

Land Business Update

Week commencing 1st May 2023

Forestry

Join our masterclass on Woodland Creation!

John Clegg & Co, in partnership with the Forestry Commission, is running a [Masterclass on Woodland Creation](#) on 8th June 2023. Reasons to plant trees are numerous, including the opportunity to generate new income streams and improve business resilience. During the masterclass, our forestry advisers along with representatives from the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust, will be discussing:

- how to diversify businesses with woodland creation and the financial benefits from it
- which grants are available
- the environmental benefits that result from tree planting.

The session will take place in person at the Alice Holt Research Station in Surrey and will also be recorded. For the agenda and to book your place, please [click here](#).

Farming and the environment

Scotland tightening TB control

New legislation will be introduced on 18th May 2023 to protect Scotland's TB free status, which was declared by the European Commission back in 2009. Stricter rules will include:

- Pre-movement tests for eligible cattle coming from higher risk areas to be done within 30 days (down from 60 days) prior to entering Scotland.
- The pre-movement tests will also apply to cattle coming from lower risk areas but that have spent any part of their lives in a high risk area.
- Reduced compensation for farmers for unclean cattle slaughtered for TB control purposes (to encourage better animal health and welfare).
- Reduced compensation for cattle not properly isolated.

If you have any questions about these changes, please contact [Mary Munro](#), our Head of Farming for Scotland.

Net zero targets for farming and land use very likely to be missed

Analysis by WWF has found that emissions reductions from farming and land use are likely be less than half the level expected by the government's original net zero strategy. For the period 2023-2037, farming is expected to be 38% behind target; a reason for this is that the government still has not produced a decarbonisation plan for the sector. Tree planting is expected to be 85% behind target, as tree planting rates are currently half of what is needed. Peatland restoration is expected to be 80% behind target, again due to lower rates of restoration than expected.

Environment

The government may be taken to court for a second time on the inadequacy of its net zero strategy

Friends of the Earth, the Good Law Project and ClientEarth argue the government has not properly considered the risk of its policies failing to deliver emissions cuts. The government has not published a formal risk assessment but its carbon budget delivery plan, published in March, showed that it only had 'high confidence' in policies covering 40% of emissions cuts required by the 6th carbon budget. This is linked to the article we included in the last edition of LBU which covered the leaked story that Defra had assessed 21 of its 44 net zero policies as 'red' or hard to achieve. The Times has also challenged the government in its failure to disclose estimated emission savings of individual measures in the net zero strategy.



Over half of global GDP depends on nature

Over 55% of global GDP is moderately or highly dependent on natural resources and ecosystem services, according to a new assessment by PWC. More than half of the market value of listed corporates on 19 major stock exchanges are exposed to physical nature risk.

Property and rural economy

Proposed policies for EPCs could see higher fines for landlords and new higher spending limits

It was announced a few weeks ago that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities will be removing the upper limit on fines for landlords whose properties fall into disrepair. This is one element of the Renters' Reform Bill, which will be debated in parliament over the next few weeks. To date, the government had remained very quiet on the outcome of the consultation of the Bill, but The Telegraph recently reported a range of potential changes to the EPC system, including:

- All rental properties must have an EPC rating of C or above by 2028 (previously, new-builds had to meet this criteria by 2025).
- Landlords can be fined up to £30,000 if they do not comply with the above.
- The spending cap on improvements to a property to meet EPC requirements increased to £10,000, from £3,500.

Landlords also need to be aware that any MEES exemptions they had that started in 2018 will expire this year. Read our blog on this topic [here](#). If you have any questions about EPCs or MEES, please contact [Alexander Macfarlane](#) or [Sarah Roberts](#).

Scotland's consultation on second homes and holiday lets

The Scottish Government is consulting on the level of Council Tax on second and empty homes, and non-domestic rates thresholds. Views are being sought on:

- Giving local authorities the power to increase the council tax rate by 100% or more on both second homes and long-term empty homes.
- For the purpose of non-domestic rates, whether self-catering accommodation thresholds are appropriate or should be amended.

The consultation will run until 11th July 2023, and you can respond online [here](#). The full consultation paper is accessible [here](#).

Electric vehicle charging network providers group together to form ChargeUK

The eighteen providers created the trade association in order to push the remove the barriers to installing more chargers, which are bureaucracy, permits, planning permission and getting a grid connection. There are currently 40,000 chargers installed and this is expected to double by the end of 2023. The government's stated target is to have 300,000 public chargers available by 2030, which is the year that the sale of cars with internal combustion engines will be banned in the UK.