

County Farm Estate Management Plan

2016 – 2021

Farming for the Future



Dorset County Council

Working together for a strong and successful Dorset





Foreword

Cllr. Hilary Cox
Chair of the County Farms
Liaison Panel

It has been a real privilege working closely with our tenants, Councillors, other farming related organisations and the County Farms Team during the consultation on this Management Plan which sets out our aims for the future of the County Farm Estate.

By being actively involved in the rural economy we are acutely aware of all the problems faced by rural communities, with our tenants often being at the forefront of these pressures.

The radical changes to the Estate implemented since 1999 have reduced the number of holdings, but without the loss of a significant amount of land and the reinvestment in buildings has transformed our farms. We have, in short, an estate which we can be proud of and holdings that offer the best possible start to a farming career.

The Estate supports the living, working countryside by providing employment and recreation, contributing to the local economy and providing a healthy financial return for the residents of Dorset.

Nothing ever stands still and there will no doubt be many more future challenges, but by working together I am confident that the Estate has a clear sense of purpose and is fit for whatever lies ahead.



Foreword

Mike Harries
Director of Environment and
the Economy

County Farms have a long history and in most parts of the Country have shown considerable resilience to change and have delivered a variety of purposes from the late 19th century onwards.

For most of this period, Dorset has had its own modest (in size) estate which has seen a large number of tenants start, develop and grow their farming businesses.

Pressure on the farming sector, especially dairy farms, is high and our tenants continue to thrive through a combination of their (and their families) hard work and determination and through the County Council's continued commitment to ensuring the Estate operates on a commercial basis.

This approach has served tenants, the County Council and local taxpayers well as we continue to generate a revenue surplus and sufficient capital receipts to both re-invest in the farms and to invest in other assets, such as schools and roads.

This latest Management Plan sets out how we plan to continue with this flexible, commercial approach, working hand in hand with our tenants and other partners.

Introduction to the County Farm Estate

Dorset County Council's County Farm Estate extends to over 2,500 ha (6,400 acres) and comprises of 48 tenanted farms.

Dorset County Council's Corporate Aims

Dorset County Council's vision is for a strong and successful Dorset. The priorities to achieve this are Enabling Economic Growth and Promoting Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding.

The County Farm Estate can play an important role in helping to deliver both of these corporate priorities.

By creating a thriving and progressive County Farm Estate which supports individual agricultural businesses the County Council enables economic growth both directly into the county's agricultural sector and also indirectly into the numerous related businesses which support the farming industry.

The 63 km of public rights of way which cross the County Farm Estate can help local people become more active and provide direct access to Dorset's unique countryside. This can help improve both public health and wellbeing.

The County Council has set out its commitment to the County Farm Estate in the Asset Management Plan 2015-2018 stating *"The*

authority will retain the County Farms Estate judiciously improving it where appropriate, support its tenants and will seek to grow the operational surplus that it generates."

Estate Background

In 2011 the County Farm Estate celebrated its centenary year, although much of the Estate was acquired in the 1920's to provide smallholdings in order to help settle ex- servicemen returning from the First World War.

Nearly a century on the Estate underwent the most radical transformation in its history. The 1998 Management Strategy provided the policy framework for the County Farms Estate Property Review. The Review set out a programme to rationalise and modernise the Estate.

Through the Property Review core farms (farms for long term retention) and non-core farms (farms where consideration will be given to amalgamation or possibly sale at the end of the tenancy) were identified. Capital receipts raised from the disposal of non-core farms have funded the necessary improvements of the core farms. It also has provided a flow of capital receipts into the County Council's Corporate Capital Programme. As the review nears its completion the focus for the Estate has now turned to providing a sustainable income for the County Council.



Estate Consultation 2015

This Management Plan is the result of an Estate wide consultation held during the summer of 2015. The views of Estate tenants and new applicants were captured using a variety of methods including face to face interviews, questionnaires, working groups and question and answer sessions.

In addition to this a number of local agents connected to the Estate were interviewed. The culmination of the consultation was an industry led workshop with both senior and local representatives of the Country Landowners and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Tenant Farmers Association and Dorset County Council Tenant's Representatives.

This Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in the Association of Chief Estate Surveyors and Property Managers in the Public Sector (ACES) Rural Branch publication, Local Authority Rural Estate Asset Management Planning: Good Practice Guidance November 2015.

Case Study – Jonathan Stanley

Jonathan Stanley and his wife Clea are the tenants of Allens Farm and in 2013 won the New Entrant - Against the Odds Award at the British Farming Awards.

The award was to recognise farming's new entrants who have overcome challenges to set up a successful business.

What the Judges said: "Jonathan and his wife Clea were hit with relentless problems which could have killed a young business, but now TB Clear, with a new parlour installed and an enviable milk price and performance costings which bring him into the top 3% in the country for the breed, Jonathan epitomises the challenges faced as a new entrant starting from scratch. Further growth and further success is inevitable for this uncompromising and resolute farmer."



Estate Aims and Objectives

Section 39 of the Agricultural Act 1970 states:

‘the statutory aim of smallholding authorities is that in performance of their functions they shall, having regard to the general interests of the agriculture and of good estate management, make it their general aim to provide opportunities for persons to be farmers on their own account by letting holdings to persons who satisfy the requirements set down in law.’

The aims and objectives of the Estate, listed below, combine these statutory requirements with the County Council’s aims, as well as encompassing good estate management principles:

- a) To provide a ‘gateway’ into agriculture for people to farm on their own account promoting the integration of good environmental and farming practices whilst ensuring a financial return to the County Council;
- b) To sustain rural communities by supporting the living, working countryside and providing opportunities for greater public access and understanding of agriculture and the countryside.

Estate Governance

Estate governance is provided by the County Farm Liaison Panel. The Panel is a non-decision making body reporting to the Director for Environment and the Economy on matters of interest to the County Farm Estate. The panel meets 3 times per year.

The Panel comprises of 5 elected members together with local representatives of the Country Landowners and Business Association, National Farmers Union, Tenant Farmers Association and Dorset County Council’s County Farm Tenants.

Representatives of the Panel are also involved with the selection process for new tenants.



The Perrett Family, Shortwood Farm

Management Policies

Estate Policy

Statutory Smallholdings

In 2013 Defra's Future of Farming Review recognised the value of County Farms to the agricultural industry and as a critical entry route for young farmers. It is therefore important that the Estate is maintained as a Statutory Smallholdings Estate in order to provide the first rung on the farming ladder.

POLICY

The Estate will be run and maintained as a Statutory Smallholdings Estate in accordance with Part 3 of the Agriculture Act 1970 and successive legislation.

Classification of Farms

Previous Management Strategies have provided for a 2-tier classification system of starter and promotion holdings. This system generally works well allowing new entrants to start on smaller farms with progression to a larger promotion unit where opportunities arise. However, it is dependent upon larger farms becoming available.

POLICY

- a) Core Farms on the Estate will be classified as either starter or promotion holdings;
- b) The County Council will aim for a ratio of 1 starter holding to 2 promotion holdings.

Length of Tenancy

With the aim of encouraging new entrants into farming to progress through and off the County Farms Estate, it is necessary to offer starter farms on shorter-fixed term tenancies. This sends out an

important signal to new entrants that the tenancy is only guaranteed for a fixed period during which they are expected to develop their business and to actively seek another holding.

Promotion farms will normally be offered on a longer fixed term tenancy based upon good estate management and to reflect the specific circumstances of the letting such as the amount of investment required in the farm by the tenant.

If the system of encouraging tenants to progress is to work then there should be no automatic renewal of a tenancy. This policy would encourage tenants to focus on seeking alternative farms. However, it is recognised that a tenant's individual circumstances should be considered before a decision is made not to renew a tenancy and that where possible tenants be given at least 3 years notice that a lease is not going to be renewed.

POLICY

- a) All farms classified as starter holdings will normally be let for fixed terms of up to 10 years;
- b) All farms classified as promotion holdings will normally be let for fixed terms between 15-20 years;
- c) When setting the length of term due consideration will be given to the anticipated level of repair and maintenance and/or other investment for which the tenant would be liable;
- d) The expectation will be that each tenant will have the benefit of one tenancy term save for tenants progressing from a starter holding to a promotion holding who will have one term on each type of tenancy. Tenants will be reminded of this at least 3 years before the end date of each lease. However, the County Council will consider requests for extensions to occupation in special circumstances. Such requests will be considered on the basis of the individual circumstances of each case, the farming performance of the tenant, the tenant's forward plan and what is

in the best interests for the management of the Estate. Consent to remain will normally be by way of a further fixed term tenancy. It is expected that the maximum term on the Estate would be no more than 35 years and only extend beyond the statutory retirement age in exceptional circumstances.

Enhancement of Estate

For the Estate to fulfil its aims farms should be of the highest quality and productive as possible. Ideally this means that the County Council would provide fixed equipment to enable a tenant to become established and therefore have the opportunity to build up enough capital to progress to a larger holding (on or off the Estate).

Since the introduction of the property Review in 1998 this policy has proved successful for both the County Council and the Estate. This has resulted in significantly improved holdings, which command high levels of interest when available to let and an improved financial return to the County Council.

POLICY

- a) The County Council will continue to support the Estate's improvements and reinvestment programme allowing the Estate to retain 100% of all capital receipts it produces below £15,000 and 50% of all capital receipts above £15,000;
- b) That, where appropriate, farm management plans will be prepared in partnership with the tenant to identify both the landlord's and tenant's aims as to how the farm will develop during the tenancy.

Repairs and Maintenance

Historically repairs and maintenance on the Estate has been in accordance with the 'Model Repair Clauses' as introduced by SI 1473 of 1973 and as amended.



New Livestock Buildings at Vale View Farm

The Model Clauses split repairing and replacement obligations between Landlord and Tenant, with the provision for the Landlord to recover certain costs from the tenant for work carried out. In recent years the Model Clauses have become outdated and there has been confusion as to which party is liable.

The way repairs and maintenance is dealt with for all future tenancies will now change. The Model Clauses will be replaced with a simpler system where the Landlord will remain responsible for the main structural elements of all buildings, electricity and asbestos removal. Tenants will now be empowered to take on the responsibility for all day to day repairs and replacements. These changes will allow tenants greater independence. A summary of the allocation of repair liabilities is shown in Appendix A.

It is acknowledged that these changes cannot be applied retrospectively to existing leases. However, the County Council wishes to encourage as many existing tenants as possible to switch to the new system. On this basis it may be necessary to incentivise

this switch by offering a reduction in rent and/or an extension to the term of the lease to reflect the additional liabilities where appropriate on a holding by holding basis.

Regardless of which party is liable, both the County Council and its tenants need to ensure that the farms are maintained to a high standard. Poorly maintained farms create a bad impression of the Estate. The tenancy agreement sets out standards of maintenance and husbandry and the respective responsibilities of landlord and tenant. In order to ensure that the farms are maintained in accordance with the tenancy agreement a rigorous policy of inspection and enforcement where required will be adopted. A tenant's failure to comply with their maintenance obligations may lead to service of notices and ultimately to repossession.

POLICY

- a) For all new tenancies the Landlord will be responsible for major repairs to the main structural elements of buildings, electrical supplies and asbestos. Tenants will be responsible for day to day repairs and maintenance;
- b) The Director for Environment and the Economy will take such action as is necessary to ensure that high standards of maintenance and husbandry are complied with;
- c) The County Council will encourage and incentivise existing tenants to change to the new repairs and maintenance system by offering a rent reduction and/or an extension to the term of their lease where appropriate on a holding by holding basis.

Dilapidations

A dilapidation claim can be made by the County Council against a tenant on vacating the farm for items which the tenant has not maintained in accordance with the terms of the tenancy agreement, e.g. weed encroachment, broken gates, poorly decorated farmhouse. The County Council retains these funds until the ingoer has

completed the outstanding remedial works. The ingoer is then reimbursed the agreed sums.

POLICY

- a) Only where an ingoing tenant can put forward a sound business case will a proportion of the dilapidation funds received from the outgoing tenant be made available to the ingoing tenant at the commencement of their tenancy. The amount will be at the discretion of the Director for Environment and the Economy;
- b) Dilapidation funds will normally be released to the ingoing tenant at such time as the works to which they relate to are completed to the County Council's satisfaction within the agreed timescale;
- c) At the end of the tenancy dilapidation claims will be dealt with in accordance with terms of the lease and relevant legislation;
- d) A schedule of condition of the holding will usually be prepared and agreed at the start of the lease.

Acquisition of land

The strategy of reducing the number of holdings and selling surplus property to fund changes and improvements is a key part of improving the viability of the Estate. However, the process of balancing the viability of the remaining holdings, maintaining rent levels and capital investment value, while realising capital receipts cannot be maintained indefinitely. It is therefore considered good practice to actively pursue options for investment in land which offer significant improvement to the Estate and/or the possibility of substantial future capital receipts.

The Property Review approach to generating funds for re-investment from within existing resources would still apply, but should allow a proportion to be re-invested in land when suitable opportunities arise. This could include the purchase of land close to

Case Study – James Macpherson

James and Louise Macpherson moved from Staffordshire in 2012 to begin farming in their own right at Burley Road Farm. Since taking the farm on they have not looked back. In a very short time they have developed the top herd of British Friesian cows in the country with 3 of their bulls standing at a leading international stud. In addition to this they have won the title of best managed large dairy herd from their local agricultural society for the last 2 years running.

James said “We are first generation farmers, starting in 2012 from scratch with 5 heifers. Now in a relatively short space of time we have established our business and expanded to 150 cows in milk, fulfilling our ambition to build a top quality dairy herd.”



existing holdings or with long term development potential. This land can improving holding viability, until such time as opportunities arise to maximise capital receipts from development.

POLICY

The County Council will acquire land where it is in its interest to do so by establishing an opportunity purchase budget funded from a proportion of future surplus property sales.

Diversification

Well-conceived diversification ideas can complement the primary agricultural business and provide useful additional income.

POLICY

Any diversification or additional business run on the holding must have the prior approval of the County Council.

Estate Management

Selection of Tenants

The existing policy is that there is no age limit for new applicants. Statute dictates that applicants must have not less than 5 years practical experience of farming of which 3 years may be on a full-time education course.

Applicants will be required to provide evidence that they possess sufficient capital resources to enable them to satisfactorily farm the holding. Financial references will be sought before the applicant is interviewed. In addition each applicant must submit a business plan for the interview panel to consider. It may also be appropriate to see copies of any previous trading accounts and to visit the short listed applicants prior to the selection interviews.

Existing Dorset County Farm tenants on starter farms who are suitable, would normally be given preference for promotion farms, to encourage progression within the Estate.

An Interview Panel will be formed to assist the Director for Environment and the Economy in appointing tenants, comprising of:

- a representative of the Director for Environment and the Economy;
- 2 elected members;
- where possible (in an advisory capacity) a co-opted member from the National Farmers' Union, Country Landowners Business Association, Tenant Farmers Association or a Dorset County Council Tenant's Representative.

Applicants are required, in their applications, to state what level of rent they would be prepared to pay. The Director for Environment and the Economy determines the rent for starter farms, as well as the length of term, based upon the data received and advises the applicants accordingly before the interview.

For promotion farms, subject to all other matters in the selection of the tenant being equal, the amount of rent offered should normally be the determining factor in the appointment of the tenant to ensure that the best consideration has been obtained. In applying this policy the Interview Panel will weigh up the level of rent on offer against an applicant's experience of farming, business plan and other factors including willingness to improve public access and conservation value of the farm. However, there may be circumstances where in order to secure the best available tenant it may be necessary to let the farm at less than the highest rent offered.

POLICY

- a) There will be no age restriction on applicants for farms, however the length of term granted will only be extended beyond the statutory retirement age in exceptional circumstances;
- b) Financial references will be obtained prior to interview and the interview panel must be satisfied that the successful applicant has

sufficient capital resources available to farm the holding in accordance with the business plan;

- c) Existing County Farm tenants will normally be given preference for promotion farms;
- d) Rents of new starter farm tenancies will be market rents set by the Director for Environment and the Economy prior to interview;
- e) The County Farms Interview Panel will comprise of 2 elected members of the County Farms Liaison Panel and a representative of the Director for Environment and the Economy and where possible in an advisory capacity one of the co-opted members representing the Dorset County Farms Tenants' Association, the National Farmers' Union, Tenant Farmers Association or the Country Landowners and Business Association;
- f) For promotion farms all applicants will be required to state the rental figure which they would be prepared to pay and that subject to all other matters being equal the amount of rent offered will normally be the determining factor in the selection of the tenant;
- g) All members of the interview panel will be appropriately trained.

Relatives Succeeding Tenant

Lettings by the County Council do not entitle relatives to any succession rights. However, legislation dictates that where a County Farm was let before 1984, close relatives must be considered for the tenancy should the tenant die. They will, however, have to meet the criteria for selection of tenants and be interviewed in the normal way, along with other candidates.

POLICY

Consideration will be given to existing County Farm tenants relatives but no preference will be afforded to them except where there are compelling reasons for good estate management.



The Trowbridge Family, Provost Farm

Tenants Farming Additional Land and Providing Additional Buildings

It is recognised that some tenants will farm additional land and erect buildings on the farms for their own use during the tenancy

POLICY

That tenants will continue to be granted consent to farm or own additional land or to erect additional buildings providing that there is no detrimental effect to the aims and objectives of the Estate.

Financial Hardship

It is recognised that the agricultural industry is of a cyclical nature and some tenants may therefore find themselves, from time to time, in need of support due to circumstances outside their control. Tenants are encouraged to approach the County Council in the first instance should they require financial support.

POLICY

- a) The County Council will fund independent financial advice where appropriate;
- b) Tenants will be encouraged to assist in contributing in kind to building projects on their farms;
- c) Payment of rent will be rescheduled where appropriate;
- d) Where further support is appropriate, a panel of members will be formed to interview the tenant and where appropriate the Director for Environment and the Economy may consider an abatement of rent.

Payment of Rent

Traditionally agricultural rents are paid six months in arrears. For farms let before 1995 i.e. Agricultural Holding Act tenancies, the rent must be paid within 2 months of the landlord serving a notice requiring the rent to be paid. Failure to pay the rent within two months after a notice demanding payment has been served could result in an effective notice to quit being served.

For tenancies let after 1995, i.e. Farm Business Tenancies, rent must be paid within 7 days of the due date. Interest will accrue on late payment. Failure to pay the rent within 28 days could result in the tenant forfeiting the lease. Farm Business Tenancies allow more flexible terms to be agreed between the parties. On this basis a number of tenants have requested that they be allowed to pay their rent by monthly instalments. This has worked well for both the County Council and the tenants.

POLICY

- a) For existing tenants with a record of prompt payment, the rent demand will be issued in accordance with terms of the tenancy agreement;

- b) Tenants of Agricultural Holding Act tenancies who persistently pay late will be served a 2 month notice to pay the day after the rent is due;
- c) For late payment where the tenant has not sought or the County Council has not agreed an extension of time to pay rent (or where delayed payment continues beyond an agreed period) action will be taken to terminate the tenancy and to charge interest on the overdue amount;
- d) Provision of facilities for payment of rent by instalments will be encouraged;
- e) Rent for all new leases will be paid by monthly instalments in advance.

Links with Private Landowners/Estates

Tenants are encouraged to progress off the County Farms Estate on to privately let farms. Promotion of the County Farms Estate and its tenants through the creation of links with private and institutional landlords helps to facilitate progression of tenants. Such links should be pursued by both the County Council and its tenants through their Tenants Association and via the Country Landowners and Business Association.

POLICY

The County Council will continue to proactively establish links between private landowners and the County Farms Estate to assist tenants progression.

Animal Welfare

Both the County Council and its tenants have a responsibility to ensure that conditions are provided for livestock to be properly looked after. Close links with Trading Standards, the County Council service responsible for Animal Health and Welfare, are maintained.

The County Council has approved a Farm Animal Health and Welfare Charter and this is attached at Appendix B.

The County Council will not tolerate poor standards of animal welfare.

POLICY

All County Farm tenants will be expected to comply with the County Council's Farm Animal Health and Welfare Charter.

Hunting/Sporting/Culls

Tenants are permitted to decide whether or not hunting/culling takes place over their holdings, provided the hunt/cull is within the law.

Fishing and sporting rights are let separately from the farms with the aim of improving income from the Estate.

POLICY

- a) Only legal hunting/culling will be permitted on the Estate Illegal hunting/culling will not be authorised or condoned
- b) Fishing and sporting rights will be reserved by the County Council and let separately from the holdings;
- c) The County Council will not condone the use of snares on its land.

Case Study – Edward Goodfellow

Ed Goodfellow of Higher Silkhay Farm laid his first hedge when he was 12 under the watchful eye of his father. Since then he estimates that he has laid over 50 miles of hedgerows.

Along the way Ed has won numerous local competitions. More recently he has had success at the National Hedgelaying Championships, winning the Dorset style class.

Ed also uses his wealth of experience to teach novices through events run by the Melplash Agricultural Society.

Ed said “Although hedgelaying is hard work it is very rewarding to see what you have achieved in a day and the dramatic and positive effect you have had on the landscape.”



Conservation

Good conservation practices e.g. creation and preservation of hedgerows, ponds, woodland and riverside habitats have a high importance, and will need to be included as a feature of any Farm Management Plan. It is also recognised that the conservation of natural resources, such as water, play an important role in the preservation of the natural environment. The County Council will help and encourage tenants to apply for conservation grants.

POLICY

- a) The conservation potential of each farm will be developed and, where appropriate, new conservation measures will be introduced in consultation with tenants;
- b) At the change of tenancy a conservation assessment will be carried out for each farm and an implementation plan put in place.

Bovine TB

The following motion was agreed at Full Council on 18 July 2013:
This Council recognises the serious and damaging impact which bovine TB has on animal welfare and the economics of farming. The County Council also recognises that dealing with the problem of bovine TB is a matter for the Government and Parliament at national level and, locally, for the County Council's tenant farmers under the conditions of their tenancies.

The Council urges the Government to be led by the best available science in finding a solution to the problems associated with bovine TB and, when implementing a solution, to ensure that it is the most humane available.

POLICY

The County Council will respect and support the individual wishes of tenants as to whether they wish to participate in any TB eradication scheme proposed by the Government.

Public Image

It is important for both the County Council and its tenants that the general public have a good perception of the Estate.

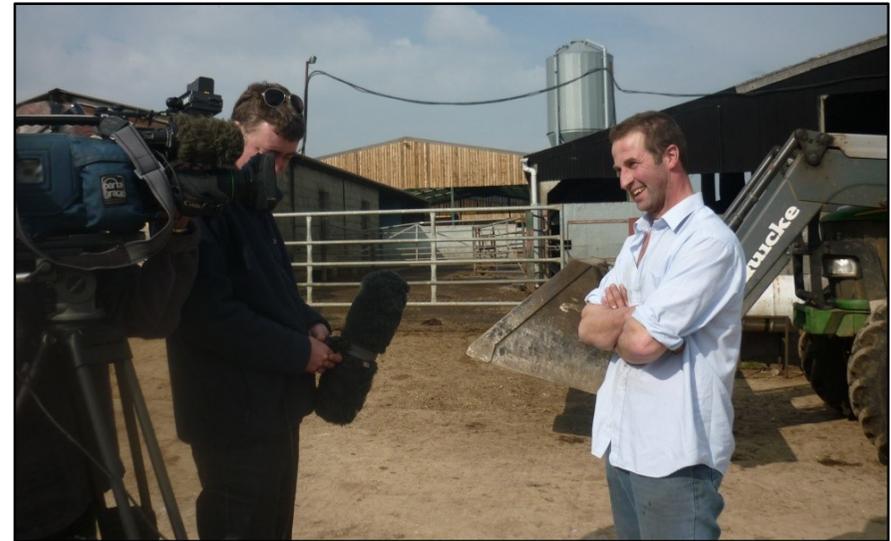
The County Council is receiving increasing media interest and enquiries regarding the County Farms Estate as its reputation and that of its tenants continue to grow.

Tenants, who are successful when entering agricultural competitions, should be encouraged to advertise their links with the Estate. At local agricultural shows prizes are often awarded by companies who are associated with the agricultural industry. This generates useful publicity and the Estate might benefit from offering similar sponsorship.

National events such as Open Farm Sunday are a good opportunity to both educate the general public about farming and to raise the public profile of the County Farms Estate. Tenants will be encouraged to participate in such events.

POLICY

- a) When entering agricultural competitions tenants will be encouraged to advertise their links with the County Farms Estate;
- b) Where appropriate, the County Farm Estate sponsors a prize at the main agricultural shows within Dorset;
- c) Tenants will be requested to assist with press enquires in order to help promote the County Farm Estate and its tenants;
- d) The County Council will encourage all tenants to participate in national events such as Open Farm Sunday in order to educate the general public about farming and to promote both themselves and the County Farm Estate.



Greg Kellaway, Crackmoor Farm, being interviewed for BBC1's politics show



Michael Woodget's, Hunt Corner Farm, prize winning cow Spice Nebraska Tulip

Deer Management

It is recognised that deer management is an emotive and emotional subject. However, as a diligent landowner it is also recognised that a deer management plan is required for the County Farms Estate. Nationally deer numbers are on the increase and Dorset is no exception.

The County Farm Liaison Panel has recognised the increasing importance of having a deer management strategy in place and as such has advocated working with a national association specialising in deer management.

POLICY

- a) The County Council will seek to maintain deer numbers across the County Farm Estate to a sustainable level. Trophy hunting will not be condoned;
- b) Numbers of deer taken and disturbance to tenants will be kept to a minimum;
- c) Anyone carrying out deer management activities will hold appropriate third party liability cover and be appropriately trained or accompanied by someone who is.

Communication with Tenants

The farm walk, during the summer, and the winter meeting between Members and tenants are valuable as a means of communication.

POLICY

A farm walk during the summer will be held each year and when appropriate a winter liaison meeting will be organised.



The Oakley Family, Drones Farm

Community

Parish Allotments

There is currently a renewed interest from the public wishing to grow their own food. As such the demand for allotments around the county is increasing. It is recognised that allotments provide an important link between people and food production as well as facilitating the development of a sense of community. The County Farm Estate can play its role in providing such opportunities.

POLICY

That where appropriate and in the interests of the Estate and the County Council small areas of land will be leased to Parish Councils for Parish Allotments.

Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way are an important link between people and the countryside and provide a valued recreational activity. The County Farm Estate has in the region of 63 km (39 miles) of public rights of way.

As the County Farms Estate sets an example to other landowners, farmers and the public, it is important that all rights of way across County Farms are maintained to a high standard and where appropriate accessible to a wide amount of user groups possible.

POLICY

- a) Rights of Way on the Estate will be maintained so that access is available and of the highest practical standard;
- b) Rights of way will be inspected periodically to ensure they are accessible and all gates and styles are in good working order.
- c) Where appropriate, to work with local communities to enhance the rights of way network on the Estate.

Affordable Housing

The County Council recognises the difficulty caused by the lack of affordable housing in Dorset. The Estate policy is to require a proportion of affordable housing to be allocated whenever appropriate land is sold for development. As the Estate is restructured there may be more opportunities to identify land that could be declared surplus and which may provide affordable housing in sustainable locations, where development may not otherwise be permitted. Officers will continue to be pro-active in this area.



POLICY

Where land is surplus to the Estate's requirements consideration will be given to making the land available for housing development and, subject to the terms of disposal, an element of the housing constructed will be affordable and available to meet local needs

Metal Detecting

Dorset has a rich and unique heritage. Metal detecting can play an important part in making new discoveries and helping us to understand our past. However, in order to ensure finds are properly recorded metal detecting should only be allowed on County Farms if it follows the County Council's Metal Detecting Code of Best Practice (Appendix C), is in the interest of the County and is agreed by the individual tenants.

Case Study – Mark Ford



Although from a farming background Mark Ford's farming career began in 1994 with an apprenticeship opportunity offered by Greg Kellaway, a County Farm tenant at Cross Farm, Buckland Newton.

Greg said " It is a pleasure and very rewarding to see young people develop through the apprenticeship scheme. County Farms has helped me develop my career and so I was glad to help start someone else's."

Mark said "Apprenticeships are a good way to learn practical skills that will set you up for life. You also make some useful contacts."

Mark then went on to work for another local County Farm tenant before a twist of fate saw him awarded the tenancy of Cross Farm in 2005. Mark is now milking 140 cows and farming additional land.

POLICY

- a) Any metal detecting carried out on the County Farm Estate must have the prior written consent of both the Senior Archaeologist and the Senior Estate Surveyor and have the agreement of the individual tenants.
- b) Any consent given by the County Council will be conditional upon the following:
 - i) The detectorist is a member of the Dorset County Council Metal Detectorists Liaison Scheme, and agrees to abide by the Code of Best Practice for Metal Detecting in Dorset.
 - (ii) Detecting is limited to land which has been ploughed recently (i.e. not pasture.).
 - iii) All finds are the property of Dorset County Council.
 - iv) The detectorist is able to demonstrate that finds will be recorded to archaeological standards.
 - v) The detectorist should have reported at least 2 previous years finds to the Dorset Historic Environment Record.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships offer a structured route into agricultural work, building skills and experience to the benefit of employee and employer. It is recognised that County Farms can offer very good placement opportunities for apprentices as they will be working directly alongside the businesses decision maker and therefore have a greater degree of exposure to the decision making process.

The Future of Farming Review highlighted the need for the farming industry to take more responsibility for the education and skills development of the next generation of farmers and farm workers and encourages farmers to support and take up apprenticeship schemes.

By its tenants employing apprentices the County Farm Estate is widening its offer of providing a gateway into farming and also helping to increase the skill base of the local farming industry.

POLICY

All tenants will be encouraged to employ agricultural apprentices. Where appropriate the County Council will provide the necessary support to facilitate this.

Case Study – Holtwood Community Farm

Holtwood Community Farm was set up in 2010 by Nigel and Vanessa Pritchard to enable people of all ages with wide ranging additional support needs to take part in meaningful work activity.

The holding is stocked with pigs, sheep, cattle, free range hens giving those attending experience of working and caring for a wide range of animals. There is also a pony and domestic rabbits, a particular hit with the more autistic visitors for whom animal contact is very therapeutic. As well as the animals there is an acre and half horticultural area where a wide range of produce is grown, for consumption and sale.

The farm employs 4 full time staff, providing the high level of support considered vital for people to achieve success. 60 individuals and 10 school groups attend each week. The farm is a vibrant and thriving working environment always looking to expand the opportunities that are offered.



Appendix A – Allocation of Repair and Maintenance Liabilities

Item	Column A Landlord to Repair and Replace	Column B Tenant to Repair Landlord Replace to	Column C Tenant to Repair and Replace
Fabric of Dwellings and Buildings			
Walls, Structural frames	X		
Cladding			X
Chimney stacks, linings and pots	X		
Roofs and valleys		X	
Bargeboards, fascias and soffits		X	
Internal plaster			X
External render			X
Interior/exterior painting/treatments			X
Ceilings and floor joists	X		
Floors (including floor boards)		X	
Exterior and interior staircases, including fixed handrails and banisters		X	
Doors, windows and opening skylights including frames, sills and all furniture and glass			X
Water, drainage, sewage and slurry			
Water supply systems and fittings below ground			X Tenant able to recover reasonable cost of repairs from Landlord
Above ground water supply systems and fittings			X
Baths, WCs and other sanitary fittings			X
Showers			X
Gutters and downpipes			X

Item	Column A Landlord to Repair and Replace	Column B Tenant to Repair Landlord to Replace	Column C Tenant to Repair and Replace
Drains, sewers, gullies and sediment/grease traps		X	
Septic tanks, cess pools etc (excluding covers and tops)		X	
Slurry, silage and other effluent storage systems		X	
Manhole and inspection chambers, sewage disposal systems (excluding covers and tops)		X	
Drain gratings; removable covers and tops for installations such as slurry handling systems, sewage disposal systems, septic tanks, filtering media, manholes, and inspection chambers			X
Electrical, Gas, Heating and Power Supply			
Electrical wiring systems in general including consumer boards but excluding, sockets, switches, light fittings and similar furniture.	X		
Electrical sockets, switches, light fittings and other fittings on or outside the surface of walls, ceilings and floors			X
Boilers, central heating systems, immersion heaters, heating apparatus, ranges, firebacks, firebricks and grates		X Tenant to regularly service	
Fitted kitchens		X	
Fuel and oil tanks		X	
Fire, carbon monoxide, smoke and similar detection systems		X Tenant to regularly test	
Other Fixed Equipment			
Garden walls, gates and fences			X
Gates, walls, fences floors and surfaces of open and covered yards			X
Fences, hedges and field walls, stiles, gates and gateposts, water courses including ditches			X
Field drainage systems		X	

Appendix B – Farm Animal Health and Welfare Charter

- 1 The County Council also has the responsibility for enforcing the
 - 1 disease control laws in relation to animals,
 - 2 the laws relating to livestock identification and movements,
 - 3 biosecurity rules at markets, shows, animal gatherings and in relation to animal transport and,
 - 4 laws relating to animal welfare during transport and on farm.
- 2 Dorset Council's policy is to monitor and influence the standards of animal health and welfare on farms, in transport, at markets and at slaughter, within the guidelines set by legislation and codes of practice, to ensure that they are protected against cruelty and avoidable pain.
- 3 The welfare of farm animals on the holdings, in transit, at markets or at a place of slaughter may be considered in terms of **“five freedoms”**. These are:
 - 1 **freedom from hunger and thirst**
by ensuring appropriate access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
 - 2 **freedom from discomfort**
by providing a suitable environment that includes shelter and/or shade appropriate to the needs of the farm animal species under the prevailing conditions.
 - 3 **freedom from pain, injury or disease**
by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
 - 4 **freedom to behave naturally**
by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animals own kind where practicable.
 - 5 **freedom from fear and distress**
by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

These freedoms will be better provided for if those who have care of livestock practice :

- caring and responsible planning and management.
- skilled, knowledgeable and conscientious stockmanship
- appropriate environmental design
- considerate handling and transport
- humane slaughter.

- 4 The County Council will look to these freedoms for guidance when exercising its statutory powers in relation to the health and welfare of farm animals.
- 5 The County Council will use its best endeavours to promote and improve the animal welfare standards by taking a fair and balanced account of animal welfare issues in the Council's day-to-day operations, its decision-making process and through influence in association with District councils, voluntary welfare groups and government agencies.
- 6 Although the County Council's role is primarily one of enforcement of its statutory powers, it supports the aim that animals which are used in farming are treated humanely, that in the processes involved all practicable measures are taken to avoid unnecessary distress or suffering and that the five guiding freedoms are observed.
- 7 An important part of enforcing these laws and standards is advising the farming community on these legal requirements. If in doubt farmers can always ask our advice first using the number at the end of this leaflet.
- 8 Statutory powers are contained mainly in the Animal Health Act 1981 which with associated legislation provides the Council's officers with the necessary powers to ensure the control of notifiable disease and the protection of animals whilst in transit and at markets. The County Council will give this enforcement activity appropriate priority. (In doing so it is not within the mandate of this charter to introduce additional measures beyond those requirements already set down by legislation).
- 9 The influencing role of the Council derives from its status as a democratic organ of local government able to reflect the view of the Dorset community which it serves.
- 10 The County Council recognises that it has the ability to influence the animal health and welfare debate and to lead by example through the

way in which it conducts its day-to-day business, by supporting and encouraging where appropriate other organisations with similar objectives.

- 11 The County Council will continue to liaise with the livestock and farming community in general and other interested organisations, including voluntary animal welfare groups, to seek to improve communication and education in farm animal health and welfare whenever possible.
- 12 The County Council will look to the Trading Standards Service and the Corporate Services Overview and Policy Development Committee as the principal committee concerned with animal health and welfare issues and the development of the Charter.
- 13 The Charter is comprised of three areas of activity principally to provide the framework within which new policies can be derived.

Service provision

We will

- employ a core of trained and experienced personnel.
- maintain a 24-hour emergency call-out procedure where there is risk of disease or ill-treatment of animals.
- assist the State Veterinary Service in dealing with outbreaks of notifiable disease.
- arrange for officers regularly to attend every livestock market in the county to ensure that proper attention is paid to the health and welfare of farm animals.
- apply a consistent set of enforcement principles described in the Trading Standards Service's enforcement policy.
- respond to emergency complaints immediately and other complaints within three working days.
- wherever possible, ensure that all infringement reports are completed within three months and that in appropriate cases prosecutions are brought.
- monitor the movements of farm animals throughout the county by random checks at markets, farms, roadside and abattoir checks.
- seek to encourage good practice by maximising publicity where prosecutions are brought.

- prepare and distribute guidance leaflets so as to promote a better understanding of the law.
- increase awareness of the existence of the Department For Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Codes of Practice which provides the basis for compliance with legal requirements.
- encourage and where possible provide appropriate training to persons working with farm animals.
- liaise with the State Veterinary Service in the implementation of Department For Environment, Food & Rural Affairs policies for animal health and welfare.
- liaise with the Rural Payments Agency, the Food Standards Agency and other enforcing agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to farm animal health and welfare.
- develop further links with organisations involved in the livestock trade with a view to improving welfare standards.

Liaison Role

- We will use our influencing role by :
- Liaising with the State Veterinary Service, veterinary profession, representatives of the farming community and livestock industry and other organisations with an interest in animal health and welfare.
- Lobbying Government Departments and other influential organisations to promote improvements in animal health and welfare.
- Reports to the appropriate Committee as necessary.

Developing and maintaining links with :

- SWERCOTS (South Regional Coordinating Body for Trading Standards) Animal Health and Welfare Panel
- Representatives of the farming community
- Livestock industry and other interested parties
- Local Farm Animal Liaison Groups

- Voluntary Animal Welfare Groups

Land Use

In relation to the land and small-holdings owned by the County Council it will ensure that the tenants receive a copy of the Charter and encourage them to comply with its overall objectives.

Trading Standards

The County Council will support the Trading Standards Service in its enforcement and advisory role to promote the highest possible standards of animal health and welfare.

County Council Contacts

Senior Estates Surveyor	Estate & Assets	Telephone: 01305 221952
General Enquiries Trading Standards 24 hr call out	Trading Standards Services In case of disease outbreak or immediate welfare issue	Telephone: 01305 224475 Telephone 07966 800326 or
Station Officer	Fire and Rescue	Telephone: 01305 252092

Appendix C – Code of Best Practice for Metal Detecting in Dorset

- Do not enter private land with the intention of metal detecting without full permission of the landowner and preferably with a written agreement
- Always research your permitted site to familiarise yourself with boundaries and scheduled monuments. It is illegal to use a metal detector on a scheduled monument
- Do not detect within 5 metres of a scheduled monument Report any suspicious sightings or activity to the landowner and authorities without delay
- Try to concentrate detecting to ploughed land and to the depth of the plough soil
- Familiarise yourself with the requirements of the Treasure Act 1996 and the procedures to be followed
- Seek agreement with the landowner to share knowledge gained from his land with the Dorset Historic Environment team to enhance the Dorset Historic Environment Record
- Report *all* interesting and historic items to the Dorset Historic Environment Record, which offers an identification facility. Allow a reasonable and agreed time for recording, drawing and photography
- Maintain accurate records (with a minimum of a 6 figure map reference) of all sites whether positive or negative in content. Submit copies at regular intervals to the Dorset Historic Environment Record. Complete confidentiality will be maintained if requested (finds, finder and landowner)
- Observe and record surface scatters of non-metallic materials such as pottery, flints and building materials, even when detector results are negative
- Consider donation or sale of objects of particular interest to a Dorset-based museum rather than sale on the antiques market
- Leave sites clean, tidy and safe for stock and machinery. Always follow the Countryside Code
- Report any dangerous items such as ammunition or bombs to the police and landowner. Mark the site and keep clear
- Be prepared at all times to protect your hobby and Code by reporting all bad conduct and deception to an appointed body. It is in the interest of all concerned to do so
- Seek regular contact with all archaeologists to advance knowledge and build up co-operation and trusting relationships
- In the event of unreasonable behaviour or action by any archaeological body or person, report to an agreed ombudsman, and seek assistance. It may be purely a misunderstanding

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Twitter: [@dorsetccfarms](https://twitter.com/dorsetccfarms)

