

# The Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant Scheme 2019

An excellent grant opportunity: but be quick!

March 2019

## The 2019 Hedgerows and Boundaries Grant Scheme opened on 18<sup>th</sup> February.

This is a stand-alone capital grant scheme, run by The Rural Payments Agency, offering substantial public funding towards restoring existing hedges and stone walls. These boundaries are a valuable part of our heritage, landscape and bio-diversity, as well as being important from a management perspective.

The maximum grant is £10,000 per rural business (twice the maximum of 2 years ago), but the application window closes on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019!**

We strongly recommend that farmers consider taking advantage of this scheme: there is no guarantee that it will be available in future years. The scheme is open to land managers who are **owner occupiers, tenants and landlords**.

Grant rates remain at the same level as in 2018, including per metre payment rates of £9.40 for hedge laying, £9.50 for filling in gaps and £25.00 for stone wall restoration (see Page 3 for full table).

These rates represent a high percentage of actual costs<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, applicants can restore substantial lengths of hedgerow or wall, at limited expense to themselves.

Applications can be made on paper or [online](#):

Three particular advantages of this scheme are:

- Grants of up to £10,000 per SBI Business. In the case of hedgerow restoration, the payment rate may contribute towards the cost of not only restoring the hedge itself but providing a protective fence, offering the chance to upgrade fixed equipment.
- It is the principal capital grant scheme aimed at restoring *existing* hedgerows and walls.
- It is a stand-alone, simplified scheme, offering a one-off capital grant. It is not a complex, multi-annual scheme with many conditions. Although successful applicants must keep the funded items to the required specification for 5 years, there are no wider conditions affecting the management of land.

### Eligibility

- The applicant must be registered on the Rural Payment service and have an SBI number.
- The land on which the selected boundaries lie must be registered to the applicant's SBI number.
- The applicant must have full management control over the selected boundaries for 2 years.
- Land is usually eligible even if it is already in the Entry Level Scheme (ELS), Organic Entry Level Scheme (OELS) or the England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) or a Countryside Stewardship (Mid Tier) Wildlife offer.

<sup>1</sup> Strutt & Parker's own data, and costings derived from CAAV and the NAAC, suggest ranges of £11-16.25 per metre for hedge laying, £7-9.50 per metre for filling in gaps, and £35-45 per metre for dry stone walling.



## Excluded Land

Boundaries cannot be entered if they lie within land which is:

- In Mid-Tier Countryside Stewardship
- In Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship
- In Upland Entry Level Stewardship (UELS)
- Within a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

Although many farmers will be ineligible because their land is in existing Mid Tier, Higher Tier, UELS or HLS schemes, it is estimated that around 50% of holdings in England will still be eligible.

## Scoring System

The scheme is competitive and applications will be scored against others. Schemes which are deemed to offer the greatest value for money, in terms of delivering most wildlife diversity and landscape enhancement in relation to the size of the holding, will be scored most highly. Very small schemes (where grants of under £1,000 are sought) will be scored down, as the administrative costs are high compared to the benefit conferred.

Land previously in ELS schemes will be scored more highly, due to a desire to continue to preserve and enhance environmental benefits already created through agri-environment schemes.

## Conclusion

This scheme is a great opportunity for both owner occupiers and tenants to restore stone walls and hedges with a high degree of public funding assistance. In recent years, some of these boundaries may have been neglected, owing to pressure on farm incomes. Restoring them will bring environmental, landscape and management benefits, so it is hard to see why a qualifying applicant should not wish to enter.

As well as entering in-hand land themselves, estate owners should consider the opportunities presented by this scheme for their estate as a whole.

Given the grant is also available to tenants, landlords may wish to draw it to the attention of their farming tenants, in case they wish to take advantage of this opportunity. Farm tenants under AHA '86 tenancies and most FBTs generally have sole responsibility for the maintenance and restoration of field walls and hedges.

In some instances, landlords and farm tenants may choose to collaborate. For example, farm tenants might apply in the name of their individual farm businesses for grant towards boundary restoration work on their individual holdings, but with the landlord helping with the cost of the application, or even the net costs of the restoration work after grant.

One application is allowed for each qualifying RPA registered business.

**Management Options and Payment Rates**

Code	Capital Item	Payment Rate (£)
BN1	Stone-faced bank repair	£31/m
BN2	Stone-faced bank restoration	£86/m
BN4	Earth bank restoration	£7/m
BN5	Hedgerow laying	£9.40/m
BN6	Hedgerow coppicing	£4/m
BN7	Hedgerow gapping-up	£9.50/m
BN8	Hedgerow supplement – Casting up	£3/m
BN10	Hedgerow supplement – top binding & staking	£3.40/m
BN12	Stone wall restoration	£25/m
BN13	Stone wall supplement – top wiring	£3.60/m
BN14	Stone wall supplement – stone from quarry	£44/m
TE1	Planting standard hedgerow tree	£8.80 per tree

But you can only apply for a supplement with its associated capital item so:

- BN8 – can only be used on BN5 and BN6
- BN10 – can only be used with BN5
- BN13 – can only be used with BN12
- BN14 – can only be used with BN12