



Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster Application Form



I hereby agree to the Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster's terms of reference (overleaf) and agree, as a member, to work towards its objectives:

- *Productive and profitable farming, hand-in-hand with maintaining and restoring the environment*
- *Controlling deer populations to reduce their impact on woodlands and crops*
- *Improving soil health and the value of grasslands for forage and wildlife*
- *Educating and managing visitors to achieve more responsible behaviour.*

Name:			
Address:			
SBI Number:			
Telephone number:			
Mobile number:			
Email address:			
Land area (ha):			
Are you currently in Countryside Stewardship	Y/N	What type of farm do you have? (mixed/arable...)	
Are you currently managing deer? If Yes who is your Stalker?	Y/N		
What interests you the most about being a member of the Farm Cluster?			
What aspects of farming or countryside management would you like to know more about?			

I give my permission for the High Weald AONB Partnership to use my details to facilitate the Farm Cluster and keep in contact about conserving and enhancing the High Weald and exploring it. **Yes** **No**

Signature	
Date	

Please attach a map showing the location of your land holding boundary with your application.

Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster - Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster has been set up as a forum for co-operation for everyone wanting to manage land to achieve environmental benefits.

Its mission:

- 
- ***Productive and profitable farming, hand-in-hand with maintaining and restoring the environment***
 - ***Controlling deer populations to reduce their impact on woodlands and crops***
 - ***Improving soil health and the value of grasslands for forage and wildlife***
 - ***Educating and managing visitors to achieve more responsible behaviour.***

Membership

Membership is open to all farmers, foresters, and other land managers who are willing to work proactively to meet the group's aims. It is open to those who have land under existing agri-environment and woodland agreements as well as those who have land not currently covered by a scheme.

Working methods of the Cluster

Secretariat for the group is provided by the Cluster facilitator, supported by the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund.

The Cluster has agreed to adopt a shared learning approach. This involves:

Group events

- At least six events each year, organised by the group facilitator.
- Event topics generated by members of the group.
- Events to include small group discussions to share experiences and learning.
- Separate working groups as a mechanism for developing, planning and delivering the group's projects.
- Inviting other people to join events to aid discussion of particular topic, for example, as speakers, observers or invited guests.

Sharing of information and resources

- Sharing information through group meetings and electronic communications.
- Sharing information on holding boundaries and land management activity to help the Cluster discuss and monitor progress towards its purposes.
- Each member being responsible for making it clear where a matter shall remain entirely confidential and not for discussion outside of an event/the Cluster.
- Each member making it clear if there is a restriction on the circulation of any information/documents and copyright/use of the contents.



Please Join The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster

Working together for a productive, beautiful and valued landscape

Membership is **FREE** and the benefits are significant

What are Farm Cluster groups?

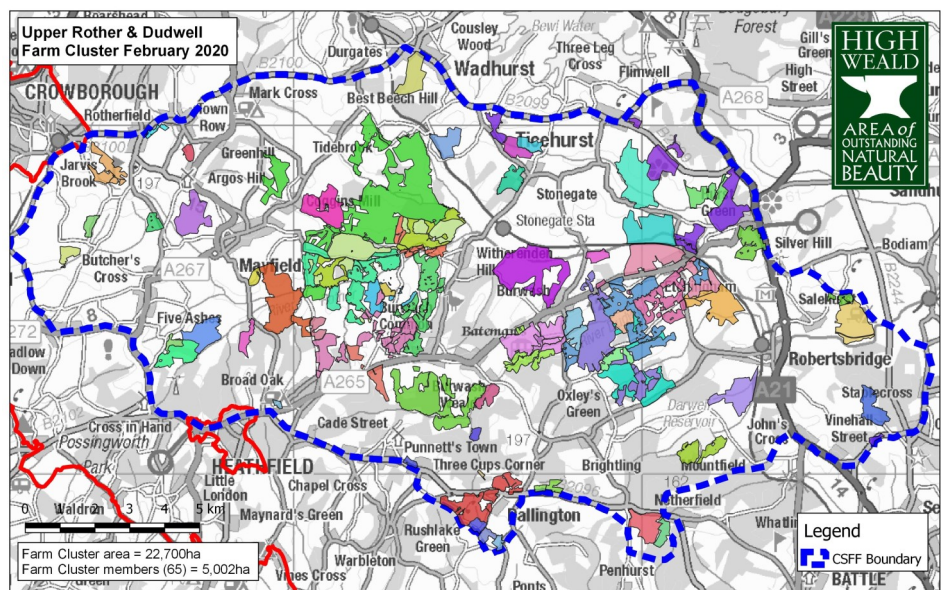
They are farmers, foresters and other land managers working together to benefit soil, water, wildlife and historic features not just on their individual farms, but across their local area. There are 98 across the UK, supported by Natural England's Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund.

Why are they important?

Farm Clusters working together at a landscape scale can deliver bigger and better environmental improvements. Government agricultural and environmental policy is changing; they have stated that *"in future, farmers and land managers who provide the greatest environmental benefits or 'public goods' will secure the greatest payments from the public purse"*. Working as a community to share new approaches can help adjustment to the changes ahead.

About the Upper Rother and Dudwell Valley

Our valleys are rich in 'public goods': miles of river, mainly gill streams; small fields whose size and shape haven't changed since the medieval period; abundant ancient woodland; historic features such as veteran trees, ponds and wood banks; field corners and roadside verges that are refuges for rare wildflower habitat; and an extensive path network which allows public appreciation of the landscape.



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved 100019238. Licence numbers 100019601, 100019238, 100018485, 100019613 (2019)

Researched and produced by the High Weald AONB Partnership
T: 01424 723011
E: info@highweald.org
W: www.highweald.org

The High Weald AONB Unit advises on the management of one of England's Finest Landscapes
This land management advice is offered as a free service to landowners in the High Weald to assist them in conserving and enhancing the AONB. It does not imply the High Weald AONB Unit's endorsement of any current or future planning application on the site.



The Upper Rother and Dudwell Farm Cluster's mission:

- *Productive and profitable farming, hand-in-hand with maintaining and restoring the environment*
- *Controlling deer populations to reduce their impact on woodlands and crops*
- *Improving soil health and the value of grasslands for forage and wildlife*
- *Educating and managing visitors to achieve more responsible behaviour.*

For some projects we have set targets: more earthworms (soil), more barn owls (grassland), and fewer deer (woodland).

The Farm Cluster was established in 2016. The group:

- has more than 60 members (Feb 2020) with land covering 5,000 ha (3.5% of the High Weald AONB) **and we would like to fill in the gaps with new members**
- includes a range of farmers, foresters and land managers with holdings ranging from large, commercial mixed farms to clusters of small meadows
- is one of several in the South East, and has one of the biggest memberships in the country.

Benefits of membership

The main benefit is access to a **FREE programme of events**, near to you, which are an opportunity to:

- share knowledge of land management in the area
- meet experts on topical subjects
- explore options for increasing farm profitability
- find out more about the area's 'public goods'
- build confidence in testing new approaches
- get help with securing grants, in particular Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Sussex Lund
- get specialist advice on projects, including delivering CS options
- work together to tackle common problems.

As a new member you will also benefit from a **FREE site visit** that will:

- explore historic maps to show the development of your holding over time
- highlight your property's special landscape, archaeology & wildlife features
- discuss how you can contribute to the Cluster and how its activity will benefit you.

How we operate

The Farm Cluster is steered by members and helped by Ross Wingfield (lead) and Christine Meadows, the High Weald AONB Partnership's land management project officers.

Membership also secures endorsement of Countryside Stewardship applications, giving a 20% uplift to the application score.

Interested in joining?

Membership is **FREE** and open to anyone willing to contribute positively to the Farm Cluster's mission.

More information, and a membership application pack, can be found at www.highweald.org/look-after/upper-rother-and-dudwell-farm-cluster.html.

Contact **Ross Wingfield** 01424 725604 ross.wingfield@highweald.org
 Christine Meadows 01424 723009 christine.meadows@highweald.org

The Upper Rother & Dudwell Farm Cluster is financially supported by [the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development](#) under Natural England's [Countryside Stewardship Scheme's Facilitation Fund](#).



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund

