

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

SCHEME PRESCRIPTIONS

BLACKDOWN HILLS 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.

TIER 1A ALL LAND

1. Do not increase your existing area of arable land without the Department's prior written approval.
2. Do not apply any organic fertiliser within 50 metres of a spring, well or borehole that supplies water for human consumption or within 10 metres of any watercourse.
3. Retain hedges, walls and hedgebanks and do not remove any part thereof. Maintain stockproof hedges, walls and hedgebanks in a stockproof condition using traditional materials.
4. Do not plough or apply pesticides or fertiliser on land within 1 metre of any hedge, wall or hedgebank.
5. For a supplementary payment, you MAY agree a programme to manage stockproof hedgerows in a traditional manner, so that laying of the hedge occurs at the appropriate time in the management cycle. Payment for this annual management will be calculated on the basis of every 10 metres of traditionally managed stockproof hedges per hectare of agreement land with hedges. You must agree to manage at least 10 metres of stockproof hedges per hectare of eligible land in your agreement.
6. Within two years of the start of your agreement agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a programme for the selection and tagging of saplings and/or planting of trees in your hedgerows to develop into hedgerow trees. Do not damage or remove tagged or planted trees, in particular during hedge trimming.
7. Retain and, where necessary, manage all individual and groups of trees; agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a programme to conserve and protect areas of non net-income generating woodland. These will be identified on the agreement map and will receive payment at the All Land rate. Seek prior written approval from the Department before planting any new woodland or trees.
8. Retain and manage watercourses, ditches, ponds and wetland (including margins and banks) for which you are responsible and carry out any necessary management by mechanical means, not pesticides.
9. Maintain any weatherproof traditional farm buildings for which you are responsible in a weatherproof condition using traditional styles and materials.
10. Do not damage, destroy or remove any feature of archaeological or historic value or interest.
11. At the start of your agreement obtain written advice on the management of known archaeological and historic features on your land. Where standard advice on agricultural management is provided this should be implemented within 12 months. Where more specific advice is required this should be obtained within the first 12 months of your agreement and appropriate advice implemented within two years.
12. Dispose of sheep dip safely. Do not spread sheep dip where it may affect areas of nature conservation value.
13. You must identify on your application any common land within the ESA where you have grazing rights. Where common land is not subject to agreement, you must not increase your use (stock numbers and period of grazing) of the common land except by prior written agreement with the Department.
14. 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 0585) as amended from time to time.

HEDGE AND HEDGEBANK RESTORATION SUPPLEMENT

15. For a supplementary payment, you MAY agree in writing with the Project Officer a programme, for a minimum of five years, to restore non-stockproof hedges and their associated hedgebanks. Payment will be calculated on the basis of every metre of hedge restored in each year.

TIER 1B IMPROVED LONG TERM GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-14 (Tier 1A) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

16. Maintain improved long term grassland by grazing and/or cutting. If regeneration or modification of the sward is considered necessary, this should be carried out only following written approval from the Department and only by direct drilling or surface treatment. Only seeds mixtures intended to produce a long term sward may be used. Do not plough or cultivate without the Department's prior written agreement.
17. Do not increase your existing application rates of organic or inorganic fertiliser.
18. Graze improved long term grassland with livestock other than pigs or poultry and avoid poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing.
19. If you cut the grass, graze the aftermath. Wilt any grass cut for silage before removal.
20. Do not erect any new permanent fences, other than for side protection of hedges and hedgebanks, without the Department's prior written approval.
21. Manage scrub in accordance with a written agreement with the Project Officer. Do not remove any scrub without the Department's prior written approval.
22. Obtain written advice on siting, design and materials before constructing buildings or roads or carrying out other engineering or construction works which do not require planning permission or prior notification determination by the Local Planning Authority.
23. Obtain the Department's prior written approval if you wish to construct any new ponds.
24. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.

GRASSLAND FIELD MARGINS SUPPLEMENT

Observe prescriptions 1-14 (Tier 1A) and 18-23 (Tier 1B) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

25. For a supplementary payment, you may agree in writing with the Department to establish and manage grassland field margins in permanent grass fields to protect habitats and features of environmental interest.
26. Establish and maintain a grass margin within the range of 4-12 metres in width, but averaging at least 6 metres wide, against agreed field boundaries or environmental features.
27. Do not excavate, plough, level, reseed, chain harrow, roll or otherwise cultivate.
28. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser.
29. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
30. Do not apply any fungicides or insecticides.

31. Do not apply herbicides except to control spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort and then only by means of a wick applicator or by spot treatment.
32. Do not allow any fertilisers or pesticides applied to the main body of the field to encroach on or affect the grassland margin.
33. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.
34. Do not store or dump any materials or dispose of any pesticides, including sheep dip, within the grassland margin.

TIER 1C LOW-INPUT PERMANENT GRASSLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-14 (Tier 1A) and 20-23 (Tier 1B) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

35. Maintain low-input permanent grassland. Do not plough, level or reseed. Cultivate only with a chain harrow or roller.
36. Graze low-input permanent grassland with livestock other than pigs or poultry and avoid poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing.
37. Do not exceed your existing application rates of inorganic fertiliser and, in any event, do not exceed 25 kg nitrogen, 12.5 kg phosphate and 12.5 kg potash per hectare (20 units of nitrogen, 10 units of phosphate and 10 units of potash per acre) per year.
38. Do not apply any organic fertiliser except for farmyard manure (FYM). Do not exceed your existing application rates and, in any event, do not exceed 12.5 tonnes per hectare (5 tons per acre) per year. Do not apply slurry, pig or poultry manure or sewage sludge.
39. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
40. Do not apply fungicides or insecticides.
41. Do not apply herbicides except to control bracken, stinging nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort or to carry out stump treatment of cleared scrub. With the exception of bracken control, apply herbicides only by means of a wick applicator or by spot treatment.
42. Any bracken control must be carried out in accordance with a programme agreed in advance with the Project Officer and any other consents obtained. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means and the use of a herbicide is necessary, only asulam may be used where application is by means of a boom sprayer (including aerial application). Other herbicides and application methods may be used only in agreement with the Project Officer.
43. If you cut the grass for hay, continue to do so and graze the aftermath. Wilt any grass cut for silage before removal.

44. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.

TIER 1D UNIMPROVED PASTURE AND ROUGH LAND

Observe prescriptions 1-14 (Tier 1A) and 20-23 (Tier 1B) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

45. Maintain unimproved pasture and rough land. Do not excavate, plough, level, reseed, chain harrow, roll or otherwise cultivate.
46. In the first year of your agreement, agree in writing with the Project Officer and begin to implement a grassland management plan for the area. This will include the type and number of stock that will be required to graze the area, the period of grazing, any necessary scrub and bracken management and any approved mechanical operations such as topping or cutting.
47. Areas of rough land must be grazed by cattle during the period 1 April to 31 October, with all livestock being removed during the period 1 November to 31 March.
48. Do not graze unimproved pasture or rough land so as to cause poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing.
49. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser.
50. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
51. Do not apply fungicides or insecticides.
52. Do not apply herbicides except to control bracken, stinging nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort or to carry out stump treatment of cleared scrub. With the exception of bracken control, apply herbicides only by means of a wick applicator or by spot treatment.
53. Any bracken control must be carried out in accordance with a programme agreed in advance with the Project Officer and any other consents obtained. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means and the use of a herbicide is necessary, only asulam may be used where application is by means of a boom sprayer (including aerial application). Other herbicides and application methods may be used only in agreement with the Project Officer.
54. Do not erect any temporary fencing without the Department's prior written approval.
55. Do not provide livestock with supplementary feed or mineral or feed blocks without the Department's prior written approval.
56. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.

TIER 2 SPECIES-RICH HAY MEADOWS

Observe prescriptions 1-14 (Tier 1A) and 20-23 (Tier 1B) plus additional prescriptions set out below:

57. Do not plough, level or reseed. Cultivate only with a chain harrow or roller except during the period 1 April to 30 June.
58. Graze with cattle or sheep or both but avoid poaching, overgrazing or undergrazing. Other livestock, including horses/ponies, may be grazed with the Department's prior written approval. Exclude stock from hay meadows by 1 May until the end of cutting.
59. Cut hay meadows annually for hay, but not silage. Do not cut in any year before 1 July. Cut hay meadows after 15 July at least once every five years. Remove the cut crop and graze the aftermath.
60. Do not apply any organic or inorganic fertiliser except for well-rotted farmyard manure (FYM). Do not exceed your existing application rates of FYM and, in any event, do not apply more than 20 tonnes of FYM per hectare (8 tons per acre) in any three year period. Apply FYM once only in a single dressing.
61. Do not apply lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity.
62. Do not apply fungicides or insecticides.
63. Do not apply herbicides except to control bracken, stinging nettles, spear thistle, creeping or field thistle, curled dock, broadleaved dock or ragwort or to carry out stump treatment of cleared scrub. With the exception of bracken control, apply herbicides only by means of a wick applicator or by spot treatment. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means and the use of a herbicide is necessary, then use only asulam.
64. Any bracken control must be carried out in accordance with a programme agreed in advance with the Project Officer and any other consents obtained. Where bracken cannot be controlled by mechanical means and the use of a herbicide is necessary, only asulam may be used where application is by means of a boom sprayer (including aerial application). Other herbicides and application methods may be used only in agreement with the Project Officer.
65. Do not provide livestock with supplementary feed or mineral or feed blocks without the Department's prior written approval.
66. Do not install any new land drainage system or modify any existing land drainage system so as to bring about improved drainage.

TIER 3 – RE-CREATION OF HEATHLAND

Observe prescriptions 1-14 (Tier 1A) and 20-23 (Tier 1B) plus the additional prescriptions set out below:

67. Cease to use the grassland within 12 months of the start of your agreement and implement a heathland restoration programme to be agreed in writing with the Project Officer.

68. Do not graze in the summer so as to inhibit heather regeneration. Graze only with sheep, at a stocking rate not exceeding 0.1 LU/ha between 15 May and 15 August until heather/dwarf shrub vegetation achieves at least 40% ground cover. Exclude all livestock between 16 August and 14 May.
69. Do not cause poaching or overgrazing.
70. Do not apply any of the following without obtaining the Department's prior written approval:
- i) organic or inorganic fertiliser;
 - ii) lime, slag or any other substance designed to reduce soil acidity;
 - ii) fungicides, insecticides, herbicides or desiccants.
71. Do not plough, level, reseed, chain harrow, roll or carry out any other mechanical operations without the Department's prior written approval.
72. Do not provide livestock with supplementary feed or mineral or feed blocks.
73. When heather and dwarf shrub vegetation exceeds 40% ground cover, sheep grazing may be progressively introduced between 16 August and 31 October subject to the written agreement of the Department, but may not in any case exceed 0.1 LU/ha (0.66 ewe/ha).
74. Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a programme of woodland management to enhance the wildlife and landscape value of non net-income generating woodland. This will involve making and keeping the woodland stockproof and the carrying out of an ongoing programme of woodland management.
75. Make the access route available for public access at no charge.
76. Maintain a free passage over the access route.
77. Do not erect new fences on or adjacent to the access route without the prior written approval of the Department.
78. Keep the access route and fields crossed by it free of litter and other refuse.
79. 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.
80. Agree with the Department in writing in advance the Public Liability Insurance cover which you will maintain for the duration of the access agreement.
81. Provide and maintain adequate means of entry to the access route.
82. Affix and maintain appropriate signboards and waymarking.
83. 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.
84. Agree with the Department in writing whether the riding of horses or cycles may be permitted on the access route.
85. 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.

WOODLAND TIER

74. Agree in writing with the Project Officer and implement a programme of woodland management to enhance the wildlife and landscape value of non net-income generating woodland. This will involve making and keeping the woodland stockproof and the carrying out of an ongoing programme of woodland management.

ACCESS TIER

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