



March 2017

Dear colleagues

Countryside Stewardship 2017

This morning Amanda Chadburn and I took part in an Agri-environment Stakeholders Group (AESG) teleconference. During the teleconference it was announced that Countryside Stewardship 2017 is being launched today. As of 10am this morning, the embargo on the launch date has been lifted. All key milestone dates and the revised manuals are now on .GOV.UK (including <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/countryside-stewardship-get-paid-for-environmental-land-management>). Details on key dates are also provided below.

Key dates – Higher Tier

Application period opens	10 March 2017
Deadline to request application pack including Woodland Only. HEFER requests for Woodland Only and Mixed applications will be made at this stage.	13 April
Deadline to submit initial application to Natural England (including Woodland Only)	5 May
Natural England will notify applications of success (pipelined for support) or failure (not pipelined) of initial application. Higher Tier HEFER requests will start to be made at this is the point.	by mid June
Natural England completes negotiations with customer	Aiming for 31 August
Customer confirms if they wish to proceed to formal offer	30 September
Agreements start	1 January 2018

This means ALGAO members should expect most Higher HEFER requests to arrive between mid June and late July/early August. HEFER requests for Higher Tier Woodland Only and Mixed applications could start to arrive very soon.

Key dates – Mid Tier

Application period opens. Natural England will make HEFER requests when application request packs are requested.	10 March 2017
Last date to request an application pack from Natural England (and therefore a HEFER)	31 July
Application period closes.	30 September
Agreements start	1 January 2018

This means ALGAO members should expect Mid Tier HEFER requests to arrive between now and 31 July.

Compared to last year, the deadline for requesting HEFERs has been brought forward about a month. This has been done to allow applicants time to consider the information and advice given in HEFERs in their applications. Although it means ALGAO members will still need to work on HEFERs in the summer holiday period, Natural England is proactively encouraging customers to request information packs and HEFERs as soon as possible. If possible, I recommend ALGAO members encourage early requests too.

A few changes have been made to Countryside Stewardship for 2017, but most of these do not directly relate to the historic environment. However, one important main change is that Woodland Only Higher Tier applications will be part of the “main” process and will require a HEFER. Our current understanding is that Natural England will request HEFERs for Woodland Only Higher Tier applications on behalf of the Forestry Commission.

SHINE enhancements

As mentioned in the last ALGAO Countryside Stewardship update (22 February 2017) Historic England commissioned Exegesis to enhance the SHINE website (www.myshinedata.org.uk). Exegesis has completed their work on priority enhancements, the majority of which were suggested at November’s Countryside Committee/National HECA meeting and all of which have been agreed by the SHINE steering group (Historic England, Natural England and ALGAO). The enhanced SHINE website is ready to go live – now Countryside Stewardship 2017 has been launched, it will go live as soon as possible.

The enhancements made to the SHINE website include:

- Updating all designation and Heritage at Risk datasets on the SHINE portal
- Reducing HEFER download pack size by reducing map resolution, whilst maintaining an acceptable product
- Introducing a new set of feature centred maps (i.e. 1 map per designated asset or SHINE record)
- Adding SBI and holding name filtering for HE, ALGAO & NE users
- Adding a list of designated assets within the area being consulted on to HE consultation notification emails
- Fixing the problem of consultations ending on a bank holiday
- Enabling HE to download consultation parcel data in GIS format
- Minor changes to improve the user interface

Before the SHINE website goes live, the SHINE steering group would like to encourage all ALGAO members to check their existing log in names and passwords. If any ALGAO member would like to new staff to register on the website, this would be a good time to do so. It would be worthwhile making sure that all registrations are up to date before HEFER requests start arriving.

SHINE support and training

I am really pleased to say that Linda Smith (lindasmith.consultancy@gmail.com) has agreed to provide SHINE support to ALGAO members during 2017 (and ALGAO England has been kind enough to provide funding for this). The SHINE support team (<https://www.myshinedata.org.uk/contact>) will also be available to help.

Over the last six months or so a number of ALGAO members have asked for further SHINE training. As part of the SHINE enhancement project Exegesis are creating two SHINE training videos, one for Historic England and one for ALGAO members. This is in response to feedback from last year, when running face-to-face training courses limited numbers of people attending. This year anyone who wishes to be trained can watch the video in their own time. We hope the training videos will be available in the next few days and I will circulate links as soon as they go live.

Involvement with Countryside Stewardship and SHINE

A number of ALGAO members current opt out of involvement in Countryside Stewardship and SHINE. If any of these ALGAO members would like to be involved this year, please do let me know and the SHINE steering group can make necessary arrangements. I'd be happy to discuss the benefits of becoming involved on the telephone.

Appeal for a new Secretary to the ALGAO Countryside Committee and National HECA meeting

As mentioned in February's update, ALGAO is currently looking for a new Secretary to help support the ALGAO Countryside Committee and the National HECA meeting. Although no one has volunteered so far, I am hoping that one or more people will be willing to put themselves forward. The Secretary role is really rewarding and vitally important. Unfortunately without a Secretary we will struggle to hold meetings. If anyone would like to discuss taking on the role, please do contact me.

This update covers all the new information available at the present time, but I will let you have further details as soon as they become available.

Best wishes

David

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