

### ***Countryside Stewardship Changes***

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) is due for a number of improvements ahead of the 2018 application period. These aim to make it easier for farmers to access the funding it offers.

#### *Streamline Packages*

Four 'packages' covering the most common farm type will be offered and will have a shorter application form and simpler checks when applying. The packages will be non-competitive meaning applicants are guaranteed an offer as long as they meet the minimum requirements. Individual management options are grouped together within a package under a number of categories. There will then be a requirement to pick a minimum number of options from each category.

The four packages are:

- 1) *Arable Offer*- 11 options grouped under three categories. A minimum of 3% of the farmed area must be under options.
- 2) *Lowland Grazing Offer*- 7 options grouped under three categories. A minimum of 2% of the farmed area must be under options.
- 3) *Upland Offer*- 8 options grouped under two categories.
- 4) *Mixed Farming Offer*- 14 options under three categories. A minimum of 3% of the farmer area must be under options.

The Arable Offer will be applied for online through the Rural Payment system with the other three being paper based. Options that fall under the Arable Offer will **not** allow double funding. This means that options chosen will not be eligible to count towards the Ecological Focus Areas requirement under Greening.

The above changes are designed to boost uptake and bare more resemblance to the old Entry-Level Stewardship Scheme. The 'classic' Mid-Tier and Higher-Tier agreements will continue to be on offer and it will be possible to have a mix of the new streamlined and classic mid-tier elements on the same holding however not within the same fields. Full details will be made available in the scheme handbooks which are due to be published shortly with the scheme likely to open for applications in January 2018.

For more details see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/countryside-stewardship-detail-of-new-simplified-offers>

### ***PLCD Mapping Updates***

The RPA have issued advice following situations arising where the PLCD mapping updates have led to parcels being linked incorrectly to an SBI or Permanent Ineligible Features have been incorrectly added or removed.

#### *Removing a Land Parcel*

When the transfer or remove land functionality is turned back on, which is due to happen by the end of January, if the 'holding type' is shown as 100% owned it should be possible to remove a land parcel online. If the land parcel 'holding type' shows as either tenant or less than 100% owned an RLE1 form will need to be complete. The RLE1 guidance states:

- at Part B1- use the option 'Sale/gift of land'
- at Part B2- transfer the land parcel to the dummy SBI set up by the RPA to remove land parcels. This is 200116651 with the business name for the SBI being 'Land removed from your holding'

- at Part B3- filling the 'Effective date of transfer' as 01/01/2010 where the parcel of land has never been under the control of the business
- at Part D- fill in the land parcel details

### *Reinstating a Permanent Ineligible Feature (PIF)*

Where a PIF has been incorrectly removed and should be added back on, an RLE1 form is required. Where the PIF has always existed the effective date on the RLE1 form should be included as 01/01/2010. The same applies for PIFs which have been included incorrectly and never existed and need to be removed.

### **Entitlement Transfers**

The RPA should be making the online entitlements transfer and land transfer/remove land functionality 'live' by the end of January under the current timetable however this may be subject to change.

### **Changes to Letting Fees**

The Government has published a draft Tenants Fees Bill which would ban lettings agents from charging fees to potential tenants. The Bill aims to make renting more affordable for tenants by reducing the costs at the outset of a tenancy and aims to achieve this by banning landlords and their agents from requiring tenants in the private rented sectors to make any payments, as a condition of granting, renewing or continuing a tenancy with the exception of:

- the rent
- a refundable tenancy deposit capped at six weeks' rent
- a refundable holding deposit capped at one weeks' rent
- tenant default fees (such as replacing a lost key)

The introduction of the Bill will mean that some letting fees will in all likelihood become the responsibility of the landlord to pay.

### **Adkin News**

Adkin are pleased to welcome James Fergusson to the team as a Graduate Surveyor. James joins Adkin from a well-known Scottish firm where he spent the last year in Inverness. James is assisting in a wide range of professional work and property management and is working towards taking his professional exams this year.

## **57<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HAY & STRAW AUCTION SALE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIMBLEBY & SHORLAND**

TUESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2018

At 2.30pm

In the Loyd Lindsay Rooms, Ardington, Wantage, Oxon OX12 8PS

**In order to ensure the continuity of the Adkin Annual Hay and Straw Sale we will from hereon be operating in conjunction with Thimbleby & Shorland of Reading. We intend to work closely together to maintain this important service.**

Catalogues available from the office or [www.adkin.co.uk](http://www.adkin.co.uk)  
All enquiries to Philip Pocock or Hannah Rickards (01235 862888)