



Farming in Protected Landscapes programme

MALVERN HILLS AONB JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE 10 NOVEMBER 2023

FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES UPDATE

Recommendation

1. **The Committee is recommended to:**
 - a) **Note the report; and**
 - b) **Raise and discuss any issues arising.**

Background

2. Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme was launched in early July 2021. The programme forms part of the Agricultural Transition Plan (published on 30 November 2020), with funding available for all National Parks and AONBs across England.
3. On the 31 January 2023, DEFRA announced that the FiPL Scheme will be extended for an additional year, meaning that FiPL now runs until March 2025.

Summary

4. Information on the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/funding-for-farmers-in-protected-landscapes>
Guidance for applicants, tailored to the Malvern Hills AONB, can be found at: <https://www.malvernhillsaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Annex-F-Guidance-for-Applicants-211011.pdf>
5. Key points and developments regarding Farming in Protected Landscapes in the Malvern Hills AONB are as follows:

Timing

6. 31 October 2023 marks 6 months of the 3rd year of the FiPL Scheme, with 18 months of the scheme remaining.

Funding and expenditure

7. For **Year 1** of FiPL (2021 – 2022), the budget allocation was £90,000.45. £72,265.53 was spent on Projects, £15,425.08 was spent on Advice and guidance and £2,332.60 was spent on Admin, totalling £90,014.21, giving an overspend of £13.76.
8. For **Year 2** of FiPL (2022 – 2023), the allocated budget was originally £236,538. However, due to the increase in Countryside Stewardship rates of January 2023, the budget was extended to support the additional costs, giving a total budget of £243,739.19. At the close of the year, £208,134.33 was spent on projects, £29,680.95 was spent on Advice and Guidance and £5,063 was spent on Admin, giving an underspend of £860.91.
9. For **Year 3** of FiPL (2023 – 2024), some slight adjustments were made to staffing (see below). The total budget for the year is £317,130.59. By close of September, £208,654.66 has been allocated on projects, £12,014.58 has been spent on Advice and Guidance, with £9,757.67 on Admin. There is £87,049.12 of the budget left to allocate, with projections that £12,000 will be used in Advice and guidance and £9,000 on admin, leaving approximately £66,000 to be allocated and spent on FiPL Projects. There are several projects in the pipeline and being built, so there is confidence that this budget will be used.
10. To note, that in May 2023, DEFRA Changed the FiPL National Framework; previously, all projects below £5,000 could be assessed by the Senior Officer of the AONB (Paul Esrich) – however, due to countrywide issues with panel member availabilities, this limit was increased to £10,000, unless the applicant has already had one FiPL Project approved; If this is the applicants second project or more, it is required to be assessed by the Local Assessment Panel, irrespective of cost.
11. For **Year 4** (2024 – 2025), there is an allocated budget of £361,212.73. Of this, £44,521 and £29,370 can be spent on Advice and Guidance, and Admin respectively. As of the end of September 2023, £69,198.03 has been allocated to FiPL Projects in year 4..

Staffing

12. Sash Warden remains the full time FiPL Officer. Due to the increased budget, Karen Humphries and Wade Muggleton (from the Worcestershire County Council Greenspace Team) are also helping out to support FiPL with meadow and

orchard projects. Their time is being marked down as Advice and Guidance, whilst Sash's time is being split between Advice and Guidance and Admin. This is the reason for the increased admin expenditure seen.

Grant Assessment Panel

13. Panel members remain the same as reported on at the last JAC Meeting. The panel have met a total of 15 times throughout the duration of the FiPL Scheme. The next panel meeting is scheduled for the 22 of November 2023.

Enquiries

14. Enquires have slowed down in recent months, however there is still interest in the scheme. In the panel meeting on the 20th of September, it was agreed by both DEFRA and the Local Assessment Panel that, due to the Malvern Hills AONB being relatively small, FiPL could be considered for projects within a one mile radius of the AONB, assuming that all FiPL criteria were met, as well as the MH AONB Management Plan and Nature Recovery plan.

Projects

15. The table on the following page details all projects approved, up to the 20 September 2023.

Historic Building Restoration Grant

16. Defra has just announced additional funding specifically for Historic Building restoration projects. The FiPL Historic Building Restoration Grant (HBRG) amounts to £5 million for English National Parks and AONBs over the next financial year FY24/25, split with £4.5 million allocated to capital project delivery, and £500,000 allocated in additional revenue funding to support developing, advising, and managing approved projects (including provision of specialist advice).
17. This funding builds on the previous Historic Buildings Restoration Pilot in five National Parks managed by Historic England and Natural England, launched in 2018. The funding recognises the importance of historic buildings in our protected landscapes and for farmers and land managers. It is an excellent opportunity for FiPL to target restoration of historic buildings under the existing "Place" theme to enhance the special qualities of your own landscapes.

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Project Code	Project Title	Applicant	Approval Date	Year 1 Spend	Year 2 Allocation	Year 3 Allocation	Year 4 Allocation
MH001	Malvern Foothill Connections	MHT	23/09/2021	£11,321.80	/	/	/
MH002	Colwall Orchard Group Traditional Orchards for the Future Initiative (COG TOFI 2021/22)	COG	23/09/2021	£8,520.00	/	/	/
MH003	Colwall Orchard Group Improving equipment and facilities for people and nature	COG	23/09/2021	£12,760.46	£10,495.00	/	/
MH004	Baston Hall – Regenerative Grazing	Private	23/09/2021	£15,235.83	/	/	/
MH005	Garden House Orchard Restoration	Private	23/09/2021	£3,960.00	/	/	/
MH006	Hope End Park Conservation Management Plan	MH AONB	23/09/2021	£8,794.00	£12,556.00	/	/
MH007	Restoration of the last remaining Donkey Shed	MHT	09/12/2021	/	£14,456.00	/	/
MH008	Restoration of Lower Norgrove Orchard	Private	09/12/2021	/	£2,556.00	/	/
MH009	Species Rich Grassland Creation and Orchard Creation at the Halvins	Private	09/12/2021	£3,649.00	£3,138.40	/	/
MH010	Tup Paddock at Woodfield's Farm	Private	13/02/2022	/	£2,745.50	/	/
MH011	Conservation enhancement at Mason's Fields (The Purlieu)	Private	31/03/2022	/	£16,307.4	/	/
MH012	Conservation enhancement at Knell Farm	Private	26/09/2022	/	£2,896	£600	/
MH013	Brush Seed Harvester	MH AONB	02/02/2022	£8,087.44	/	/	/
MH014	COG TOFI 2022/23	COG	19/05/2022	/	£24,187.50	£1611.00	/

MH015	New House Orchard Restoration and expansion	Private	19/05/2022	/	£15,596.00	/	/
MH016	Woodland Track Creation at Mathon	Mathon Court	12/07/2023	/	/	£5,124.21	/
MH017	Eastnor Estates Woodshed Improvement	Eastnor Estates	28/07/2022	/	£17,391.00	£10,932.92	/
MH018	Increasing local meadow biodiversity for education and as a local seed bank	Private	16/08/2022	/	£1,820.00	£2,220.00	/
MH020	Lane End Meadow Restoration	Private	26/09/2022	/	£582	£742.50	/
MH021	Orchard Planting at Castlemorton	Private	12/01/2023	/	£256.16	/	/
MH022	Pond Restoration and Hedgerow Creation at Tundridge Stud	Private	03/11/2022	/	£1,728	£9,693.87	/
MH023	Pond and Orchard Creation at Crumpton Hill Farm	Private	28/09/2022	/	£5,899.50	/	/
MH024	All Saints Wood	MHT	18/11/2022	/	£5,434.70	£478	/
MH026	Hedge Laying at Cherry Green	Private	06/10/2022	/	£1,817.60	/	/
MH028	Hedgerow (Re)Creation at Lower Moors	Private	07/10/2022	/	£2,392.50	/	/
MH029	Woodland Management at Dove Barn	Private	18/11/2022	/	£5,688.95	/	/
MH030	Hedgerow creation at Wildgoose Hill Farm	Private	03/11/2022	/	£16,964.50	/	/
MH031	Dingwood Park (Re)Creation	Private	03/11/2022	/	£27,403.64	/	/
MH033	Hope End Park Restoration – Roger Allsop – Phase 1	Private	03/11/2022	/	£6,162	/	/
MH034	Tan House Hedgerow Improvements	Private	01/11/2022	/	£1,403.80	/	/
MH035	Shelter Belt Creation at the Town House	Private	18/11/2022	/	£4,969.80	/	/
MH036	Hedgerow creation at Colwall	Private	11/01/2023	/	£918.80	/	/
MH037	Hope End Restoration Phase 2	Private	12/07/2023	/	/	£6,038.00	/

MH038	Dingwood Park (Re)Creation – Phase 2, Ledbury	Private	20/04/2023	/	/	£38,160.68	/
MH039	Colwall Orchard Group (COG) Traditional Orchards for the Future Initiative	COG	12/07/2023	/	/	£39,743.09	£30,415.44
MH041	Vineyard Expansion, Mathon	Mathon Court	12/07/2023	/	/	£4,208.86	£2,976.79
MH043	Malvern Hills AONB Meadows Project 2023	AONB	21/06/2023	/	/	£11,140.00	/
MH044	Evendine Lane Field Improvements	MHT	21/06/2023	/	/	£11,811.74	/
MH045	Conservation and education enhancements at The Elms	The ELM's school	12/07/2023	/	/	£8,597.44	/
MH047	Hawthorns Farmyard Refurbishment and Permissive Access	Bromesberrow Estate	20/09/2023	/	/	£2,710.94	£10,018.00
MH048	Livestock Infrastructure and conservation enhancements at Colwall	Private	31/08/2023	/	/	£24,342.24	£11,130.30
MH049	Pastures for Profit in Protected Landscapes	Pastures for Life	31/08/2023	/	/	£10,259.70	£14,657.50
MH052	BASIS Reg Courses for Carbon and Sustainable Land Management	MH AONB / MHT	20/09/2023	/	/	£2,455.00	/
MH054	Woodland and Orchard Management at Dove Barn, Phase 2	Private	20/09/2023	/	/	£3,616.00	/