

This newsletter is published by the Chilterns Conservation Board to keep partner organisations, farmers and landowners up to date with the Board's activities and relevant news from the Chilterns AONB. **In future this newsletter will be available via email only unless a postal copy is specifically requested.** It will also be available from the AONB web site to download.

If you have any news, events or comments you would like to see published, or would like to be removed from the mailing list please contact tadams@chilternsaonb.org or phone 01844 355523.

Collaboration – Worth it or Waste of Time?

Ever thought about working more closely with your neighbour to cut costs? Want to know more? The subject of this year's Farmers Forum taking place on 26th February is "Collaboration - Worth it or Waste of Time?"

Speakers include Poul Christenson, local dairy farmer and Deputy Chair of Natural England Board, local farmer and director of farming company HBH - Guy Hildred and Richard Haddock - Devon farmer, former Chair of NFU National Livestock Committee, former director of Triple S PLC farmer processing and marketing group and winner of numerous awards for his farm retail business. This free event includes food and will be held in Princes Risborough from 4.30pm-7.00pm.



Guy Hildred and Edward Bishop of HBH Farming
(Image -Farmers Weekly)



To book a place contact Tracy Adams at the Conservation Board by 23 February.

Higher Level Stewardship Targeting

Natural England has produced a set of targeting maps and statements to increase the environmental benefits delivered through the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme. The aim is to focus delivery of HLS to maximise the environmental gains.

Most of the Chilterns area is included within a target area. The priorities for the target areas are set out in Target Area Statements. These can be viewed along with the targeting maps on the Natural England website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Natural England currently has sufficient funds to consider new high quality HLS applications within the new target areas and outside where they deliver key regional themes. Applications deadlines are now monthly. Funds are also available to add further

capital works and special projects to existing HLS and Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreements.

Farmer and landowners in the Chilterns who are interested in the scheme should contact Natural England. For Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire contact the Cambridge office on 08456 024094, for Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire contact the Reading office on 08456 024092.

You will be put in touch with an adviser who can provide appropriate guidance .

Unsown cultivated margin to encourage rare arable flora

LEADER funding for Chiltern Farmers and Foresters

As announced in the last newsletter, the Chilterns Local Action Group (LAG) has recently been awarded £2.5 million of Leader funding by South East and Eastern Development Agencies to be spent over the next 4 years. LEADER is a source of funding from the EU and Defra that will be used in defined geographical areas (represented by LAGs) to deliver the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). Any project looking for a grant of up to £50,000 of RDPE money within the Chilterns, will apply directly to the Chilterns LAG rather than SEEDA.

Eligible projects including farm diversification, tourism activities, renewable energy projects and collaborating to develop new products and services.



In the first instance an Expression of Interest form should be filled in which is available from www.ngagesolutions.co.uk/leaderprogramme or contact the Programme Manager on 01844 210447.

Get Involved! Open Farm Sunday 7th June 2009

If you want to improve sales, learn new marketing skills, build staff moral and sense of pride, gain new contacts, or just simply want to improve your neighbours and friends understanding of why farmers matter ... then get involved with Open Farm Sunday on 7th June 2009.

Organiser's LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) have ambitious plans for Open Farm Sunday 2009 and want to build on the fantastic success of the last event when 400 farmers all over the country organised farm tours for local families, friends and neighbours. No one event was the same, some organised a farm walk for a small number of people,



whilst others put on machinery demonstrations, tractor and trailer rides, plus much more for hundreds of people.

To help you organise an event LEAF will provide you with a pack to include - publicity material (posters, flyers); suggested activities; H&S guidance; polo shirts and lots more! LEAF will also be running a workshop at Collings Hanger Farm, Prestwood, Bucks on March 31st 2009

If you would like to know more about taking part in Open Farm Sunday please visit www.farmsunday.org or telephone LEAF on 02476 413911.

Horse Pasture Management Workshop February 5th

A free horse pasture management workshop is being held at Amersham Town Hall on February 5th. Subjects include the management of your pasture to benefit your horse, managing land adjacent to watercourses and dealing with waste.

For more details contact Tracy Adams.



Stone-Curlews Ahead of Schedule

One of the UK's most threatened birds has reached a conservation milestone, seven years ahead of schedule, boosting hopes that it will reappear in the Chilterns. The latest UK figures, released by the RSPB and Natural England in November, show 351 stone-curlew pairs nested in 2008, meeting the 2015 Biodiversity Action Plan target of 350 pairs.



Stone-curlew Chris Gomersall / RSPB Images

Kirsty Brannan, RSPB farmland conservation advisor, believes there is much reason for optimism: "It is great to see the population going up, which is testament to the passion and commitment of farmers in the UK. There is still much work to do, and by working with farmers in the Chilterns we hope for stone-curlews to reappear in the near future."

One of the strongholds of the yellow-eyed wading bird is in the North Wessex Downs, and it is hoped that this population will spread into the Chilterns. Stone-curlews nested in the Chilterns up until 1980, but disappeared as the national population fell. Since 1990, the UK's stone-curlew population has risen, due to wildlife-friendly farming schemes - like Environmental Stewardship - and set-aside. However, this success could be partially undermined by the scrapping of set-aside as it could be used to provide the ideal conditions for these birds to nest and feed.

Pete Brotherton, head of biodiversity for Natural England, said: "The recovery of the stone-curlew is fantastic news and shows the difference farmers can make when they manage their land with wildlife in mind. Together we are bringing this bird back from the brink of extinction and we will continue working with farmers and the RSPB to ensure it thrives in the future."

The rise of the stone-curlew population is one of the major successes of the Natural England/RSPB Action for Birds in England project.

Think Food and Farming Seminars

Think Food and Farming is the exciting legacy project building on the successes of the Year of Food and Farming. So much has been achieved, in the South East that we want to continue to promote these vibrant activities and links which are helping children to understand more about where our food comes from. We hope this interest in engaging our young people will continue and schools will continue to take part in farm visits and growing and cooking activities.

If you are a farmer already involved in, or are interested in becoming involved with educating young people, come along to one of our free Farmers Seminars. There will be the chance to find out what

schools and farms have been doing over the past year; current developments in the curriculum and learning outdoors; how you can become involved in regional projects and initiatives; how you can support your local school/s with their farming and countryside related learning.

Tuesday 24th February 2009 at The Kent Showground, Detling, Nr Maidstone, Kent, ME14 3JF

Wednesday 25th February 2009 at The Bargeman's Rest, Newport, Isle of Wight,

Friday 27th February 2009 at The Cricketers, Duncton, West Sussex, GU28 0LB

(10am - 3.30pm, refreshments and lunch provided).

To book contact Meg Hart 01494 562716

Congratulations to Chilterns award Winners



David Passmore (right) with the Conservation Award Judges

Better late than never but finally congratulations must go to David Passmore of Mays Farm, Nuffield near Wallingford for winning the 2008 Chilterns Conservation Award as well as being judged Best Farmed Farm by the Nettlebed Farming Club and the Federation of Oxfordshire Farming Clubs. Ian Waller of Hampden Bottom Farm near Great Missenden has also been busy scooping the Farmers Weekly Countryside Farmer of the Year and being a runner in the FWAG Silver Lapwing Award, and SE regional winner at Natural England's Future of Farming Awards. Well done to you both and to everyone doing their bit for wildlife, however small, as Tesco likes to remind us 'every little helps!'

Woodland Events

The Chilterns Woodlands Project has a number of upcoming events that may be of interest:

Chilterns Woodlands Conference Friday 20th March 2009

10am-2pm

“Tree Pests and Diseases in the Chilterns” at Green Park, Aston Clinton, Bucks. £25/person including buffet lunch.

Two woodland archaeology workshops are being held on Thursday 26th February and Saturday 28th February at Pigotts Wood, North Dean near High Wycombe. Both 10.30 - 4pm. £40/person, discounted to £30/person for woodland owners and volunteers.

To book contact John Morris 01844 355503



Chilterns Conservation Board - an introduction



The Chilterns Conservation Board is the public body with the responsibility for protecting and enhancing the Chilterns AONB

The Conservation Boards primary duties are

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB
- To increase the understanding and enjoyment of the AONB's special qualities.

In addition the Conservation Board has a secondary duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities where that is compatible with its primary duties.

Who to Contact - Chilterns Conservation Board

Tracy Adams
Farming and Land Use Officer
01844 355523
tadams@chilternsaonb.org

Kath Daly
Countryside Officer
01844 355524
kdaly@chilternsaonb.org

Allen Beechey
Chalk Streams Project Officer
01844 355502
abeechey@chilternsaonb.org

Chilterns Conservation Board
The Lodge, 90 Station Road, Chinnor Oxon OX39 4HA
Tel: 01844 355500 Email: office@chilternsaonb.org
Website: www.chilternsaonb.org



It's Your Newsletter

This newsletter is your opportunity to share experiences, ideas and problems with other farmers & landowners. Your contribution is most welcome.



an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty