

Woodland, Hedgerow and Scrub Creation through *Farming in Protected Landscapes* in the North Pennines AONB

Advice for applicants

The creation and/or management of woodland, hedgerows, scrub and successional areas fits within the objectives of the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant scheme (benefits to Nature and Climate). Including such activities may strengthen an application involving other outcomes (benefits to People and Place). The relevant potential outcomes of a woodland type project under three program themes are:

CLIMATE

- More carbon is stored/sequestered
- Flood risk has been reduced
- The landscape is more resilient to climate change

NATURE

- There is a greater area of wildlife rich habitat
- There is greater connectivity between habitats
- Existing habitat is better managed for biodiversity
- There is an increase in biodiversity

PLACE

- The quality and character of the landscape is reinforced or enhanced
- There is an increase in the resilience of nature friendly sustainable farm businesses, which in turn contributes to a more thriving local economy

Woodland type projects may also contribute to the delivery of several Short-term Outcomes described in the North Pennines AONB Management Plan:

- The landscape delivers more for nature, farmers, and the public, including climate change mitigation and other natural services
- Landscape quality and character is protected and enhanced whilst ensuring essential development takes place
- More and bigger areas of habitat are better connected and managed, and biodiversity loss is reversed.

While more/better managed trees and shrubs in the landscape help to address some of the Top 10 Conservation Priorities for the North Pennines, as described in the AONB management plan:

- Native and mixed woodland and scrub
- Rivers and riparian habitat

Example projects

Some activities that could be funded through Farming in Protected Landscapes are:

- Planting of native low-density woodland to benefit priority species such as black grouse
- Creating areas of new woodland or scrub, or enhancing connectivity between existing habitats.
- Reinstating a historical field boundary with a traditionally managed hedgerow
- Removing areas from grazing for the purpose of promoting natural regeneration of scrub and woodland
- Using hedgerows and trees to provide shade and shelter for livestock, for example as upland wood pasture
- Planting a woodland buffer strip along watercourses

Eligibility by project area

There is no minimum area for woodland type activities funded through Farming in Protected Landscapes grants, though note that a minimum project value of £3000 applies to all applications.

If your project involves the creation of new woodland and covers a total area greater than 1 hectare (minimum of 0.1 hectare blocks) then other grant schemes such as the England Woodland Creation Offer are likely to be a better fit. Please discuss which funding may be most appropriate with your Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer.

Trees and Basic Payment Scheme

Trees are an eligible feature and will not affect BPS payments if they are:

1. individual trees scattered within an agricultural parcel;
2. lines of trees (of a maximum of two trees wide) on an agricultural parcel;
3. groups of trees on an agricultural parcel that are not adjacent to a boundary; and
 - a. the area underneath the canopy is used for agricultural activity (this condition is met where it is suitable for cultivation or grazing of livestock);
 - b. more than 50% of the area underneath the tree canopy is covered by grasses, other herbaceous forage or arable land.

or

1. groups of trees on an agricultural parcel that are adjacent to a boundary and;
 - a. the area underneath the canopy is used for agricultural activity (this condition is met where it is suitable for cultivation or grazing of livestock);
 - b. if unsuitable for cultivation, the entire area under the canopy is accessible to farm animals for grazing; and
 - c. more than 50% of the area underneath the tree canopy is covered by grasses, other herbaceous forage or arable land.

What would be expected from you

To receive funding for woodland-type projects the applicant would have to commit to maintaining the trees/shrubs for the duration of the grant programme (ends 31st March 2024), while demonstrating longer-term commitment to the appropriate management of the hedge or woodland. All trees that fail during the grant term will need to be replaced.

Tree species selection, planting location and planting design of the woodland should be discussed with your Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer and must be delivered as agreed. The planting of native species in locally appropriate species mixes is encouraged. Creation of mixed woodland with commercial conifer species included are eligible but would be funded at a reduced rate. Planting schemes should consider impact of new woodland on other conservation priorities e.g., breeding waders or species-rich grassland.

When considering planting trees make sure you consider proximity to underground services such as water mains, gas and overhead power and telephone lines. Please consult provider e.g., National Grid, Water Companies, BT Openreach etc. for exact locations and advice before applying. Bear in mind the size of the trees on maturity and any future management required.

What Farming in Protected Landscapes might fund

FiPL can fund tree planting at the same rates and specification as Countryside Stewardship capital grants, for example:

- Planting new hedge, £22.97 per metre
- Planting standard hedgerow tree, £19.06 per tree
- Planting fruit trees, £28.07 per tree
- Supply and plant tree, £1.72 per tree
- Supplement for use of individual tree-shelters, £2.43 per unit
- Tree guard (tube and mesh), £3.95 per guard
- Tree guard (wood post and rail), £109.64 per guard
- Tree guard (wood post and wire), £132.16 per guard

Other examples of other fundable activities include:

- Grouped trees/shrubs in 1.8m square cage, £95.36
- Grouped trees/shrubs in 4m square enclosure, £170
- Larger enclosures for trees and scrub (up to 12m x 12m) £10/m perimeter

This is not a complete list of options. Please discuss your ideas with a FiPL Officer to identify the best way to deliver your woodland project. Note all funded options will have a defined build specification and onward conditions for maintenance of trees (2 years) and fencing (5 years).

In certain cases, projects may be eligible to claim maintenance payments for the duration of the FiPL programme. This applies where certain habitats have been created or restored, or where livestock are excluded to permit natural regeneration. Some example annual payments include:

- Creation of upland wood pasture, £333 per hectare
- Restoration of upland wood pasture, £316 per hectare
- Management of upland wood pasture, £212 per hectare

- Creation of successional areas and scrub, £149 per hectare
- Management of successional areas and scrub, £88 per hectare
- Livestock exclusion supplement– scrub and successional areas, £74 per hectare

How to strengthen your application

1. Meets the project outcomes	Think about how your woodland can maximise benefits to wildlife, carbon capture, flood management and enhance the landscape.
2. Value for money	Woodland projects will largely be based on Countryside Stewardship and other standard payment rates to ensure value for money. Activities that do not have an associated standard payment rate will be considered but require the provision of 3 quotes.
3. Sustainability/ Legacy	You will need to demonstrate that you are able to maintain plantings etc. after the project term ends and ensure the project has lasting benefits.
4. Ability to deliver	Can you show successful examples of past projects? Have you secured suppliers for materials and tree stock? Are contractors available (if required) to undertake the work as planned?

For further advice please contact Farming in Protected Landscapes Officers for the North Pennines AONB here: fipl@northpenninesaonb.org.uk