Invasive species control**
 - To support the active management and eradication of severe infestations of invasive non-native species, namely, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, floating pennywort and other invasive aquatic plants
- **Pond/dub - scrub management**
- **Drain blocking (uplands)**
- **Hedge laying**



The enhancement of existing habitats

Control of invasive plant species

Purpose: To support the active management and eradication of severe infestations of invasive non-native species, namely, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed, floating pennywort and other invasive aquatic plants

Schedule / Number

5/02

Eligible land: All land that is currently under ADS payment

Management conditions:

- control the invasive species so that cover is reduced to a set proportion by a set date
- only carry out chemical control on specifically identified areas
- use temporary grazing controls to protect vegetation regeneration
- control any re-infestation during the term of the agreement
- carry out specific follow up cutting or grazing management tailored to their site

Invasive species can be controlled through a range of methods, including:

- containing a species in a limited area
- preventing (or slowing) its spread
- localised population reduction or eradication in particular areas
- Alternative methods include cutting by hand or cutting mechanically, applying herbicide or an alternative agreed method, depending on the plant being controlled.
- If the applicant has permission to spray herbicide make sure that the person spraying has the relevant qualifications and certifications.
- When controlling and disposing of invasive non-native plants on land, specific legal responsibilities must be complied with.

Supplement cannot be used

- To control weeds as listed
- To control bracken and gorse
- For complying with cross compliance requirements

Hedge management

Purpose: To enhance existing hedges;

Schedule / Number

5/02

Eligibility: Any established hedge, composed of woody plants with less than 2m between the ground and the base of the leafy layer, over 20m long less than 5m wide between major woody stems at the base composed of at least 80% native shrubs

Specifications

- 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

Do not

- remove any tree limbs, including lower limbs, or mature ivy growth from hedgerow trees

Manx sod hedge building, repairing or rebuilding

Purpose: To create repair or replace Manx sod hedges (stone faced earth banks) in parts of the Island where these are an important landscape feature. These banks provide a nesting habitat for many birds including robins and wrens, give warmth and shelter to lizards and butterflies such as the wall brown, support particular wildflower species such as harebell, primroses and sheep's bit scabious, and provide good shelter for livestock.

Eligibility: For new sod hedges: any site where a new sod hedge can be successfully created and where it links two other sod hedges. For repair or rebuilding: the existing sod hedge must have gaps of more than 5m.

Schedule / Number

5/02

Specifications

- Protect with stock-proof fencing on both sides if both sides are grazed.
- Build from material traditional to the locality, using soil from the farm, not brought in.
- Use stone facing if adjacent sod hedges have stone facing.
- Build in the style found in the locality.
- Height and width should match that found in nearest sod hedge.
- Pesticides should not be applied to the hedge bottom, however herbicides may be used, with DEFA approval, to spot treat injurious weeds.
- Avoid spray drift or fertilisers and manures affecting the sod hedge.



The protection of existing Habitats

This initiative covers the protection of areas of desirable habitat to improve the sustainability of habitats and the islands biodiversity.

– *Maximum grant 100%*

- Examples of eligible works but not exclusively include
- Specific habitat management agreement/capital works



Catchment Management

This initiative covers measures to control excessive water flow and improve the quality of water in rivers and streams.

– ***Maximum grant 100%***

Examples of eligible works but not exclusively include

- Specific habitat management agreement/capital works
- Upland water management
 - Flood plain creation
 - Drain blocking
- Riparian tree planting
- The creation of Water Protection Zones
 - Fencing, gates and styles
 - Livestock watering facilities
 - Troughs and associated piping
 - Livestock water pumps



Diffuse water pollution management

This initiative covers measures to minimise organic and inorganic fertiliser loss to improve the quality of water in rivers and streams

- *Maximum grant 100%*
- Examples of eligible works but not exclusively include
 - Crop nutrient management plan
 - Manure management plan
 - Low emission slurry spreading (LESS) machinery
 - Direct injection
 - Trailing shoe
- In field grass strips



Agricultural / Horticultural initiative

This initiative covers measures to encourage the uptake of novel land management/husbandry practices.

- *Maximum grant 100%*

Examples of eligible works but not exclusive include;

- Organic
 - Organic Scheme accreditation
 - Organic conversion support
- Soil Health
- Novel Crops



Wildlife Boxes

It provides nesting, roosting sites for specific mammals, birds and invertebrates

Each box should be sited in the agreed location and cleaned out (October & November), unless it's a bee box, or hibernating or roosting bats are using it.

• Bird Boxes

- on farm buildings or hedgerow trees, ideally near permanent water such as ponds
- away from places cats can easily access, with a secure lid
- out of the midday sun
- weatherproof with small drainage holes in the floor
- made from wood at least 15mm thick with a 28mm entrance hole - follow the [RSPB](#) and [British Trust for Ornithology](#) guidance

• Bat Boxes

- large enough for a maternity colony to cluster to conserve heat
- dry, rainproof and draught-free, with no gaps where the sides and top join
- entered by a slit at the base (front or back) no more than 15mm to 20mm wide - follow the [Bat Conservation Trust](#) guidance
- preservative-free if made of wood
- out of the midday sun
- close to a hedgerow or tree line
- placed with other boxes facing in different directions to offer a range of temperature conditions

• Solitary bees

- in a dry, sunny and sheltered position on farm buildings, a post, or freestanding with a raised base to prevent rising damp
- near pollen and nectar forage
- 50cm by 50cm and 20cm deep, open fronted but with a back
- made of untreated timber
- weatherproof with small drainage holes in the floor
- contain at least four compartments, packed tightly with drilled hardwood blocks, bamboo stem sections and reed stems or paper drinking straws



Educational Initiatives

To let schools visit a farm for educational experiences

- Must carry out a health and safety check and prepare a risk assessment for the farm, then give this to potential group leaders
- complete the online [Farm-facts-template](#) for the farm within 3 months of the start of the agreement
- Must carry out enough promotion so that at least 1 and at most 10 group visits happen every year
- Make sure the tour of the farm lasts at least 2 hours and is conducted by a member of farm staff or volunteer who suits the visitors' needs
- Make sure the tour explains the links between farming, conservation and food production using the agreement land as a classroom

Do not:

- Charge for visits
 - Receive any other direct income from government funds relating to the educational visit



Upland Stewardship Scheme

To create a sustainable upland land management plan

Above Mountain Line

- Habitat Management plans must show the current baseline of the land
- Periodic reviews must be built into the plan
- Habitat management plans should include habitat creation and ecological measures
- Mitigation plans if requested must also be in the habitat management plan
- Only Above Mountain Line land is eligible for the Upland Stewardship Scheme payment
- Capital and Environmental works support are not included in the Upland Stewardship Scheme



