

# The Upper Rother & Dudwell Farmers' Group



## NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2016

### Launch and Group Priorities

The Upper Rother & Dudwell Farmers' Group launch on 1 November 2016 was attended by 12 Group members. During the meeting there were constructive discussions about issues concerning the Group and many suggestions on where the Group can focus available support over the next five years.

Many thanks to the members who have sent back their priorities questionnaire. The results so far indicate the areas that you are most interested in are:

- Wildlife records and surveying
- Great Farmland Bird Count
- Event on increasing songbird numbers
- Circulation of Non-native Invasive Species Survey and updates on biological control methods
- Media on responsible dog ownership/walking

However, there is still time for you to send in your responses which can be added to the results.

### Healthy Living Soils for Agriculture Workshop



23 people attended the 29 November event led by Matthew Shepherd, Natural England and Paul Cobb, Farm Wildlife. It was an opportunity to examine live soil animals and their importance in ensuring healthy farmland soil for the future. A video recording of the presentation can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/soilvid>



### Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) 2017

If you have an Entry Level Scheme (ELS), Organic Entry Level Scheme (OELS) or Higher Level Scheme (HLS) agreement expiring in 2017 or the first six months of 2018 you should be eligible to apply for a new CSS agreement in 2017.

If Natural England uses the same application process in 2017, applicants to CSS Higher Tier will have to submit an outline application in April 2017. Full Higher Tier and Mid Tier applications will need to be submitted in September 2017. We will be providing support to the Group with the application process, let us know if you would like to be involved with this.

### 2017 Big Farmland Bird Count



This annual event is taking place from **Friday 3rd February to Sunday 12th February** organised by the Game Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) and is an easy way for you to find out about the birds you have on your farm.

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This year GWCT are launching a new online tool to make it quicker and easier for you to record your count and will enable you to plot trends and compare your farm with others in your region.

Farmers, gamekeepers and landowners are crucial to the survival of many farmland bird species and the BFBC is an opportunity to demonstrate the positive effect of farmland management for birds.

### LEADER Funding

The LEADER programme has funds available until the 30 September 2018. LEADER can fund eligible projects at a grant rate of up to 40% and up to £50,000 per project.

The local priorities are:

- Improve the productivity of farming
- Strengthen links between local food and drink and the visitor economy
- Build the market and supply chain for wood biofuels and other wood products
- Support rural business start-ups, home-based businesses and other SMEs.

You can download more details of the local LEADER Fund priorities here <http://tinyurl.com/warrpdf>

If you have an idea for a project contact Don Cranfield the LEADER Programme Manager [don.cranfield@plumpton.ac.uk](mailto:don.cranfield@plumpton.ac.uk)



### Dates for your Diary:

**Thursday 16 February 2017 7pm - 9 pm**

**Turtle Dove Conservation Talk**

The Bear Inn, Burwash

**January/February 2017**

**Farmland Bird Identification workshop**

Time and location to be decided shortly

### Useful Tips

Top tips for compliance with sheep identification and registration - <http://tinyurl.com/sheepid>

Top tips for compliance with cattle identification and registration - <http://tinyurl.com/cattleid>



### Finally ....

The Upper Rother and Dudwell Landowner's Group brings farmers, foresters and other land managers together to improve the natural environment of the Upper Rother at a landscape scale. The Group is assisted by the High Weald AONB Partnership with financial support from the Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund. To find out more and get involved contact:

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