

# Land Business Update

Week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022

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## Farming

### Take part in the CLA and Strutt & Parker's 'Future of Farming' survey

The survey aims to capture farmer attitudes to some of the new schemes being introduced, identify how farms and estates are trying to build resilience and explore how receptive land managers are to the idea of land use change. The results will feed into the CLA's advocacy work and will also be published at the CLA's *Reimagining Land Use* event on 14<sup>th</sup> September. Click [here](#) to take part. All responses will be treated in complete confidence.

### Funding up to £3,700 now available to Scottish farmers through the Farm Advisory Service

The funding will help farmers access specialist advice from farming advisors. The funding can be used for various services, including:

- **Integrated Management Plans (ILMPs)** – a farm advisor will provide a detailed analysis of the farming business. 80% of costs toward ILMPs is claimable, capped at £1,200.
- **Further specialist advice** – farmers can choose to receive further specialist advice on two different topics, selected from a total of 13 topics available. This includes carbon audit action plans and soil and nutrient management.
- **Mentoring for new entrants** – up to four days of free support from a farm advisor.
- **Carbon Audits** - £500 available to farmers to carry out farm carbon audits.

Strutt & Parker advice: we strongly encourage all farmers to have a carbon audit done, particularly given the direction of travel of future support payments towards enhanced environmental conditionality. Our [blog post](#) summarises the funding available and more information on the various schemes is also available on [here](#).

### New Slurry Infrastructure grants to open in England in the autumn

The first round of this new grant, which covers 50% of costs, aims to help livestock farmers upgrade their slurry storage and nutrient management systems. [Guidance is already available](#) so that farmers can prepare in advance. There will be a two stage application process – an on-line checker, which takes about 10 minutes to complete; if selected, applicants then have to submit a project plan. If you would like to discuss the grants or nutrient management, please contact [Paul Dennison](#).

### Call for evidence on immigration and agriculture

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration is holding an enquiry on the interaction between the UK immigration system and the agricultural sector. It will include assessing the effectiveness of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Pilot. The call for evidence is open until 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## Environment

### New Zealand's plan to tax livestock methane

A new initiative to tackle climate change has been announced by the New Zealand government. In a bid to reduce its emissions from agriculture, which accounts for almost half of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions, the government is working on an 'effective emissions pricing system', which would mean that farmers could start having to pay for their livestock's methane emissions from 2025. The money raised will be invested in R&D and advisory services for farmers, and incentives to reduce and offset emissions, such as tree planting, will be encouraged. New Zealand was one of the signatories at COP26 to the initiative to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030. S&P comment: this is evidence that NZ is serious about delivering what they committed to.



## Rural economy and property

### Planning policy changes should make conversion of disused farm buildings into residential properties easier

The government has announced a large number of new policy proposals on housing. There is not much detail on many of the proposals yet. A proposal that will be welcomed by many land owners is making it easier to convert disused agricultural buildings into homes for local first-time buyers. Other proposals include:

- A greater emphasis on using publicly-owned brownfield land for housing to use.
- Unlocking small sites for 'unobtrusive development that communities welcome'.
- A review of the mortgage market, reporting this autumn.
- Extending the right to buy to housing association tenants. This has had a very mixed reception, especially from housing associations.

### Vineyard land remains in strong demand

UK vineyard land is attracting premium prices, with ground suitable for planting selling for £15 - 25,000 / acre and land with established vines selling at £30 - 35,000 / planted acre. In the last five years, the UK has seen a 70% increase in the land area under vines, according to WineGB. UK winemakers are making at least four times as many bottle of wines as they were 20 years ago. Demand has been strong in south east England and it is growing in East Anglia, which has the right climate and soil type for vines. Read [our latest blog](#) about this growing niche market.

### Parish councils can get six months free membership to the Rural Village Services Group

Parish councils play important roles in enabling communities survive and thrive. This new group, which is part of the Rural Services Network, aims to provide its parish council members with information, tools, connections and experience so that they can generate better outcomes for their communities. Send an [email to this address](#) to join.

### Platinum Jubilee Grant Fund for rural community buildings

This new £3m fund, financed by the government, is to part-fund capital improvements to rural community buildings. The Fund is being administered by ACRE, which managed the previous Village Halls Improvement Grant Scheme. Details of what can be funded will be announced shortly but expressions of interest can be made [here](#). It is expected that funding will support improvements to energy efficient by renewing roofs, windows and heating systems, alongside extensions to provide more space for community activity.

### Rural businesses – new report from NICRE on enterprise development highlights that nuanced approach is needed

The National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise has published a report on rural businesses and what they need to thrive. It is based on a survey of over 3,500 businesses in three regions. It is extremely well-timed as it provides some of the best available evidence to government on what businesses outside big towns and cities need so that their opportunities are 'levelled up'. The report concludes that:

- Rural businesses say that their 'infrastructure indicators' – which are broadband, transport infrastructure, local services and availability of affordable housing - are worse than for urban firms.
- Having high quality broadband is the most important of the 'infrastructure indicators' that affects the resilience of businesses. However, having the full breadth of the other 'infrastructure indicators' is important too.
- There were material differences between how the businesses operated in (i) the three English regions studied and (ii) between more and less remote areas.

Given this, the report emphasises the need for a flexible and nuanced approach to policies aimed at addressing enterprise development. It makes the case for everyone – including central and local government – to base policies on a deep understanding of the infrastructure challenges in each area, as one size will not fit all. Strutt & Parker is delighted to be a founding commercial partner of NICRE.