

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

SCHEME PRESCRIPTIONS

BRECKLAND ESA

NB. If you carry out any work contrary to the scheme's objectives, for example the destruction of features such as walls, buildings or hedges, or the ploughing of valuable grassland, shortly before applying to join or rejoin the scheme, the Department is likely to reject your application.

The Department may modify the prescriptions set out below, to introduce additional requirements or amend existing ones, where this will help to protect and/or enhance habitats and species which are of importance within the designated area. Such modifications may be made for the lifespan of the agreement or from time to time, by means of a written agreement with you which will form part of your ESA agreement for the term specified.

ALL LAND

1. Maintain hedges and hedgerow trees using traditional methods.
2. Maintain ponds, reedbeds and sedgebeds.
3. Maintain existing ditches in rotation over the period of your agreement and by mechanical means, not sprays. Spoil must be levelled following cleaning out, after allowing to dry.
4. Do not damage, destroy or remove any feature of archaeological or historical value or interest. Obtain written advice on the management of known and important archaeological sites and historic features on land covered by your agreement.
5. Do not damage or destroy any patterned ground, meres, pingos, pits with exposed sections, fossilised dunes or similar features.
6. Obtain written advice on siting design and materials before constructing buildings or roads or carrying out any other engineering or construction works which do not require planning permission or prior notification determination by the local planning authority.
7. Sheep dip must be disposed of safely and not spread where it may affect areas of nature conservation value.
8. You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Soil, Air and Water, published by the Department (references PB 0617, PB 0618 and PB 0587) as amended from time to time.
10. Hard graze the sward with livestock other than pigs or poultry, but avoid poaching, undergrazing or overgrazing.
11. On known important sites for ground-nesting birds you must agree in writing a stock management programme in advance of the breeding season.
12. Do not irrigate.
13. Do not apply organic or inorganic fertiliser.
14. Do not use lime, slag or any other substance to reduce soil acidity.
15. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.
16. Herbicides may only be used to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock, ragwort, bracken or for stump treatment of cleared scrub. Infestations of these weeds must be controlled either by cutting or by herbicides. Apply herbicides by wick applicator or spot treatment.
17. Any bracken control must be carried out in accordance with a programme agreed in advance with the Project Officer and any other necessary consents obtained. This must include adequate follow-up treatment. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means and a herbicide is necessary then only asulam may be used.
18. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock (including mineral licks) to areas and quantities agreed in advance.
19. When reverting former woodland to heathland, carry out an agreed reversion programme which takes into account the requirements of the site in question.

TIER 1 – HEATHLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-8 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

9. Maintain heathland vegetation and do not plough, level, re-seed, cultivate, roll, chain harrow or carry out any other mechanical operations.

TIER 2 – REVERSION TO HEATHLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-8 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

21. Cease arable production immediately after harvesting any crop already in the ground or cease grassland production in accordance with an agreed reversion programme.
22. Within 12 months of the start of the agreement, begin an agreed programme of reversion to heathland which in most cases will include all of the following operations and requirements:

Plough the land.

Establish a low productivity grass sward by a date agreed with the Project Officer using suitable native grass species and sown at the rate of 10 kg/ha (9 lbs/acre) or as otherwise agreed. Agree in writing with the Project Officer before purchase the seed mix to be used. Seed of native origin and local provenance should be used wherever the Department considers it appropriate.

Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser.

Do not apply fungicides or insecticides.

Herbicides may be used only to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Infestations of these weeds must be controlled either by cutting or by herbicides. Apply herbicides by wick applicator or spot treatment.

Do not use lime, slag or any other substance to reduce the acidity of the soil.

Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock (including mineral licks) to areas and quantities agreed in advance.

After establishment, the sward must be managed by grazing or cutting or a combination of the two. The sward may be cut for hay or silage, but if so the cuttings must be removed and the aftermath must be grazed.

23. Following completion of the agreed reversion programme you must follow all of the Tier 1 prescriptions (9-20).

TIER 3 – RIVER VALLEY GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-8 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

24. Maintain river valley grassland and do not plough, level, re-seed or cultivate the land. You may use a chain harrow or roller but not between 31 March and 1 July.
25. Graze with livestock other than pigs or poultry but avoid poaching, undergrazing or overgrazing.
26. Do not cut grass before 1 July.
27. Do not apply any inorganic fertilisers.
28. Do not apply sewage sludge, slurry, pig or poultry manure.

29. Do not apply more than your existing application rate of farmyard manure and, in any event, do not apply more than 12.5 tonnes per hectare (5 tons per acre) of farmyard manure in any three year period. Do not apply organic fertiliser within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole that supplies water for human consumption or within 10 metres of a watercourse.

30. Do not use fungicides or insecticides.

31. Herbicides may be used only to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Infestations of these weeds must be controlled either by cutting or by herbicides. Apply herbicides by wick applicator or spot treatment.

32. Do not use lime, slag or any other substance to reduce soil acidity without prior written approval.

33. Do not install field under-drainage. Do not sub-soil or mole drain.

34. Do not substantially modify the existing drainage system to improve drainage.

35. Where ditch water levels are within your control, you must maintain existing water levels and ensure that ditches at no time dry out completely.

36. Restrict supplementary feeding of livestock (including mineral licks) to areas and quantities agreed in advance.

WATER LEVEL SUPPLEMENT (available on Tier 3 land)

37. Agree in writing with the Project Officer an in-field Water Management Plan. This may include the creation, re-instatement and management of ditches and foot drains. Ensure that the plan is implemented.

38. Maintain ditch water levels within 15cm (6 inches) of ground level from 15 March until 30 June.

39. Begin to raise ditch water levels to the 15 March to 30 June level no later than 1 March.

40. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser or manure.

41. From 1 May until 30 June do not exceed a grazing density of 1.4 Livestock Units (LU) per ha and do not cause poaching, over-grazing or under-grazing.

42. Do not graze with sheep before 1 June.

TIER 4 – ARABLE LAND

TIER 4A – UNCROPPED WILDLIFE STRIPS

Observe prescriptions 1-8 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

43. Cease production on a strip of land 6m or 12m wide at the edge of a field used for arable cropping. The strip must be taken from existing arable land or be an uncropped wildlife strip under an existing ESA agreement.

44. All strips must be cultivated not more than once per year and not less than once every two years to create a seedbed. The operation must be carried out during the period 31 July to the following 31 March.

45. Do not apply to the strip any of the following:

- i) Organic or inorganic fertiliser.
- ii) Lime, slag or any other substance to reduce the acidity of the soil.
- iii) Fungicides or insecticides.
- iv) Herbicides except to control nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broad-leaved dock or ragwort. Infestations of these weeds must be controlled either by cutting or herbicides. Herbicides must be applied by wick applicator or spot treatment.

46. Control sterile brome by mechanical or chemical means. If chemical control is proposed, agree in writing a control programme.

47. Do not use the strips as access tracks or materially damage them by machinery or other means.

48. Do not irrigate the strip.

49. Do not sow grass or other seed in the strip.

50. You may regularly cultivate and apply herbicides to a one metre strip on the edge of the strip adjacent to the cropped area.

TIER 4B – CONSERVATION HEADLANDS

Observe prescriptions 1-8 plus additional prescriptions set out below:

51. Do not apply any insecticides to the strip except between 31 August and the following 15 March.

52. Do not use herbicides to control broad-leaved weeds, other than where cleavers are a problem, in which case spot treatment only may be used. Herbicides to control grass weeds must be agreed in writing with the Project Officer.

TIER 4C – TARGETED ARABLE REVERSION TO GRASSLAND

53. On eligible land within either of the following categories, cease arable production and within 12 months establish a grass sward. Agree in writing with the Project Officer before purchase the seed mix to be used. Seed of native origin and local provenance should be used wherever the Department considers it appropriate:

Important archaeological sites

Adjoining wetland areas (including fen, reedbed and wet grassland sites)

54. On grassland reverted from arable, do not exceed an annual average stocking level of 1.4 Livestock Units (LU) per hectare.

55. Following completion of grassland establishment, follow all the Tier 3 prescriptions (24-36)

TIER 4D – WINTER STUBBLE

56. Provide an area of cereal or linseed stubble, which must remain undisturbed between harvest and the following 1 March in any year. After 1 March there will be no restriction on the subsequent use of the land.

57. Do not use insecticides or herbicides between crop harvest and 1 March the following year.

58. Do not sow any cover crop unless agreed with the Project Officer.

59. You must abide by the Codes of Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Soil, Air and Water, published by the Department (references PB 0617, PB 0618 and PB 0587) as amended from time to time.

WOODLAND TIER

60. Retain any woodland, copses or groups of trees. Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a programme to maintain and enhance the conservation and landscape value of non net-income generating woodland. All farm woodland in Tiers 1, 2 and 3 must be entered into this woodland tier. Other woodland not on or adjacent to your agreement land may be entered at the discretion of the Department.

PUBLIC ACCESS TIER

61. Make the access route available for public access at no charge.

62. Maintain a free passage over the access route.

63. Do not erect new fences on or adjacent to the access route without the prior written approval of the Department.

64. Keep the access route and fields crossed by it free of litter and other refuse.

65. Exclude bulls from the access route and fields crossed by it, except for bulls which do not exceed the age of 10 months or are not of a recognised dairy breed and are at large in any field or enclosure in which cows and heifers are also at large.

66. Agree with the Department in writing in advance the public liability insurance cover which you will maintain for the duration of the access agreement.

67. Provide and maintain adequate means of entry to the access route.

68. Affix and maintain appropriate signboards and waymarking.

69. Do not permit any of the following activities on the access route or on fields crossed by it: camping, caravanning, lighting of fires, organised games or sports, riding of motor vehicles (except those used for agricultural operations on the land) without the Department's prior written approval.

70. Agree with the Department in writing whether the riding of horses or cycles may be permitted on the access route.

71. If you wish to apply for temporary closure of the access route you must agree this with the Department in writing in advance. Where temporary closure is permitted you must post signs giving notice of the intended closure and the reasons for it at each entry point to the access route at least two weeks in advance of the date of closure.