

AGRICULTURAL
UPDATE
DECEMBER 2023

THE END OF AN ERA FOR BPS & CROSS COMPLIANCE

The RPA stated on 4th December that 97% of BPS 2023 claimants had received both their advance payment, issued earlier in the year, and the balancing payment issued on 1st December 2023.

With the ending of the BPS scheme on 31st December 2023, also comes the end of the cross compliance rules in their current form. Many of the cross compliance rules exist within both European and domestic legislation governing good environmental and agricultural practices. This means that you will still have to comply with the same rules and standards, only you will now be governed by domestic legislation. We are waiting on clarity about how the management of hedges and animal health and welfare matters will be enforced. Clarity is being sought on the legal baseline that farmers need to comply with from 2024 onwards, so that we can understand how breaches will be penalised or remedied. Further guidance is also available through DEFRA, via their guidance about rules for farmers and land managers.

If you are in any doubt about what the changes mean for you, then please do not hesitate contact one of our Agricultural Team who will be able to assist.

SHEEP & GOAT INVENTORY

Keepers of sheep and/or goats are reminded that an annual inventory of animals on your holding at 1st December needs to be submitted to Defra by 31st December. Registered keepers should have received a letter in November with instructions on how to complete this.



INCREASE IN PLANNING FEES

With effect from 6th December 2023, the Government has increased planning fees by 25% for minor development, and 35% for major development (more than 10 dwellings or over 1,000sqm of floorspace).

The Government has also announced that it will be introducing annual increases in planning fees, with effect from 1st April, 2025.

The annual increase will be either in line with inflation or 10%, whichever is lower.

In addition to an increase in Planning Fees, the Government has removed the “free go” application resubmission. It has previously been possible to resubmit an application which had been withdrawn or refused without having to pay further planning fees. However, this option has now been removed.

We hope that the increase in Planning Fees will improve the service provided by the Local Planning Authorities and allow for quicker determination of applications.

If you would like any further information on any aspect of rural planning, please contact Lucy Kernon on 01285 648107.

EPC UPDATE

The Government has recently reversed its decision and has frozen plans to enforce the new Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rules for privately rented properties.

The new regulations were set to be introduced for new residential tenancies from 2025, and for all tenancies from 2028.

The proposal to raise the minimum EPC rating from an 'E' to a 'C' has also been abandoned for now, with the minimum energy rating remaining unchanged.

Please contact our Rural Lettings Team to discuss any EPC matters further.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FARM INSPECTIONS

We are aware of a number of farm inspections currently being undertaken by Environment Agency Inspectors in the Upper Thames catchment. Water quality in the River Thames remains outside of permitted limits and agriculture appears to be being targeted with the aim of reducing diffuse pollution reaching the watercourse.

Inspections can be a worrying and anxious time. If you are notified of an impending inspection, do use the time wisely to get all of your paperwork in place.

The inspections will cover both paper records and physical inspections. Expect all of your organic manures and their storage locations to be scrutinised. Diesel tanks, feed stores and chemical stores will also be checked.

Unfortunately, the timing of these inspections falls during a period of very high rainfall, meaning that all storage systems have been under pressure.

Government grants through the Catchment Sensitive Farming Fund are available to support farmers, either before or after the inspection.


Do consult a member of our Agricultural Team for more information.

RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND - STROUD DISTRICT

Round Two applications to apply for funding in 2024 and 2025 for the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) are now open for small rural businesses and community organisations within the Stroud District. There is £300,000 available for funding within the district, comprised of grants ranging from £3,000 and £20,000. These grants can be applied for as capital projects; however the funding must be used on lasting assets such as buildings or equipment.

The funding is available to support small businesses and community infrastructure, to enhance the rural economy and communities. Funds will be allocated to plans which relate to Environment and Climate Change, Support for Businesses and Community Resilience and Wellbeing objectives stated within the District's Council Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

The Round Two application deadline is 17th January 2024.



The following organisations are eligible to apply to the scheme:

- Micro-businesses
- Small businesses
- Social enterprises and CICs
- Town and Parish councils
- Registered charities
- Public sector organisations
- Higher and further education institutions
- Constituted community/voluntary groups.

For further information please contact one of the Agricultural Team on 01285 648107.

RESIDENTIAL NOTICES TO QUIT - WHAT IS GOING ON?

In 2019 the Government announced the abolition of Section 21 (S.21) 'Non-Fault' Notices to Quit for private rental tenants in England and Wales under the Renters Reform Bill (RRB). This was intended to bring an end to Landlords circumventing the provisions of Section 8 (S.8) of the same legislation which requires referral to the Courts, where the Tenant is at fault.

There has been much in the press recently about this change having been postponed or scrapped: This is not quite the case....

The RRB is still proceeding through the Houses of Parliament. The Government has, however, recognised that in light of the extensive delays in the Court system, which need to be sorted out so that it can process the S.8 'Fault' notices that are likely to result from this change in a reasonable timeframe, the change will be deferred. How long the deferral will be remains unclear, and there is a possibility that the Court application process under S.8 will be streamlined to make it quicker and easier to use (perhaps in the form of online or telephone hearings), in which case S.21 could be removed quite soon.

The background image shows a traditional stone building with a garden. On the left, there is an arched doorway. To the right of the doorway is a window with a flower box containing white and pink flowers. In the foreground, there is a low stone wall and a garden with tall grasses and other plants. The sky is blue with white clouds.

The changes announced also include the introduction of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) which will form the backbone of services provided by a new Ombudsman which all landlords and lettings agents must sign up to; the theory being that if referrals to the Court can be avoided, this will keep the Court system free to prioritise cases and deal with them in a reasonable timeframe.

Ultimately, S.21 Notices will still be coming to an end, but ADR and S.8 will pick up this gap for most issues, leaving most landlords with some protection in most situations.



CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

Friday 22nd December– Open 9am to 11.30am

Monday 25th December - Monday 1st

January – Closed

Tuesday 2nd January – Normal opening hours.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

VACANCY

Agricultural Sales Assistant
Based in our Cirencester Office

Are you organised, motivated & looking to join a successful team of rural surveyors? Do you have a talent for effective communication with customers? If so then our Agricultural Sales Assistant role is the next step in your career.

The ideal candidate will:

- Have a broad understanding of agriculture.
- Sales experience is preferable but not essential.
- Have excellent written and oral communication skills.
 - Demonstrate a practical proficiency for IT.
- Be able to work independently and motivate yourself as well as being a strong team player.
- Have a strong customer focus, good attention to detail with excellent organisational and prioritisation skills.
- RICS or CAAV qualifications are not a requirement but the firm will provide all training required to complete professional exams.
 - Be a car owner with a full driving licence.

The Role

To assist our current team with:

- The production of marketing material including sale particulars
- The management of applicants and rural property details on a database
 - All rural property enquiries
 - Property research for marketing appraisals and valuations
 - Farm machinery sales
- Viewings at properties which the department is marketing

The package offered will be competitive and commensurate with experience.

For an informal and confidential discussion about the role, please contact Amy McDonald on 01285 648115 or please send a C.V and covering letter to sue.farrier@mooreallen.co.uk

MOORE ALLEN & INNOCENT

Here for the past present and future

LAND & ESTATE AGENTS

VALUERS

AUCTIONEERS



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