

Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster



NEWSLETTER – Spring 2018

CS Mid-Tier Application Deadlines

For those of you thinking about Countryside Stewardship (CS) but haven't got the ball rolling yet...

You need to have applied for your application packs by the **31 May 2018** and all applications must be submitted by the **31 July 2018**.

These deadlines are especially critical if your last Stewardship (ELS or HLS) is finishing and you are looking to continue environmental management of your land.

If you think your land holding is too small for CS Mid-Tier or that the paperwork looks too much, then we recommend looking at the [new CS packages](#) that have straight forward options and are easier to complete. Just search for **Countryside Stewardship Simplified Offers** on the internet.

CS Help and Support

If you have queries about whether CS is right for you, or you feel a bit in the dark, please get in touch and we can talk over your options.

Following the Natural England CS Mid-Tier meetings in March, we ran a smaller meeting in Burwash for new group members who wanted more information and help with the application process. We can run a similar meeting if there is interest from other Cluster members.

Recent Events

We have had some great attendance at recent events from Farm Cluster members and other interested landowners:

Deer Impact Assessment Workshop at Dallington - 10 Jan

The weather finally allowed us to run this event for those of you who wanted to know more about how to assess the number of deer on your land and the impact they were having. We had a good discussion about working collaboratively to manage deer in the

farm cluster area and beyond, and we are now organising a workshop for deer stalkers across the area for 22 May 2018. More events will follow, in the meantime there is lots of advice here:

www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk



Distinctive deer 'racks' or routes in Dallington Forest

Best Practice in Hedge Management at Scotney Castle - 8 March

Thank you to those who came for braving the cold wind. We had a good walk around the Estate to look at the development of hedges that had been planted in the last 15 years and older hedges that are now being laid or coppiced and gapped-up.

We discussed planting and laying techniques (including a demonstration of hedge laying by the NT Scotney Ranger team), as well as identifying mistakes that were made and the evident successes within a year of planting.



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Dark Skies Workshop at Five Ashes -1 Feb

This event was very well received by Cluster members, parish councils and others, and we are now loaning out light meters which record night-time light levels around the area. Thanks to the Moores, Farbrothers, Mulhollands, Maitlands and Haines for your contributions to date.

This will help create a dark skies map for the area based on locally-collected data. If you are interested in borrowing a light meter and doing a quick survey, please contact Sam Nicholas on 01424 723011.

Giant Hogweed Control Project

We have secured £20,000 from the Environment Agency to control Giant Hogweed in the area in 2018/19.



The project is a follow up from our 2016 survey of the river catchment for Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed.

What does this mean for you? If Giant Hogweed has been recorded on your land, we may be in contact to ask for permission for contractors to spray it.

We haven't surveyed every river tributary - if you spot the plant anywhere around the AONB, please let us know so we can plan to treat it prevent future spread.

As I am sure you are well aware, Giant Hogweed is a dangerous plant and you should avoid getting any of the sap on your skin as it can cause severe and painful burns.

If you have any questions or about any of the topics in this newsletter, please contact either Ross or Christine on the numbers below:

Ross Wingfield: Tel. 01424 725604
ross.wingfield@highweald.org

Christine Meadows: Tel. 01424 723009
christine.meadows@highweald.org

Events to watch out for:

To book, call Sam Nicholas 01424 723011

Creating and managing wildflower grassland
Venue: Beech Estate, Battle, East Sussex, Date: Wednesday 4 July

An introduction to the principles and practice of grassland creation and restoration
Venue: Wakehurst Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, Ardingly, West Sussex, Date: Wednesday 18 July

Practical scything for managing wildflower grasslands
Venue: Wadhurst Estate
Date: Wednesday 15 August

Rhododendron clearance techniques
Venue: TBC, Date: September, exact date to be confirmed

Fungi for beginners
Venue: TBC, Date: 11 October

The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster brings farmers, foresters and other land managers together to improve the natural environment of the Upper Rother and Dudwell at a landscape scale. The Cluster is assisted by the High Weald AONB Partnership with financial support from the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund.

