



Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme

 Biodiversity
Spring 2021

APPLICATIONS
CLOSE
18th APRIL

STEPS  Biodiversity

WONDERFUL ON TAP

SEVERN
TRENT

Welcome to spring STEPS for Biodiversity

In Spring 2020 as we moved into extraordinary times of living and working in a global pandemic, we took the chance to introduce a time limited offer of a range of biodiversity options to our priority farms. This trial was received so well we've decided to make it an annual feature of our Farming for Water Programme.

The spring STEPS for Biodiversity grant options are aimed at improving and enhancing biodiversity across your farm business, and is sister to our main STEPS grant scheme which targets water quality. We've awarded over 200 grants, and have enabled a range of projects from winter bird feeding and wildflower meadows, through to woodland creation. Those projects have delivered over 1500Ha of new, or enhanced habitat and 20,000 trees.

So what's changed in this year's edition?

- There are still a great range of options to choose from, although slightly less, as some of the options weren't as popular as we expected.
- You can only apply for a biodiversity option if you have already applied for a water quality option in previous STEPS rounds, and have finished the work or it's in progress.
- You can apply for a biodiversity option at the same time you apply for a water quality option.
- All biodiversity options must be completed by 1st March 2022.

We hope that this spring we will continue to see a great number of applications for biodiversity improvements and enhancements, and as always your local agricultural advisor is on hand to answer your specific questions.

Once again, we cannot thank you all enough for the support you show for STEPS and our Farming for Water programme.

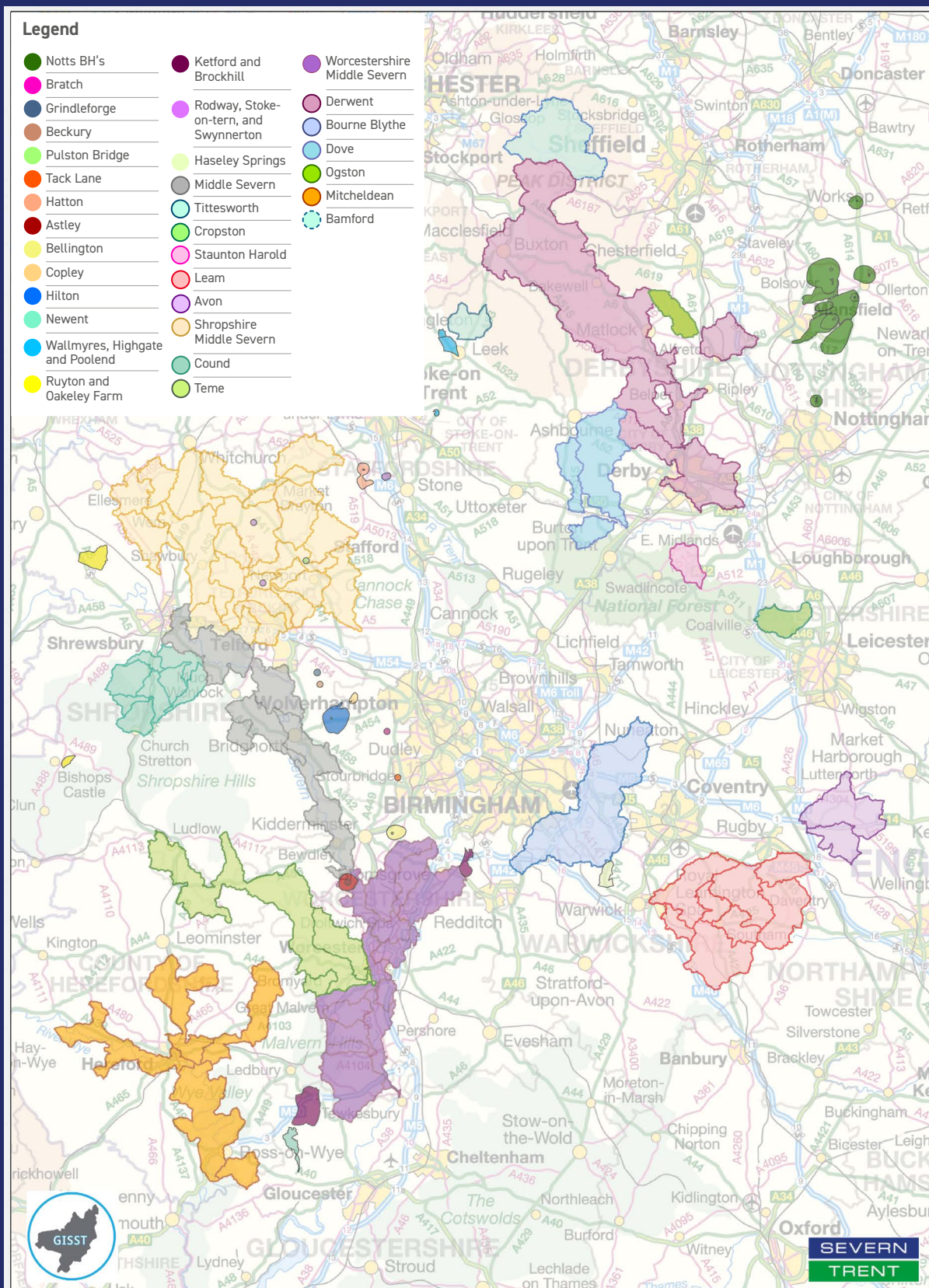


Contents

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Welcome | 2 |
| Priority catchment map | 4 |
| Our team and our partners | 5-7 |
| How the grant scheme works | 8-9 |
| Terms and Conditions | 10-15 |
| Full Terms and Conditions are online at stwater.co.uk/steps | |
| Biodiversity options | 17-38 |
| B20-01 Farmer innovation - Biodiversity | 17-18 |
| B20-02 Annual pollinator mix | 19-20 |
| B20-03 Arthropod banks | 21-22 |
| B20-04 Feeding farmland birds | 23-24 |
| B20-05 Diverse herbal leys | 25-26 |
| B20-06 Wildflower margins and mini-meadows | 27-28 |
| B20-07 Bee and bird food | 29-30 |
| B20-08 Flowering summer catch crop | 31-32 |
| B20-09 Enhancing diversity in existing grasslands | 33-35 |
| B21-10 Spring sown bird seed crop | 37-38 |
| Dedicated support and advice | 39 |
| FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions | 40-45 |
| Useful resources and help | 46-47 |

Priority catchment map

View it online at stwater.co.uk/steps



Our team

All of our team have a farming background, most have agricultural degrees, are BASIS qualified, and some have FACTS qualifications. Some of the team are also farmers, with farms located in our region.

North Warwickshire, Derbyshire (Dove)

Surface water catchments:

Whitacre, Bourne and Blythe, Dove

Groundwater catchments:

Haseley Springs

Una McBride

Phone number: 07811 847161

Email: Una.Mcbride@severntrent.co.uk

South Warwickshire/Northamptonshire

Surface water catchments:

Avon & Leam

Groundwater catchments:

N/A

Marion Perrett-Pearson

Phone number: 07970 944834

Email: Marion.Perrett-Pearson@severntrent.co.uk

Peter Bowman

Phone Number: 07711 169635

Email: Peter.Bowman@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire (Shrewsbury to Bewdley)

Surface water catchments:

Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Oakeley Farm, Ruyton , Hilton, Gringleforge, Copley, Beckbury

Geoff Jordan

Surface water catchments: Middle Severn

Phone number: 07800 961684

Email: Geoff.Jordan@severntrent.co.uk

Tanis Slattery-Penfold

Groundwater catchments: Oakeley Farm, Ruyton, Hilton, Grindleforge, Copley, Beckbury

Phone number: 0794 4947267

Email: Tanis.Penfold@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire (North of Shrewsbury)

Surface water catchments:

Shropshire Middle Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Stoke-on-Tern, Rodway, Swynneton, Pulston Bridge, Hatton

Mark Biddulph

Phone Number: 07970 198191

Email: mark.biddulph@severntrent.co.uk

Cath Edwards

Phone Number: 07508 091799

Email: Cath.Edwards@severntrent.co.uk

Our team and our partners

Shropshire/Worcestershire (Ludlow to Worcester)

Surface water catchments: Teme

Groundwater catchments: Astley, Bratch

Emma Abbott

Groundwater catchments: Astley, Bratch

Phone number: 07909 000680

Email: Emma.Abbott@severntrent.co.uk

Jess Nott

Groundwater catchments: Astley

Phone number: 07498 540405

Email: Jess.Nott@severntrent.co.uk

Worcestershire & Gloucestershire

Surface water catchments:

Worcestershire Severn

Groundwater catchments:

Ketford, Brockhill, Ketford, Brockhill,
Bellington, Newent, Tack Lane

Susan Bamber

Groundwater catchments: Ketford, Brockhill,
Bellington, Newent, Tack Lane

Phone number: 07921 676664

Email: Susan.Bamber@severntrent.co.uk

Emily Williams

Groundwater catchments: Ketford, Brockhill

Phone number: 07498 959818

Email: Emily.Williams@severntrent.co.uk

Robin Bickley

Groundwater catchments: Brockhill, Bellington

Phone number: 07957 761004

Email: Robin.Bickley@severntrent.co.uk

Shropshire

Surface water catchment:

Cound catchment

Georgie Hyde

Telephone: 07498 671888

Email: Georgie.Hyde@severntrent.co.uk



Herefordshire/Gloucestershire (Mitcheldean to Leominster)

Surface water catchments: Mitcheldean (River Wye)

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Abi Croshaw

Surface water catchment: downstream of
Mordiford, including lower Wye

Phone number: 07990 068941

Email: Abi@weuskfoundation.org

Mike Williams

Surface water catchment: upstream of
Mordiford, including upper Wye, Lugg & Frome

Phone Number: 07920 441215

Email: mike@weuskfoundation.org

Staffordshire Derbyshire

Surface water catchments: Tittesworth

Groundwater catchments: Highgate, Poolend
and Wallmyres

Adrian Rochford

Phone number: 07423 437961

Email: Adrian.Rochford@severntrent.co.uk

Tina Bardill

Phone Number: 07384 815880

Email: Tina.Bardill@severntrent.co.uk



Derbyshire

Surface water catchments: Upper and Lower Derwent, Ogston

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Margaret Baile

Phone number: 07789 903652

Email: Margaret.Baile@severntrent.co.uk

Leicestershire

Surface water catchments:
Cropston, Staunton Harold

Groundwater catchments: N/A

Louise Richmond

Phone Number: 07713 333192

Email: Louise.Richmond@severntrent.co.uk

Nottinghamshire Boreholes

Surface water catchments: N/A

Groundwater catchments: Boughton, Bestwood, Rufford, Amen Corner, Budby & Budby Forest, Clipstone, Clipstone Forest, Chequer House

Phil Billings

Phone Number: 07784 924584

Email: Phil.Billings@severntrent.co.uk

Our team and our partners

Our Partners

We have an exceptional way of working with partner organisations across the region. By utilising our partners skills and expertise, it allows us to work with and support our local farming community to provide access to schemes and programme grants that will ultimately help to protect and improve the quality of the local environment.



Shropshire Wildlife Trust



Worcestershire



Warwickshire



Nottinghamshire

How the grant scheme works

How to apply for a grant

The STEPS grant scheme offers farmers and land managers, both owners and tenants, financial and technical support, to invest in tailored solutions to help tackle diffuse water pollution and to protect and maintain biodiversity and the natural environment.

The Spring STEPS grant scheme is aimed at improving and enhancing biodiversity across your farm business.

This scheme is sister to our main STEPS for protecting water quality and we've awarded more than 1900 grants ranging from cover crops, pesticide washdown areas, and biofilters.

Spring STEPS for Biodiversity has awarded over 200 grants, and has enabled projects ranging from winter bird feeding, cover crops and woodland creation. Those projects have delivered over 1500Ha of new, or enhanced habitat and 20,000 trees.

We even offer an option for farmers to submit an innovative idea, specially developed for their farm business.

① Is your farm in a priority catchment?

Do you farm, or have land in a priority catchment in the Severn Trent Region? View the map online at stwater.co.uk/steps or in your STEPS guide brochure.

Additionally STEPS grants are available in Severn Trent 'priority Source Protection Zones' (SPZs) located around the selected drinking water boreholes listed:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Amen Corner | Hatton |
| Astley | Highgate |
| Beckbury | Hilton |
| Bellington | Ketford |
| Bestwood | Newent |
| Boughton | Oakeley Farm |
| Bratch | Poolend |
| Brockhill | Pulston Bridge |
| Budby | Rodway |
| Budby Forest | Rufford |
| Chequer House | Ruyton |
| Clipstone/ Clipstone Forest | Stoke on Tern |
| Copley | Swynnerton |
| Grindleforge | Tack Lane |
| Haseley Springs | Wallmyres |

② Choose your options

Find details of the grant options available in the STEPS options handbook or go online at stwater.co.uk/steps

Our Agricultural Advisors are available to help and assist you in the process. You can call them to arrange an appointment to suit you, or chat to them on the phone.

Biodiversity items may be applied for if you have implemented a priority water quality item in a previous STEPS round.

③ Make your application

Apply online between 22nd February and 18th April 2021. Simply go online and fill in the easy application form at stwater.co.uk/steps

All applications are assessed by the end of May and we aim to let all applicants know the outcome of their application within 6 weeks.

④ Assessing your application

The grant scheme is a competitive process and all our applications are assessed and reviewed based on the farms individual circumstances and the options you choose to apply for.

We advise you to read the Options brochure and the Terms and Conditions in this guide, before making an application – this will improve the chances of you making a successful application.

⑤ We'll be in touch

Once you submit your application, we'll acknowledge receipt. Then once every application has been assessed, we will notify everyone of the outcome of their application via email.

If successful, this email and the attached letter specifies the items and grant amount that has been awarded to you, so it is important to keep it.

You will be able to download and accept your agreement electronically. If you would prefer to receive your agreement via mail, you will be given the option to do so in the application process. Applicants who select this option will receive two agreements which you will need to sign and send one copy back to us.

⑥ Complete the work

Once you have returned your signed agreement to us you're free to get on with the work.

After completing your work, let your Agricultural Advisor know, and they will supply you with a claim form. You'll need to submit photographs, receipts or invoices to show that the work was completed.

We'll then reimburse you for the amount agreed in your offer and agreement letter.

Spring 2021

Terms and Conditions

Your personal data and environmental information

1. By participating in the scheme, you agree to provide ST with the necessary personal and farm business data in order to comply with the scheme's requirements, and to meet our audit parameters. Any data used for our own audit purposes is totally anonymous. For further details, please, read the Privacy Policy on our website: stwater.co.uk/help-and-contact/legal/privacy/

2. In the event that we receive a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIR"), we may be required to disclose information to third parties that you have provided to us, to the extent that it is environmental information as defined under the EIR.

See our full Terms and Conditions online at stwater.co.uk/steps

The Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme (STEPS) is part of Severn Trent's Farming 4 Water catchment management programme.

The scheme is a grant programme solely covered by Severn Trent and provides a wide range of options to farmers for infrastructure investments and land management items.

These Terms and Conditions are here to help applicants understand the requirements and conditions of the grant funding that can be awarded.

All applicants accept that they are familiar with the Terms and Conditions outlined in this document and will comply with them.

If applicants have any queries in relation to their application they should speak to their local Agricultural Advisor (contact details at the front of this handbook), or email; farming4water@severntrent.co.uk before submitting their application.

In the event that there are any changes to these Terms and Conditions, they will be publicised immediately on the Severn Trent Water website and an updated version of the document available for download. You will also receive a soft copy via email where possible.

The following abbreviations will be used throughout the Terms and Conditions:

'ST' shall mean Severn Trent Water Limited.

'STEPS' shall mean Severn Trent Environmental Protection Scheme.

'SPZ' shall mean Source Protection Zone.

'Objective' shall mean a specific action required to be completed in association with a particular scheme.

'Farm' or **'Holding'** shall mean all the production units that are under the control of the applicant farmer/land owner.

Spring 2021 Terms and Conditions

'Farming Activity' shall mean dairy farming; livestock production; cultivation of fodder and tillage crops, and the growing of horticultural crops.

'Eligibility' shall mean essential criteria which must be fulfilled to allow a STEPS contract to be agreed.

'Application' shall mean an application for a STEPS support scheme prepared and submitted by land owner/manager.

'Watercourse' shall mean all rivers, streams, ditches, drains, cuts, culverts, dykes, sluices, and passages through which water flows, but excluding any pipes owned or used by ST or any other water or sewerage undertaker.

'EA' shall mean Environment Agency.

'Building control regulation' shall mean the most up to date regulations as outlined by your local council or Local Authority.

The STEPS grant scheme Terms and Conditions

1. Criteria for funding

- You must be aged eighteen or over, on the date you submit your application.
- You must be the owner or leaseholder of the farm.
- Applications may be submitted by a 3rd party on behalf of the landowner, however you should declare this on the application, and provide confirmation that the landowner's permission has been obtained.
- Grants will only be available to farmers and landowners who farm, or have land within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment, and/or farm within one of ST's priority SPZs. STEPS for Biodiversity items may be implemented on land owned or managed by the applicant, which is located outside the priority catchment area.
- For details on priority catchments, the map is available on page 4.
- STEPS biodiversity items may be implemented on non-farmed land. However before implementing any STEPS item on non-farmed land, you must consider any existing species or habitats that may be present and consult either/or Natural England and your local authority beforehand.
- Any evidence of 'double funding' will result in the cancellation of your agreement and withdrawal of any potential funds.

- Where funding has already been released, you will be required, and agree, to refund it and we (ST) will take the necessary action to recoup the funds, including any legal costs.
- Any applicant or application found to be fraudulent will be rejected and the applicant disqualified from future ST programmes and schemes.
- ST may reject applications if they are not likely to benefit water quality, biodiversity or the environment.
- The submission of a valid application does not guarantee entry to STEPS.
- Once offered a grant, applicants can't change their capital or works, or amend their agreement unless given permission by ST.
- Contracts are non-transferable except in the case of:
 - Certified serious illness of applicant
 - Death of the applicant
 - Long term professional incapacity of the applicant.
- Each STEPS item specifies particular criteria to be met, in order to be included in an application.
- We cannot fund any item or work which is a regulatory requirement.

2. Supporting evidence for applications

Mandatory supporting evidence is required in order to successfully assess your application, as outlined below:

- Brief description of the farm enterprise
- An overview of the work planned and the environmental reason for undertaking this work
- Forecast timescales for completion of the project
- Photographs of site prior to commencing any work
- Farm maps which display farm boundary and site location of STEPS items chosen
- Dated quotes for items applied for under 'Farmer - innovation - biodiversity'.

Our Agricultural Advisors will be available to support with the application process free of charge but are not responsible for the submission of your application.

Spring 2021

Terms and Conditions

3. How we assess your application

- A scoring system has been used to ensure that funding will go to projects that demonstrate the greatest benefit and positive impact to biodiversity. We will also take into consideration any prior engagement with a ST Agricultural Advisor, participation in other ST catchment schemes and, particularly in the case of Farmer innovation applications, value for money.
- Application forms are usually submitted through the online portal accessible through the Severn Trent Catchment Team website stwater.co.uk/steps
- Scoring is a competitive process, and not all applicants are guaranteed to receive full funding or any funding at all, even if applicants have been successful in the past.
- All applicants will be contacted regarding the outcome of their application.
- Where possible, as part of our ongoing commitment to our impact on the environment and in a bid to reduce paper waste, agreements may be issued and accepted via email.
- Applicants will be given the option of choosing how they are notified at the outcome of their application at the end of the application process.
- The agreement form must be signed, dated and returned to us, either electronically or by post (if applicable).
- Returning and signing the agreement form acknowledges that you are committed to the work, as per your grant application, and will abide by these Terms and Conditions.

4. Your obligations

- If successful in being awarded STEPS funding, you must return a copy of your signed grant agreement to the catchment team by the date specified on your acceptance letter. Agreements not returned by this date will be voided and the funding reallocated to other STEPS projects.
- You must inform ST of any change to a selected option and a written reason displaying your actions. You will then receive confirmation of approval. If you change the location of the STEPS item and do not inform ST you may not receive the allocated funding.
- All records must be kept for 5 years following entry into the scheme. Records include invoices, receipts, permits, maps, photos and consents.

See our full Terms and Conditions online at stwater.co.uk/steps

Spring 2021 Terms and Conditions

- Any breach of cross-compliance noted during an on farm inspection may be reported to the EA. STEPS biodiversity items must be maintained for the full 5 year commitment, with additional seeding/maintenance undertaken as necessary. All STEPS biodiversity items should be implemented as per the specification in the handbook.
- All work must comply with relevant environmental legislation, have the appropriate planning permissions, and meet the latest building control regulations and British Standards.
- Specialist On Farm Advice (SOFA) visits are a requirement for some STEPS items. Refusal or cancellation of the visit without rearrangement will result in the STEPS application being terminated or funding withheld.

Planning permission and consents

- Written consent(s) from a relevant authority may be required with your application. You may or may not require planning permission from your local authority or relevant body – it is your responsibility to check and to apply if permission is required.
- Planning permission may be required depending on the capital scheme chosen. Consult your local planning authority or National Park authority to seek advice.
- You must enclose a copy of the consent, or the application for consent, with your application if relevant.
- In some cases, and with permission from ST, advice and consent can be received up until 15 days after the application deadline; you can discuss this with your Agricultural Advisor. ST won't be able to process your application until we receive these.
- All works must comply with relevant environmental legislation associated with the scheme.
- Once the scheme is complete it must be kept in agricultural use e.g. not changed to an alternative use such as residential or commercial accommodation, for a minimum of 5 years from the date of your STEPS contract.

Health and safety

- All work must comply with the relevant health and safety legislation. Please visit the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk) for further information. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that any work carried out under a STEPS agreement complies with the relevant health and safety legislation. This includes all subsequent maintenance of items which address water quality or

biodiversity. The HSE may need to be notified of some construction work.

- All work must comply with all British Standards and Codes of Good Agricultural Practice.
- Capital items must be installed in accordance with Protecting our Water, Soil and Air: a Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers (CoGap).
- Capital items installed under the scheme must have a minimum design life of 10 years; or have a minimum design life of 20 years if the item has to comply with The Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry, and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended 2013) (SSAFO).
- Biodiversity options require management throughout their lives to ensure they provide suitable habitat. Failure to appropriately maintain an item within the grant period may result in Severn Trent seeking to recoup the grant funding.

Environment Agency, Natural England, other authorities and legislation

- If your work affects any of the following you will need consent from the EA or from the relevant authority;
 - National Park
 - Listed Building
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Protected Species
 - National Nature Reserve
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Registered Parkland
 - Local Nature Reserves
 - Registered Battlefields
 - Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
 - Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
 - RAMSAR
 - Biobed/Biofilter construction and spreading of used Biomix to land.
- Before commitment to any work, you may have to seek guidance from the EA e.g. installation of a biobed on your farm holding.
- Any work carried out within 1m of the top of a river bank may require flood defence consent. Depending on the size of watercourse you should consult the EA. Telephone: **03708 506506** or email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Spring 2021

Terms and Conditions

5. Our (ST) obligations

- Assess applications in an unbiased manner.
- We will provide one-to-one support through our Agricultural Advisors. Where necessary, in order to protect you and our advisors, this support may be conducted via phone, video call, or via email in order to comply with government guidelines in social distancing.
- Respond to queries within 20 working days via our catchment team inbox email – **farming4water@severntrent.co.uk**
- Provide at least 7 days' notice of any planned site visit and inspection.
- We may carry out on-the-spot checks at farm level to ensure compliance with the requirements of the scheme.
- We will keep all your personal, farm and financial information confidential. See our privacy statement, at the end of these Terms and Conditions.
- This does not affect our duty to report any breaches in cross compliance to the EA.

6. Processing grant payments

- All applications for support and payment claims will be subjected to our administrative checks, and any other controls deemed necessary, before approvals or payments are made under the scheme.
- Receipts or invoices for materials purchased for the delivery of STEPS options must be retained and must be submitted with your completion and evidence of the work carried out.
- Participants must provide documentary evidence of payment. Receipts must be made out by the vendor to include the name and address of the beneficiary.
- Receipts must be dated and any materials purchased before entry to STEPS will not be accepted.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that any requested supporting documentation for the release of payments is submitted. Photographs of site must be taken and retained both before and after completion of work. (Please take both photos from same position).

See our full Terms and Conditions online at **stwater.co.uk/steps**

7. Additional funding opportunities

- It is the applicant's responsibility to understand that if they decide to apply for funding from other EU funded or National Schemes, addressing similar objectives to the STEPS scheme, that they will be at risk of losing any grant awarded from ST, and also the other organisation to which an application has been made for funds. This is known as double funding.
- Double funding is defined as grant money used, from different sources to fund the same capital works at the same location. As a guide, the following schemes should be considered (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Environmental Stewardship
 - Countryside Stewardship
 - Paths4Communities
 - Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme
 - LEADER Farm Productivity Grant
 - Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid
 - Woodland Grant schemes
 - Energy crops.
- In relation to your claim, all paperwork must be kept for 5 years after the start of your agreement.
- VAT will not be paid if you are VAT registered.
- If you are not VAT registered, your VAT can be included in the total costs.

8. Breaking your agreement and participation in STEPS

Force Majeure - where an applicant is unable to continue within STEPS commitment(s) due to reasons beyond their control. The following categories of Force Majeure will be recognised (not an exhaustive list):

- Death of the participant
- Long term professional incapacity of the participant
- Expropriation of a large part of the holding if such expropriation could not have been anticipated before joining STEPS
- A natural disaster affecting the holding's agricultural land
- The accidental destruction of livestock buildings on the farm e.g. destruction of property via a fire

- An outbreak of disease affecting all or part of the livestock on the farm
- The disposal or vacation of land to satisfy a court order or legal settlement in cases of marital breakdown
- A profound change of business circumstances that makes participation financially unviable.

9. Breaching the agreement

This could result in the non-payment or recovery of the grant payable or already paid. Note that applicants are responsible for the work carried out (even if work was contracted to an external contractor). The following are classed as breaches of agreement (not an exhaustive list):

- Refusal to allow ST Agricultural Advisor access to the land for inspection on reasonable notice (7 days)
- Providing false or misleading information in relation to the grant and evidence
- Submission of a claim for capital works that are not completed or where funds have been used for an alternative purpose
- Lack of evidence of how the funds were spent or of the finished work e.g. photos
- Removal of any capital works without written consent from ST
- Change of use of a capital item, e.g. roofing over a manure storage to turn it into a grain or machinery storage (even when at the applicant's own expense)
- You are found to not meet the criteria for funding
- Not following the relevant deadlines for responding and submitting your agreement form
- Failure to comply with the appropriate standards, planning rules and agricultural codes of practice
- Subsequent refusal of a Specialist On Farm Advisory visit (should one be required in order to be eligible for a STEPS item) after returning your signed agreement
- Failure to adhere to STEPS item requirements.

In addition to the Severn Trent requirements for each STEPS option, you should also be aware that all works undertaken must conform to UK legislation and you should consult the relevant authority or guidelines to check you comply. Some things to consider are detailed on pages 46-47 along with additional resources.

stwater.co.uk/steps

© Phipps Farm Partnership



Farmer innovation – Biodiversity

How does this help the environment?

This option helps any farm enterprise to improve habitats that will help to provide us with food to eat (through sustaining pollination), helps to clean the water we drink (such as wetland filtration), and helps provide the oxygen we breathe. Improved habitats also bring wider benefits for wildlife, and can provide social and economic benefits too. Biodiversity is all about protecting and enhancing the amazing variety of life on Earth.

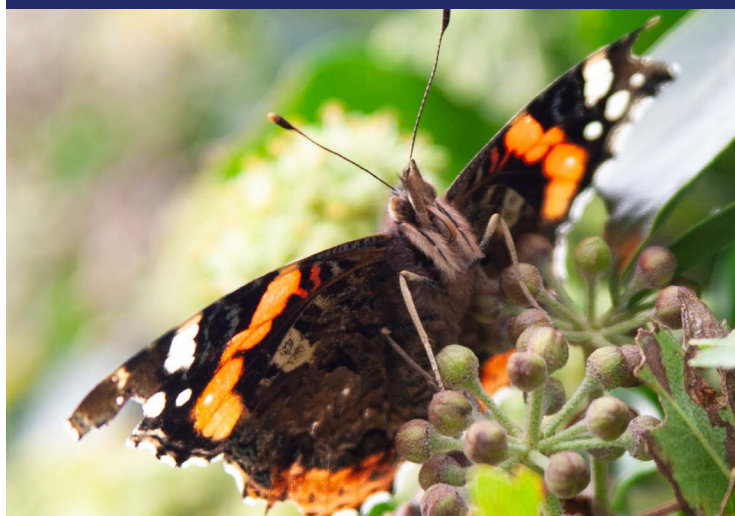
How does this help my farm business?

Every farm enterprise is different. If the list of options available in STEPS doesn't suit your farm, circumstances or budgets, using this option to suggest an alternative or innovative way to help protect water quality and the environment can bring business benefits tailored for you.



B20-01

Full payment received in first year. Minimum of a 5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



We reserve the right to offer a longer agreement, depending on the application.

Eligibility

You should discuss this option with your Agricultural Advisor before applying.

The applicant must ensure that the item is not located on a site that will damage existing habitats (see **Magic.gov.uk**), archaeology or infrastructure.

We may specify that you require a Specialist On Farm Advice (SOFA) visit to support your application.

This will be organised by your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

B20-01

Farmer innovation – Biodiversity

Specification

It is essential that you discuss your ideas for this option with your Agricultural Advisor.

Evidence

Please ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the claim:

- Invoices (if applicable)
- Maps showing location of item(s)
- This is not an exhaustive list of evidence requirements. Specific requirements will be stipulated in your grant agreement.

- **Please provide before and after photos**

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.

Examples of previous successful applications include:

Pond management

Long term habitat creation

Invasive species control.



Annual pollinator mix

How does this help my environment?

This option provides areas of flowering plants to boost essential food sources for beneficial pollinators as well as invertebrates that will help to feed farmland bird chicks in the summer. Once considered weeds, some cornfield annuals are now among the rarest flowers in the UK and uncommon to see in the farmed landscape.

How does this help my farm business?

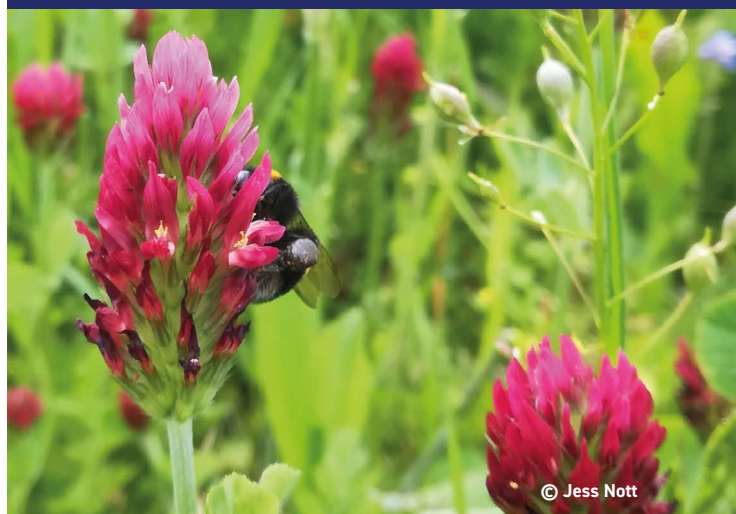
Flower mixes can attract and support natural predators of crop pests, potentially reducing the farms reliance on insecticides. These areas also support native pollinators, essential for oilseed rape and beans. This option could also be seen as a wildlife friendly annual fallow and green manure, with the soil health and rotational benefits they bring.

Brightly coloured, an annual pollinator mixture can look great on your farm. Consider planting where it would be visible to the public.



B20-02

Grant value: Total £2500/ha
£500/ha per year (claimed
annually for 5 years).



Eligibility

The option must be re-established each year. It can be kept in the same location if working well, or moved around the farm, but the same area must be retained.

Only available on cultivated land.

Mixture diversity must
be maintained.

Do not use where evidence or records exist for important arable plants or adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see **Magic.gov.uk**).

Speak to your Severn Trent
Agricultural Advisor
about eligibility.

B20-02 Annual pollinator mix

Specification

- Establish a mix containing at least 4 of the following; Crimson Clover, Red Clover, Berseem Clover, Persian Clover, Phacelia, Native Corn Flower, Native Corn Marigold and Native Corn Chamomile, Borage, Common Vetch, Field Poppy. The seed mix chosen should be discussed with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.
- The type of mix can be established on all soil types and in most locations but it works best in south or south-southwest areas with a sunny aspect. Some cornfield annuals are best suited to lighter land. Check with your seed merchant for the best mix for your soil type and situation.
- Establish as early as possible after harvest considering topography and soil type, following the guidance of your agronomist and chosen seed merchant.
- Retain the mix until 1st September the following year.
- Plots should be at least 6m wide. Many pollinator species have a limited foraging range, so spreading smaller areas of this habitat around the farm will have significant benefits.
- You should not drive on the annual pollinator mix area, but limited turning is allowed if sward damage is prevented.
- Talk to your Agricultural Advisor regarding pesticide use on this option. Herbicides are only permitted to spot treat or weed wipe injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, stinging nettles and bracken.
- Speak to your local Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor for further advice.

Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the annual claim:

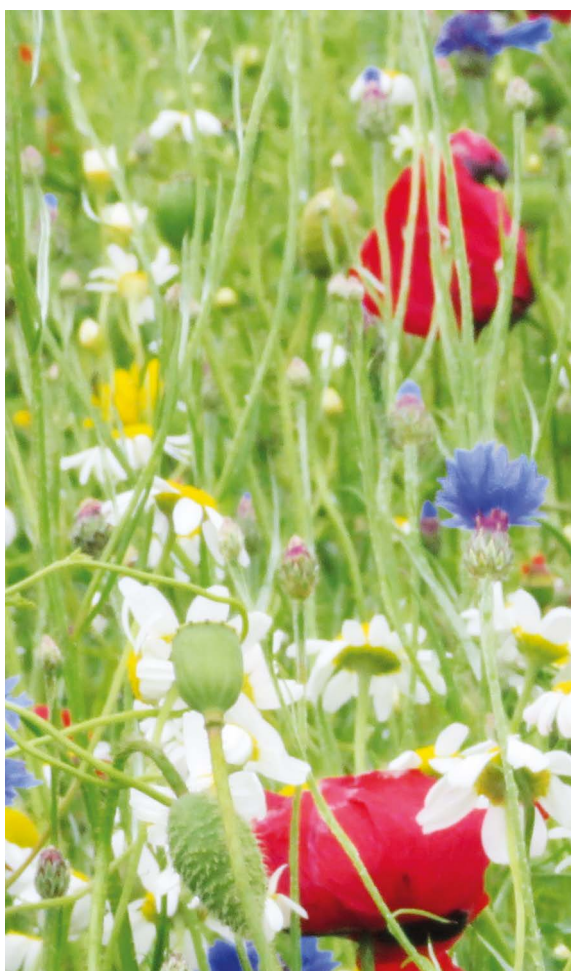
- Invoices for seed mix used
- Maps showing locations and areas of annual pollinator mix
- Photos of the annual pollinator mix in flower are particularly valuable evidence that the option is working well. These should be taken annually and sent to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.



Arthropod banks

How does this help the environment?

This option provides raised grass areas which mimic the dense, tussocky grass cover of traditional hedgerows, providing a habitat for invertebrates and farmland birds to forage and nest in. Small mammals, bumblebees, spiders, insects and farmland birds which prefer to nest in open areas can be found on successful arthropod banks.

How does this help my farm business?

Beneficial predatory and pollinating insects overwinter in dense grass cover and will move in to the crop in spring. They then act as natural predators of crop pests, and pollinate the crop itself. As many of these beneficial species do not travel more than 250m, arthropod banks located in the middle of a field can be a valuable resource to control crop pests. Over time there can be an economic benefit from the reduction in insecticides used on the crop. Arthropod banks can also help to slow surface water flow, reducing the risk of water pollution from pesticides, and can help prevent soil erosion.



B20-03

Grant value: £2500/ha

Full Payment received in first year.
5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



Eligibility

Cultivated land or temporary grassland only.

Suitable for larger fields (20 ha and above) or in areas where soil erosion is a risk.

Can be located in the centre of fields or near the edges.

The applicant must ensure that the arthropod bank is not located on a site that will damage existing habitats (see [Magic.gov.uk](https://www.magic.gov.uk)), archaeology or infrastructure.

Arthropod banks must remain in place for a minimum of 5 years.

B20-03 Arthropod banks

| Commercial Cereal pests | Natural predators that benefit from banks |
|---|---|
| Aphids | Green and brown lacewings, lady beetles, hover flies, midges, and soldier beetles |
| Leatherjackets, frit fly, gout fly, slugs | Parasitoid wasps, carabids and farmland birds |
| Bean seed flies | Spiders, parasitoid wasps, rove beetles |

Specification

- Create or maintain an earth ridge, this should be free-draining. It needs to measure between 2m to 5m wide and about 0.4m high.
- Leave gaps at each end of the ridge to allow access for machinery.
- Establish or maintain a native grass mixture in year 1 of the agreement, with suggested species including fine leaved grasses and tussock-forming varieties such as Fescues, Cock's-foot and Timothy.
- Cut the established mixture several times as required in the first summer to control woody growth and annual weeds. In years 2-5, cut between 1st April and 31st August, making sure you are careful to protect ground nesting birds and invertebrates; cut when the bank is dry but before insects look to find shelter over winter.
- Do not graze the arthropod bank with livestock.
- Do not spray with pesticides or fertilisers. Herbicides are permitted for spot treatment or wipe injurious weeds like stinging nettle or bracken, or invasive non-native species.
- You should avoid application of insecticides within at least 6 metres of the bank as these will be particularly harmful to the beneficial predatory insects you are trying to encourage.
- Speak to your local Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor for further advice.

Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the claim:

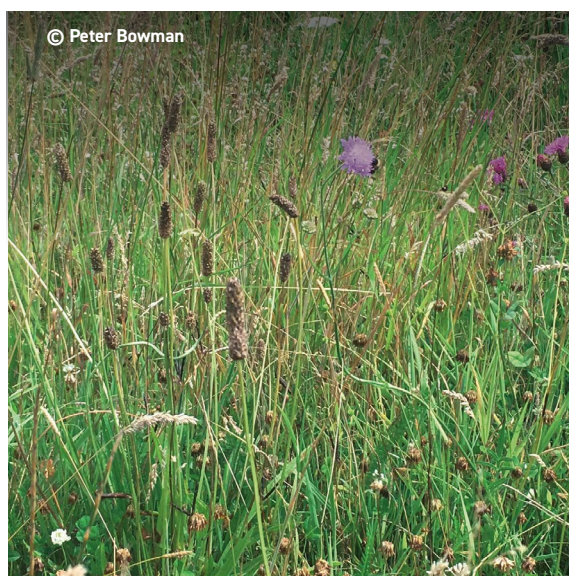
- Invoices for seed mix used (if applicable)
- Maps showing location of banks
- Photos of the arthropod bank in flower are particularly valuable evidence that the option is working well. These should be taken annually and sent to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.



Feeding farmland birds

How does this help the environment?

This option is a quick and easy method to provide food for seed-eating farmland birds during the 'hungry gap' (January - April) before natural food resources become available.

How does this help my farm business?

A diverse farmland bird population is a sign of a healthy farmed environment. Look out for target seed-eating farmland birds such as; Linnet, Corn Bunting, Grey Partridge, Yellowhammer and Tree Sparrow, using the feeding sites – they'll find them quickly!



B20-04

Grant value: £3250/tonne

£650/tonne received as 5 annual payments. 5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



Eligibility

Up to 3 tonnes per year per farm can be applied for.

This option is not designed to feed game birds, such as Pheasants and Red-Legged Partridge. Whilst these can undoubtedly benefit, the aim is to feed smaller farmland birds.



Agreement holders are encouraged take part in the **'Big Farmland Bird Count'** annually (see bfbc.org.uk).

B20-04 Feeding farmland birds

Specification

- Spread the supplementary feed mixture on the ground twice per week between 1st December and 30th April. Use at least two separate locations. For example, 50kg per week (bi-weekly application) x 20 weeks = 1 tonne.
- Spreading feed when it is raining or very wet can increase wastage hugely. Similarly when conditions are really cold and tough there is a need to increase feeding regularity and amount.
- Select feeding areas that are firm and free-draining, e.g. farm tracks or hard standing and preferably in close proximity to existing favourable habitat (e.g. hedgerows, game covers/winter bird food plots, woodland). Ensure that access to these sites does not cause undue soil damage.
- The mix should comprise a maximum of 70% cereal (Wheat, Barley, Triticale) plus 4 of White millet, Red millet, Linseed, Oilseed rape, Canary seed, Niger seed or Sunflower hearts.
- Ground based feeders are not permitted. Specialist farmland bird feeders are permitted, but the majority of seed must be spread.
- Tailings should not be used as supplementary feed.
- To ensure that clean and healthy feeding areas are maintained, you should move feeding sites regularly when necessary, and avoid close proximity to farm buildings or wet ditches where rats might be an issue. Farm tracks and drier areas work better and cause fewer problems.
- If registered as organic, the feeding mix should comply with organic standards.
- Agreement holders are encouraged take part in the **'Big Farmland Bird Count'** annually (see bfbc.org.uk).

Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the annual claim:

- Details of mixture used
- Invoice for components of the mixture bought in and records of own seed used
- Diary of feeding dates and locations - a minimum of 1 months diary evidence is required in order to claim
- Amount of feed
- Mapped location of feeding areas
- 'Before' photos of the tracks that are going to be spread
- Photographic evidence of supplementary feeding in progress on farm and mixture used.



© Phipps Farm Partnership

Diverse herbal leys

How does this help environment?

Diverse herb rich swards, with a mixture of grasses, herbs and legumes, provides habitat and food for pollinators and other invertebrates, which in turn provide food for farmland birds and mammals. Herbal leys can be highly beneficial to soil health, increasing biological activity and organic matter content. Improved water permeability through the action of the deep rooting plants can reduce surface runoff.

How does this help my farm business?

As part of a sustainable and diverse rotation herbal leys can provide multiple benefits to the farm. They provide valuable protein and mineral rich fodder for livestock, nitrogen-fixing legumes enhance soil fertility and deep rooting plants improve soil structure and organic matter content. They can greatly increase the resilience of the soil, such that it is better able to hold moisture in a dry period, cope with heavy rains without leading to surface runoff and allow a wider window for field work. Certain herbs like Forage, Chicory, Birds-foot trefoil can have an anthelmintic effect, possibly reducing the reliance on key active ingredients in livestock drenches.



B20-05

Grant value: £1500/ha

Full payment received in first year.
5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



Eligibility

The total area must be retained for the duration of the 5 year agreement, the option can be moved around the farm (and best for the farms rotation if it does), but the same area must be retained. If the option is moved, new maps of the location will be required by your local Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

This option should be only be used on temporary grassland or cultivated land.

It is not an appropriate option for permanent pasture.

Do not use where evidence or records exist for important arable plants, or adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see **Magic.gov.uk**).

No minimum or maximum areas are given for this option - this will be reviewed annually at time of scoring applications.

Speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor about eligibility.

B20-05 Diverse herbal leys

Specification

- Establish a mix of at least 5 grasses, 3 legumes (include Bird's-Foot Trefoil) and 5 herbs and wildflowers in the first year of the agreement. Please consult your agronomist and/or chosen seed merchant for advice on establishment of this option. The sward should aim to achieve a 10% cover of Red Clover and an additional 10% cover of other legumes, herbs or wildflowers.
- The sward can be managed by cutting and/or grazing. This option is providing greatest biodiversity value when it is allowed to flower and management will need to allow this.
- The herbal ley should be allowed to flower and sward diversity must be maintained.
- Mob or rotational grazing work well, set stocking is not allowed. If the herbal ley is for hay or silage it must not be cut until the majority of Red Clover has flowered and try to ensure that the whole area is not cut all at the same time. Consider leaving some areas uncut.
- Livestock can preferentially graze species such as Red Clover and Chicory, which will decline if their crown is grazed too tightly. These two plants can also decline naturally over the five years, whilst the grasses can become too dominant. Diversity must be maintained if the herbal ley is to deliver its full range of benefits. It might be necessary to re-establish the sward or look at over-seeding during the 5 years.
- Flowering can continue into late summer and plants such as Chicory and Plantain provide some useful seeds for early winter, consider leaving some areas uncut going into the winter.
- Speak to your Agricultural Advisor regarding pesticide and fertiliser use. Herbicides are only permitted to spot treat or weed wipe injurious weeds, invasive non-native species, soft and hard rush, Stinging nettles and bracken.



Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with your claim:

- Invoices for seed mix used
- Maps showing location of herbal leys (if the option needs to be moved, new maps of the location will be required)
- Photos of the diverse ley in flower are particularly valuable evidence that the ley is working well. These should be taken annually and sent to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.

Wild flower margins and mini-meadows

How does this help the environment?

This option goes some way to mimic our traditional native wild flower meadows, 97% of which have been lost in the UK since World War 2. It provides areas of flowering plants in an arable landscape, which provide essential food sources for beneficial pollinators and habitat for invertebrates that will feed farmland bird chicks in the summer. If managed correctly this option will provide a more lasting and natural habitat than the annual pollinator mix. These native flower margins and mini-meadows can get better year after year and should not need re-establishing.

How does this help my farm business?

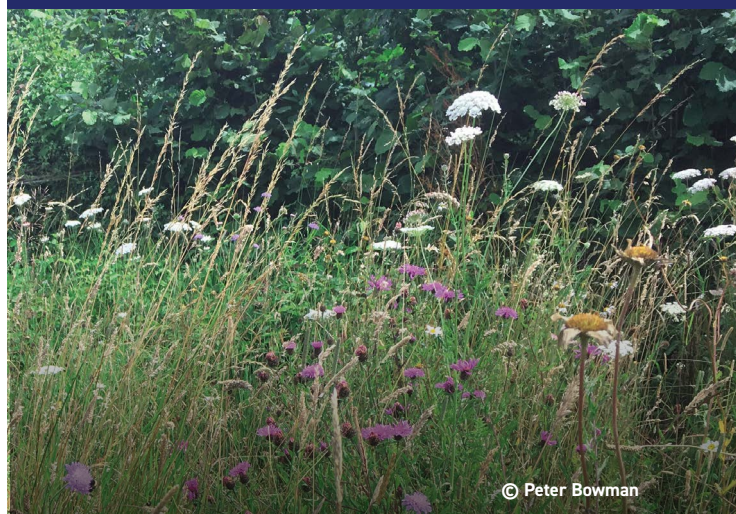
Native flower mixes can attract and support natural predators of crop pests, benefitting the adjacent crop. Wild flower margins and mini-meadows will benefit from sympathetic grazing and hay cuts, potentially adding value to the farm business. This option works well for taking out awkward areas and making field work more efficient.



B20-06

Grant value: £2500/ha

Full payment received in first year.
5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



© Peter Bowman

Eligibility

The option must be established in the first year and managed in the same location for the remainder of the 5 year agreement.

This option should only be used on cultivated land, not a suitable option for permanent pasture.

Sward diversity must be maintained.

Do not use where evidence or records exist of important arable plants or adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see **Magic.gov.uk**).

Speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor about eligibility.

B20-06 Wild flower margins and mini-meadows

Specification

- Establish a mix containing both native wildflowers (minimum 10%) and native grasses (maximum 90%).
- Robust wildflowers that are most likely to establish well should be used. These include, but are not limited to, at least 10 different species from; Bird's-Foot Trefoil, Common Sorrel, Ribwort Plantain, Self-Heal, Yarrow, Wild Carrot, Meadow Buttercup, Ox-Eye Daisy, Black Knapweed, Lady's Bedstraw, Field Scabious, Wild Red Clover and Musk Mallow. Yellow/Hay Rattle can usefully be added to the mix as it reduces the vigour of grasses allowing better establishment of broadleaves.
- Non-competitive grasses might include Smaller Cat's-Tail, Sweet Vernal Grass, Common Bent, Crested Dog's-Tail, Sheep's Fescue, Smooth-Stalked Meadow Grass. Red fescue is more appropriate for neutral grassland. Sheep's Fescue is associated with acid/peat or calcareous soils.
- The mix can be established on all soil types and in most locations, but it works best in south or south-southwest areas with a sunny aspect. Speak to your seed merchant about soil types and fertility.
- The mix can be sown either in spring or late summer, depending on ground and weather conditions. Options for weed control are limited once established, so aim for as clean a seedbed as possible.
- Seeds need to be broadcast or surface drilled, any deeper than even 1cm can adversely affect establishment. Best results can be achieved by rolling before and after sowing.
- In the first year of establishment be prepared to cut the area a minimum of 4 times, to a height of 5cm when the area reaches 15cm in height. If practical, grazing with sheep in the autumn may aid establishment.
- In the second year set out to replicate the simple traditional late season hay cutting that has maintained wild flower meadows for centuries:
 - Do not cut before 15th July and leave until 15th August one year in 3, but please speak to your Severn Trent adviser if the season dictates that you need to cut earlier
 - Cuttings should be removed otherwise rank grasses, docks and thistles can out compete the flowering plants
 - 90% of the area should be cut and removed every year, leaving 10% uncut will leave some wild flowers and long grass to act as a refuge for overwintering invertebrates
- Aftermath grazing in the autumn, if practical, will reduce grass vigour and create small areas of bare ground allowing new seedlings to establish. If grazing is not practical, a light scarification in the autumn can work
- The area should come into spring as a short turf, allowing wild flowers to emerge ahead of the main grass growing period. If the area is not grazed, this is best done with a late winter mow (before March 15th) however it is important to ensure that any ground-nesting birds or hares are not disturbed.
- The location and extent of this option is down to the applicant and their Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor. When used as a margin, these should be at least 6m wide. Mini-meadows could be sited in field corners, used to straighten tramlines in awkward fields and alongside watercourses. Consider how this option could be used to complement existing farm habitats and improve wildlife corridors around the farm.
- You should not drive on the wild flower mix area apart from essential management.
- Do not use pesticides or fertilisers.
- Herbicides are only permitted to spot treat or weed wipe injurious weeds or invasive non-native species, Stinging nettles and bracken.
- Speak to your local Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor for further advice about this option.

Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the claim:

- Invoices for seed mix used
- List of species and the percentage of these within the seed mix.
- Maps showing location of mix areas
- Photos taken when these areas are flowering are particularly good evidence that the option is working well.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works. Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.



Bee and bird food

How does this help the environment?

This mix benefits early emerging pollinators as well as farmland birds. It provides an abundant supply of pollen and nectar rich flowers for early emerging pollinators in the first spring after establishment, and other invertebrates which additionally form part of the diet of farmland bird chicks in their early days. The supply of small seeds then helps to feed farmland birds during the 'hungry gap' (December to April) in the second year after establishment before natural food resources become available in the late spring and summer.

How does this help my farm business?

A diverse farmland bird population is a sign of a healthy food chain at work on the farm. An autumn sown mix can offer better establishment opportunities on heavier soil types. Early established mixes provide habitat for beneficial insects which can benefit your crop establishment, and reduce your reliance on pesticides.



B20-07

Grant value: £2500/ha

£500/ha received in 5 annual payments.
5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



Eligibility

Only to be used on cultivated land.
It is not an appropriate option for permanent pasture.

The total area must be retained for the duration of the 5 year agreement. The option can be moved around the farm but the same area must be retained. If the option is moved, new maps of the location will be required by your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

B20-07 Bee and bird food

Specification

- Establish as soon as possible after harvest and before 15 September, in year 1 and year 3 of your 5 year STEPS agreement, by sowing a seed mix containing a minimum of six flower species and five seed-bearing crops.
- To maintain seed and flower provision, retain for 2 years after establishment.
- Seed-bearing crops include Winter Wheat, Winter Triticale, Winter Barley, Fodder Radish, Kale, Gold of Pleasure, Rye. The mix must contain at least 1 non-cereal.
- Flower species include White Clover, Crimson Clover, Bird's Foot Trefoil, Common Vetch, Phacelia, Common or Black Knapweed, Rough Hawkbit, Wild Carrot and Ox-Eye Daisy.
- Check with your seed merchant for the best mix for your soil type and situation.
- Plots can receive 50kg per ha of nitrogen in the first spring after establishment to help increase seed production in the following winter.
- Top the whole or half of the established mixture between mid-February and mid-March in the second spring after sowing, to promote legume flowering during early and mid-summer.
- Retain until 15th August in the second summer after sowing.
- The option area returns to the farm rotation on 15th August, which allows time to incorporate any legume biomass to promote healthier soils before drilling the next crop.
- If a following spring crop is planned, the bee and bird food mix should be left in the ground until the crop sowing year begins, to maximise the nutrient and soil conditioning benefits of the sown plants.
- Do not graze.

Evidence

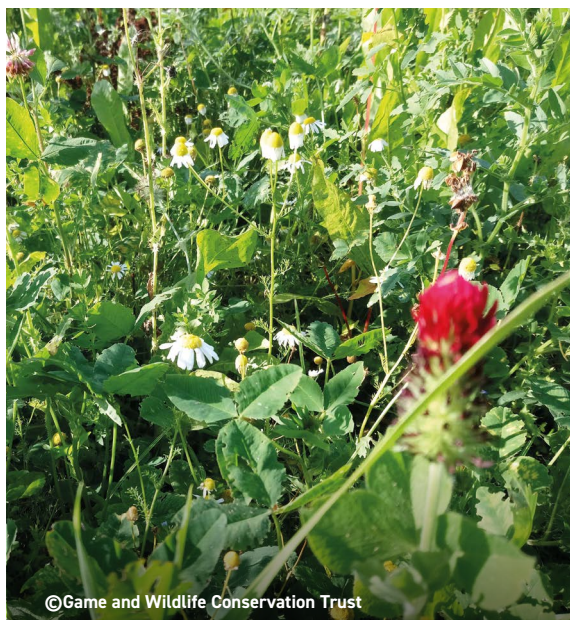
- Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the claim:
 - Invoice for seed mix used
 - Maps showing location of mix areas.
- Photos of the bee and bird food option in flower over summer and in seed over winter are particularly valuable evidence that the option is working well. These should be taken annually and sent to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.
- If the option needs to be moved and re-established, new maps of the location will be required.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.



Flowering summer catch crop

How does this help the environment?

This option provides areas of flowering plants to boost essential food sources for beneficial pollinators, as well as invertebrates, which will feed farmland bird chicks in the summer. Depending on sowing time and management, these areas can still be flowering into autumn, when most other flowering species will have faded, greatly extending pollen and nectar availability. As a spring sown crop this option may attract ground nesting birds in suitable locations. There are wider environmental gains as well; soil life will be enhanced, and carbon will be sequestered into the soil.

How does this help my farm business?

Planting a range of quick growing species, with different rooting depths and growth habit, will harvest and recycle soil nutrients, improve soil structure for the following crop, and any legumes will provide some free Nitrogen. Flower mixes will attract and support natural predators of crop pests, and support native pollinators, essential for oilseed rape and beans.



B20-08

Grant value: Total £750/ha

£150/ha per year (claimed annually for 5 years). 5 year agreement - must maintain the same area for 5 years.



Eligibility

Only available on cultivated land.

This option is designed to be rotational, so can be moved around the farm, but the agreed area must be established each year for 5 years.

Do not use where evidence or records exist for important arable plants or adjacent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (see [Magic.gov.uk](https://www.magic.gov.uk)).

Speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor about eligibility.

B20-08 Flowering summer catch crop

Specification

- Establish a mix containing at least 5 of the following; Crimson Clover, Red Clover, Berseem Clover, Persian Clover, Phacelia, Buckwheat, Sunflower, Common Vetch, Radish, Mustard.
- The catch crop should be retained until the majority of plants have flowered (and for a minimum of 10 weeks after sowing) before destruction with herbicides or cultivations or livestock.
- Check with your seed merchant and agronomist for the best mix for your soil type, position in your rotation and seeding/cultivation options.
- Seedbed preparation needs to retain as much soil moisture as possible. Super shallow cultivations and direct drilling work well where soil conditions are reasonable.
- Establish in spring or summer following the guidance of your seed merchant and agronomist.
- Once sown, no fertilisers or herbicides should be necessary, but pernicious weeds need to be controlled via spot-spraying. Slugs can be an issue for catch crops, but metaldehyde slug pellets should not be used.
- Method of destruction of the crop in the autumn should be considered early. Excessive cultivations following destruction of the crop will greatly reduce the soil improving potential of this option. Direct drilling and leaving residues at the top of the soil profile work well.
- The option can be sown in spring to replace failed crops/bare fallow or sown by mid-August after harvest to provide green cover prior to autumn drilling.
- Volunteers should be considered. For interest look at: vimeo.com/294141014
- Speak to your local Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor for further advice.

Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be included with the annual claim:

- Invoices for seed mix used
- List of species and the percentage of these within the seed mix
- Please take photos when these areas are flowering of established plots.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.



Enhancing diversity in existing grasslands

How does this help the environment?

The UK has lost 97% of its wild flower meadows since World War 2. This option aims to restore plant diversity on grasslands with low biodiversity value. If the grassland can be managed as a meadow, rather than a grazed sward, flowering will benefit pollinators. The greater structural diversity of meadows will also benefit a huge range of invertebrates, mammals, birds and amphibians.

How does this help my farm business?

Almost all grassland habitats are reliant on some form of agricultural activity, so new habitats can be created and livestock production can be continued. Hay made from wildflower meadows may contain more stalks than we are used to these days, but is still highly palatable and nutritious. Boosting the area of flowering plants, especially native ones, on the farm will increase populations of both crop pest predators and beneficial pollinators.



Due to the risks with this option, an assessment by your Agricultural Advisor is required in the 1st year to assess site suitability. If deemed suitable, a plan will be produced, which you are expected to follow in order to obtain payment.



B20-09

Grant value: £2000/ha

Full payment received in first year.
5 year agreement – must retain the same area for 5 years.



Eligibility

This option should only be used on permanent pasture with low biodiversity value and where active intervention is required to enhance it. Suitability is at the discretion of Severn Trent.

Suitable grasslands are those that may still have some native grass diversity.

Grassland habitats are the product of long-term low intensity farming. This option will be targeted to those applicants that show clear commitment to the long term care and management of these fields.

Depending on your site and proposals, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) may be required from Natural England.

Speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor about this option.

B20-09 Enhancing diversity in existing grasslands

Specification

This is a multi-year option unlike any of the other options offered within STEPS. In the 1st year, you are required to have a Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor visit your site, to deem whether it is suitable for this option. Your site should have more than 50% perennial Ryegrass and White Clover in its present state, in order to be considered. Additionally, it should have less than 10% cover of wildflowers and sedges - discounting any White Clover, Creeping Buttercup, and injurious weeds.

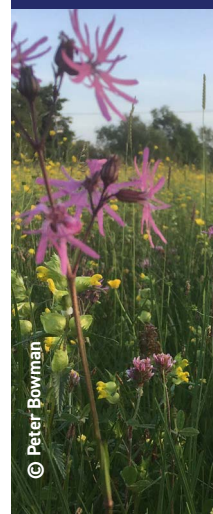
If this visit deems your site to be suitable for this option, your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor will produce an 'Enhancing Existing Grassland' plan, which will detail the steps required to enhance your site to obtain its full potential. Your 5-year agreement begins after you have received this plan and signed a STEPS agreement. You will receive the full payment for the 5-year agreement in the first year to facilitate the restoration and management requirements in the first year.

This process is to allow truly suitable sites to be identified, to maximize the levels of success of restoration of the habitat. It also allows your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor to consult with Natural England or the county Wildlife Trust. Considerations include:

- **Green hay:** the use of green hay from a nearby species-rich grassland is the preferred method of introducing new seed. It is a tried and tested method, can be more affordable than a purchased mix and is the best way to ensure that new meadows are actually characteristic of their local area. However due to suitability, provenance and biosecurity of the seed source, this method can only be used with the approval of the Severn Trent Ecology team.
 - Restoring the plant diversity of fields close to areas of existing species rich grassland can be particularly valuable and makes the option of using green hay that much simpler. Projects adjacent to SSSIs will need to consult with Natural England, who will be supportive and just need to be satisfied that the genetic integrity of the site is respected, hence the preference for using green hay.
- **Purchased seed:** sadly, really good species rich grasslands are few and far between and the option of using green hay might just not be possible. Where it is decided that the best restoration technique is to bring in purchased seed, it must be truly UK native, ideally locally native, and must be agreed with your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.
 - Be particularly careful about the provenance of species such as Red Clover, Birds-foot Trefoil and Ribwort Plantain. Improved cultivars of these can find their way into mixes to make them appear more affordable. These improved cultivars are very different from our native plants, generally being much larger and less persistent.

When your agreement starts, set out to replicate the simple traditional late season hay cutting and aftermath grazing that has maintained our finest wild flower meadows for centuries (this will be detailed in your plan):

- Do not use any artificial fertilisers
- Herbicides can be spot sprayed only
- To allow seed to set and spread, do not cut before mid-July and try to leave until mid- August every 1 year in 3, but please speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor if the season dictates that you need to cut earlier
- To further aid seed spread, the field should be made for hay and not silage. Cuttings must be removed otherwise rank grasses, docks and thistles can out compete the finer flowering plants
- Consider leaving approx. 10% of the field uncut to leave some wild flowers and long grass as a refuge for overwintering invertebrates, but this area should be moved around the field to avoid the above concern
- Aftermath grazing in the autumn, if possible, is highly beneficial and creates small areas of bare ground allowing new seedlings to establish. If grazing is not practical, a light scarification in the autumn can work almost as well



STEPS B20-09 Enhancing diversity in existing grasslands

- The area should come into spring as a short turf. Early bite grazing is beneficial, but the meadow should be shut up by mid-April or Hay/Yellow Rattle (an annual often referred to as 'the meadow maker' as it suppresses grass growth) could be grazed out.
- After photos on an annual basis, showing areas in flower. This is evidence that the option is working well and should be sent to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor
- Written proof of UK native provenance for any purchased seed. Suppliers should be signed up to and follow the Flora Locale Code of conduct.

Evidence

Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the claim:

- Where required, evidence of permissions for work (Environment Agency permits, Natural England EIA)
- Soil tests should be taken in year 1 to determine site suitability (please speak to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor if you require these). Please keep a copy and forward the results to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor for their records
- Maps showing location of option areas
- Photos showing conditions of managed areas and when green hay is being spread or seed sown, etc

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.





Spring sown bird seed crop



How does this help the environment?

The supply of small seeds will help to feed farmland birds during winter and, when combined with supplementary feeding, continue providing food through the 'hungry gap' (late winter months and early spring). This ensures not only a greater winter survival rate, but also allows birds to come into spring in better condition for breeding.

How does this help my farm business?

A diverse farmland bird population is a sign of a healthy farm environment. This option has been introduced to compliment B20-07 Bee and bird food option which is sown in late summer/autumn, mainly for pollinating insects. This new option offers seed for farmland birds through the winter following sowing, critical for their over-winter survival. A spring sown crop will offer good cover for many ground-feeding birds and can also replace traditional game covers, which can offer little diversity for other farmland bird species, particularly if the dominant crop.

Supplies farmland birds with food throughout the winter months. Should where possible be used with other farmland bird options such as supplementary feeding.



B21-01

Grant value: £2500/ha

£500/ha/yr. received in 5 annual payments. 5 year agreement – must maintain agreed area for 5 years.



Eligibility

Only to be used on cultivated land or rotational grassland.

This option is not permitted on permanent pasture.

The agreed area must be retained for the duration of the 5 year agreement. The option can be moved around the farm, but the same area must be present each year. If the option is moved, new maps of the location will be required by your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.

Maximum areas are at the discretion of Severn Trent, but as a rule, an area of 2% of your farmed area as a seed rich crop has been shown to have a positive impact on farmland bird populations.

B21-01 Spring sown bird seed crop

Specification

- Seed crops must have a minimum width of 6m, and the area applied for within the whole application must be a minimum size of 0.5ha.
- Dependant on the season, it is recognised that your agreement might arrive later than the ideal sowing time in the first year. It is essential, however, that the agreed area is managed to benefit farmland birds for the full 5-year period.
- Sow a seed-bearing mix in the spring or early summer each year. If Kale is included in the mix and establishes well, it can be left for a second winter.
- This option works best in sunny locations but can be used anywhere on the farm. Think about how to link up plots with existing habitat.
- Seed-bearing crops include Wheat, Triticale, Barley, Fodder Radish, Kale, Gold of Pleasure, Quinoa and Millet. Check with your seed merchant for the best mix for your soil type and situation, and for the ideal timing for sowing.
- The mix must be made up of at least 5 species, at least 3 of which must be non-cereals, to ensure small seeds are present. No single species should make up more than 80% of the mix. Agreement holder input is welcomed, if you wish to sow a different mix, discuss with your Advisor.
- Plots should receive at least 50kg per ha of nitrogen to help increase seed production.
- Failed crops will need to be re-sown.
- To maintain seed provision for as long as possible, do not cultivate the areas before 15th March.

- Consider combining this option with B20-04 Feeding farmland birds, and/or using the plots for supplementary feeding.

Evidence

- Please provide with your application, Ensure that the following records are retained and can be provided with the claim:
 - Invoice for seed mix used
 - List of species and the percentage of these within the seed mix
 - Maps showing location of mix areas
 - Before and After Photos, showing the locations and conditions of established areas.
- Photos of the bird seed crop in seed over winter are particularly valuable evidence that the option is working well.
- Photos should be taken annually and sent to your Severn Trent Agricultural Advisor.
- If the option needs to be moved and re-established, new maps of the location will be required.

• Please provide before and after photos

Before photos - showing the location of the works to be carried out prior to that work being undertaken.

After photos - showing the completed works.

Photographs should be taken from the same position, and the location of which should be marked on an accompanying map.

A June sown mix of Quinoa, White and Red Millet, Linseed, Buckwheat and Triticale.





Dedicated support and advice

In addition to the Severn Trent requirements for each STEPS option, you should also be aware that all works undertaken must conform to UK legislation and you should consult the relevant authority or guidelines to check you comply. Some things to consider are detailed on pages 46-47 along with additional resources.

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What do I need to supply with my application form?

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Q What is a priority catchment?

A These are specific areas across the region where we abstract water to treat and use for drinking water. We abstract water from surface rivers, reservoirs and groundwater drinking water catchments and boreholes. These are often at risk due to specific forms of diffuse pollution from farms. In particular groundwater sources are most vulnerable to nitrate pollution while surface waters are at most risk from pesticide pollution.

Q What is the availability of a grant?

- A** ST will pay the fixed costs offered in the handbook for each of the items.
- There is no maximum value of biodiversity items which can be applied for in STEPS. However, for applications that exceed 50ha, you are required to enter into a formal partnership agreement with us. Please ask your Agricultural Advisor for more details.
 - You may apply for several items but they must all be submitted under one application.
 - Biodiversity items are available to applicants who have previously implemented a water quality priority item.
 - Grants will only be available to farmers and landowners who farm within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment and/or farm within one of the ST priority 'source protection zones' (SPZs). Please contact your ST Agricultural Advisor (contact info at start of handbook) or you can email the Severn Trent Catchment Team at farming4water@severntrent.co.uk
 - The location of the priority water quality STEPS items must be within the Severn Trent priority catchment. Items located outside these catchments cannot be funded. STEPS for biodiversity items may be outside the priority catchment.
 - We will not fund any item directly linked to a regulatory requirement.
 - We will not fund any infrastructure or project which is also receiving money from another grant scheme. An applicant can only apply for a ST grant in addition to another grant where they fund different items.
 - We will not fund the costs of any maintenance, normal wear and tear, or direct replacements of capital items.

FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions

Q Are there any other factors that are taken into account when applications are being assessed?

A Yes - applications will be prioritised according to the following:

- Location of the farm within our catchments
- Biodiversity benefit
- The award of STEPS grants are not influenced by any other interaction between a farm business and ST, for example where construction may have taken place on agricultural land. STEPS grants shall not function as a means of compensation or payment for these activities
- Past engagement with ST Agricultural Advisors
- Attendance at ST workshops over previous years.

Q When will I get paid?

A Upon completion of the works, obtain a claim form from your ST Agricultural Advisor. Claim forms should be submitted to ST, accompanied by photographic evidence and valid receipts.

- All grant funding is awarded as a single payment when all works are completed.
- ST is unable to make part payments.
- Should an applicant be unable to install certain items in their agreement, grant funding may only be claimed for the work which has been completed.
- Unclaimed funding either for uncompleted works or those which have not been started, cannot be held and rolled over to subsequent STEPS rounds.

The deadline for submission of evidence is March 1st.

Q What do I need to supply with my application form?

A You need to supply the following with your application form:

- A brief description of the farm enterprise
- An overview of the work planned and the environmental reason for undertaking this work
- Timescales for completion of the project

- Photographs of site prior to commencing work
- Farm maps which display the farm boundary, and the site location for works being undertaken
- Dated quotes for items applied for under 'Farmer innovation'
- Copies of your farm map(s) that display:
 - The boundary of your holding;
 - The location of the proposed scheme on your farm map, mark an 'X' on the map along with STEPS item code;
 - A national OS grid reference (gridreferencefinder.com), or valid postcode, marked for the scheme location.

Note: If applying for a fence/track, draw the proposed line on the map. For an example map, please ask your Agricultural Advisor.

Q Will my farm be subject to STEPS inspections?

A Yes, inspections and checks will be carried out at a farm level by ST to ensure that all funded items have been completed as per your application. All applicants can expect a farm inspection within a 5 year period from joining the STEPS scheme.

Q Will I be guaranteed entry to the STEPS following my application?

A No, submission of an application does not guarantee approval. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to biodiversity and water quality, together with other factors such as location, value for money and previous engagement with the catchment team.

Q Can I apply if only part of my farm holding falls within a ST drinking water abstraction catchment and/or within one of ST priority 'source protection zones' (SPZs)?

A Yes.

Q When is opening/closing date for the application period?

A The application period is open until April 18th.

Q Where can I get a claim form?

A By contacting your ST Agricultural Advisor.

FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions

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How much
can I claim?

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Q When will I be informed if my application is successful?

A Applicants will be informed within 6 weeks of the application closing date. Once written confirmation has been received, applicants may commence work on their STEPS item(s).

Q What happens if my application is unsuccessful?

A You will receive a formal letter outlining the reasons for your declined application. Depending on your application you may be encouraged to apply next year.

Q When does the work have to be completed by?

A All STEPS project work must be completed and claim forms/evidence received by ST by March 1st 2022.

Should you be unable to complete or start the works, your application will not automatically be accepted for the following STEPS round, although you will be encouraged to reapply.

In exceptional circumstances applications may be granted a short extension however this cannot be guaranteed.

Farm management items must be completed in accordance with that specified in the handbook.

Q When will I receive funding?

A Successful applicants are entitled to claim their funds once work is completed.

Applicants are required to provide evidence of completed work by March 1st. All successful applicants will receive their funding by March 31st.

Q What happens if the work is not completed on time or the standard of work does not meet the required specifications?

A Depending on the circumstances you may not receive the funded grant money. It will affect your application for grants in subsequent years.

Q How much can I claim?

A There are fixed costs for each biodiversity item. Please see the STEPS Options Handbook for these values. There is no upper or lower limit on the area or value that can be applied for in your application. Please note that second hand material including refurbished items should not be purchased under STEPS. VAT will not be paid if you are VAT registered. If you are not VAT registered, your VAT can be included.

Q The handbook says that a STEPS item needs a specialist advisory visit. What is this and do I need one?

A Yes, some items require a bit more planning and or management in order to provide the greatest benefit to your business and the environment. Specialist advisory visits by industry experts help to provide this information and can be arranged for free by your Agricultural Advisor. If you have already had a visit from an expert e.g. through Catchment Sensitive Farming and can show that your plans are sufficient, additional visits may not be required.

Q Am I entitled to apply for grants from other organisations?

A Yes. However, grants can't be combined with other funding sources for the same work in the same location. This is known as 'double funding'. Failure to acknowledge this may result in both grants being reclaimed. Examples of such funding schemes include:

- Environmental Stewardship
- Countryside Stewardship
- Paths4Communities
- Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme
- LEADER Farm Productivity Grant
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid
- Woodland Grant schemes
- Energy crops.

Q Can the location of the STEPS biodiversity item be changed?

A Yes, but only under certain conditions. You must inform ST of the change, and provide a written explanation for your actions with updated evidence. You will then receive a letter of approval. Depending on the item, the relevant authorities may also have to be informed (County Councils, EA, etc.) and new planning permits may have to be submitted. If you change the location of the STEPS capital item and do not inform ST you may liable to a penalty.



FAQ's Frequently Asked Questions

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Why are ST funding Biodiversity options?

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Q Do consents and permissions need to be given and investigated before submitting the STEPS application?

A Yes, see your STEPS handbook for reference. Written consent(s) from a relevant authority may be required with your application. You must enclose a copy of it with your application or in some cases, and with permission from ST, advice and consent can be received up until 15 days after the application deadline; applicants can discuss this with their Agricultural Adviser. ST won't be able to process your application until we receive these.

Q Can I withdraw my application after I have been successful?

A Yes, Please contact your Agricultural Advisor for advice. Written or electronic confirmation that you wish to withdraw will be required.

Q If my STEPS application is successful, will this affect further applications to the grant scheme in subsequent years?

A No. STEPS operates on an annual basis. Applications are prioritised through our scoring system which recognises the likely benefit to biodiversity and previous engagement with ST.

Q Will I receive a notification that my application has been received?

A Yes. All applicants will receive a notification that their application has been received within 2 weeks.

Q Why are ST funding Biodiversity options?

A ST recognises that water quality and the wider healthy environment are explicitly linked, therefore by improving biodiversity and taking an integrated farm management approach allows us to look at our catchments in a holistic way. We also know that farmers are very keen to protect wildlife and their habitats, and we wish to support them in doing this.

Q Is there a limit to the number/amount of biodiversity options that I can apply for?

A No, you can apply for a mixture of biodiversity options in each grant window, however applications will be scored based on their biodiversity value.

Q What are the water quality priority items for my catchment?

A Priority items may differ across each of the priority catchments - contact your Agricultural Advisor for details of the priority items in your area.

Q Will my farm be subject to inspection of STEPS-funded biodiversity options?

A Yes. Any prospective applications should be discussed with your Agricultural Advisor. Evidence of all work will be required, and could include invoices, maps, or "before & after" photos.

Q Will any biodiversity monitoring be required on my farm?

A Monitoring of biodiversity before, during and after item implementation is an optional service that we can provide. If you're interested in having monitoring in place on your farm, let your Agricultural Advisor know and they can discuss the options with you. Any monitoring is likely to be carried out by an external party/biodiversity specialist, and will not be available to everyone.

Q What happens if my biodiversity option does not establish, or requires re-establishment during the agreement period?

A If establishment of your item fails, it may be necessary to re-establish the sward during the agreement period. This will be at your own cost, but may be moved to a new location to aid establishment. Please liaise with your Agricultural Advisor.

Q What can I claim if my biodiversity item does not establish after 2 attempts?

A If you are subject to a 5 year agreement, you can claim for your first year costs. If you are subject to an annual agreement, you can claim for the cost of your seed. In order to claim one of these part payments, evidence must be provided of seed invoices, as well as that which shows that you have followed and sought your seed merchant/ agronomists advice. You must liaise with your Agricultural Advisor throughout the agreement period.

Q What if I have an issue with a biodiversity item that is not covered within the items guidance?

A Please liaise with your Agricultural Advisor if you encounter any issues with the biodiversity item(s) that are not detailed in the guidance.



Useful resources and help

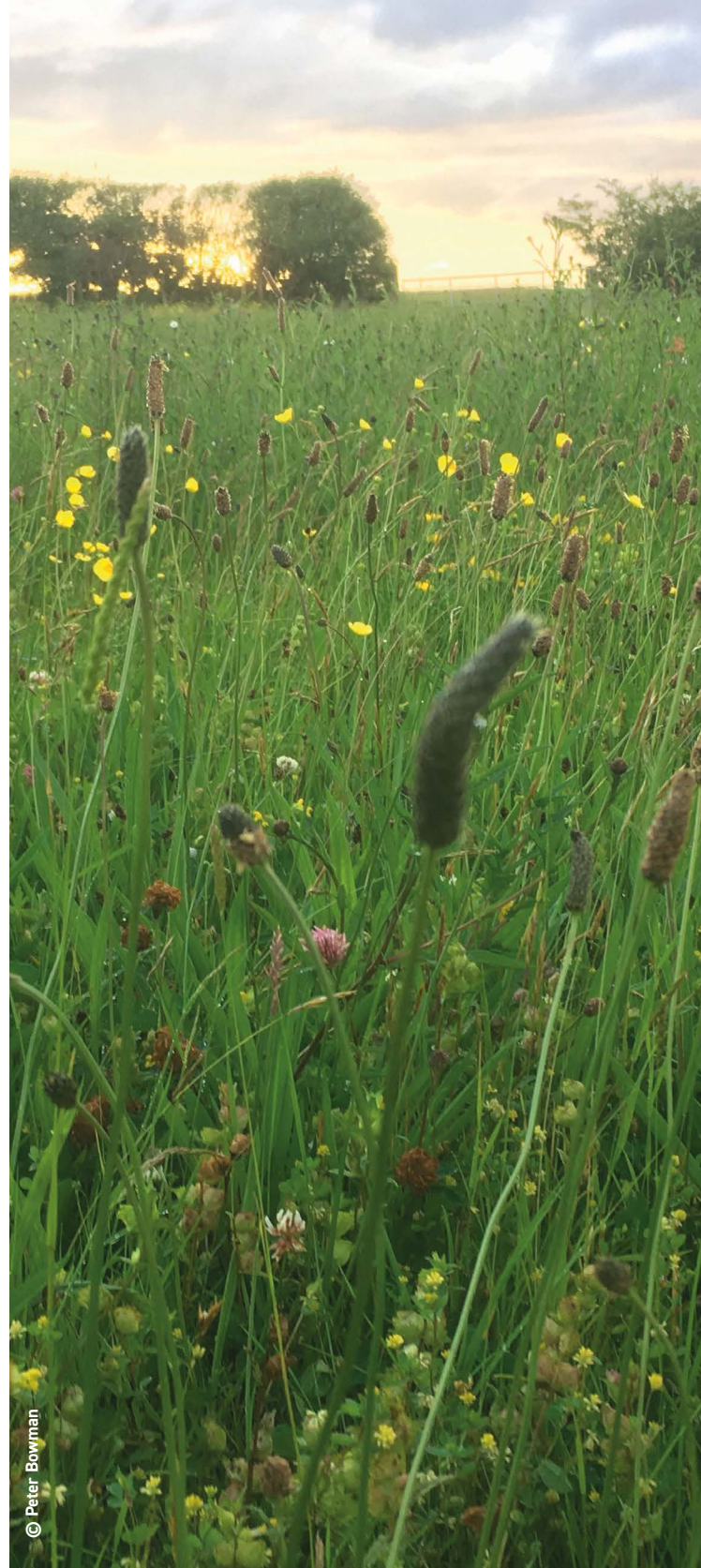
For in-field works or groundwork

Work must be undertaken and installed in accordance with:

- **Protecting our Water, Soil and Air:**
A Code of Good Agricultural Practice for farmers, growers and land managers (CoGAP)
- **Groundwater Protection Code:** Use and disposal of sheep dip compounds; and any higher standards that apply
- Any crop sown created for Ecological Focus Area (EFA, CAP greening criteria) cannot be claimed under STEPS. EFA is a regulatory requirement which cannot be funded by STEPS. For guidance to the Basic Payment Scheme, go online and search for BPS.
gov.uk/government/collections/basic-payment-scheme

Work carried out near the top of a river bank may require flood defence consent. Depending on the size of watercourse you should consult the Environment Agency Telephone **03708 506506** or email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

- Please consult with your Internal Drainage Board and your Local Authority.



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Applicants must also consider the work's impact on the landscape.

If your work affects any of the following you will need consent from Natural England or from the relevant authority:

Natural Environment:

- Protected Species, such as Great Crested Newt and Bats species
- SACs
- SPAs
- Ramsars
- National Nature Reserve (NNR)
- Local Nature Reserves
- Protected sites e.g. Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), N2K.

Historic environment:

- Listed Building
- Scheduled Monument
- Registered Battlefield
- Registered Parkland
- Registered Battlefields.

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