

Press release: Apply for hedgerows, boundaries, and woodland management plan grants online

Applicants can apply through the [Rural Payments service](#). The online service allows those applying to log on at a time that suits them to submit applications for the [hedgerows and boundaries grant](#) or the [woodland management plan grant](#). Applications can be saved and returned at the applicant's convenience. The online service ensures only eligible fields are included. Instant confirmation is provided once an applicant submits an application.

Customers who already apply for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) online should find submitting an online application familiar and the service easy to use. Last year 80% of BPS applicants took advantage of applying online.

The woodland management plan grant is open all year round for applications. This year the hedgerow and boundaries grant opened on 1 February and closes on 28 April.

Support is available from Natural England via the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301.

Whilst applicants are encouraged to use the online service, paper applications will still be accepted for the hedgerows and boundaries grant and the woodland management plan grant.

The online service will be extended in spring 2017, when customers will have the option to submit their Countryside Stewardship annual revenue and capital claims.

For enquiries (media only) contact: Mary Tomlinson, Senior Press Officer, Natural England. Email: mary.tomlinson@naturalengland.org.uk Telephone: 07771 834 975.

Press release: Environment Agency unveils new paintings to promote fishing

The Environment Agency has unveiled three paintings by top wildlife artist David Miller to promote angling. The images front the 2017/18 fishing

licences which go on sale today (1 March). The three fishing licence designs depict salmon (*Salmo salar*), mirror carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) and brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) in their natural habitats.

You can see the images, and download posters here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rod-fishing-licence-campaign>

The Environment Agency has also launched "Get a Fishing Licence" on GOV.UK to simplify the process of buying a fishing licence:

www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence. This is part of a series of improvements to the service, which include:

- Free licences for junior anglers, up to the age of 17, announced in November 2016
- The fishing licence now lasts for 12 months from the day it is bought, rather than expiring at the end of March each year
- The use of three rods now needs just one licence, rather than two.

People are required to buy a fishing licence in order to fish legally in England, Wales and along the Border Esk in Scotland. Sales of licences for the 2015/16 season raised [£21 million](#). The money was used to restock rivers with 452,220 coarse fish, encourage over 35,000 people to try angling for the first time and bring 2,043 successful prosecutions against crimes like poaching.

Artist David Miller said:

I'm delighted to have provided the images for the fishing licences again this year, not only because it gave me the opportunity to paint three species for the first time but also because all the money raised goes back into supporting fisheries. Of the three I was particularly pleased with the brown trout, my favourite UK game fish, and one I love to fish for on small rivers and streams.

Judy Proctor, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

We hope David's stunning images encourage people to give fishing a go. Angling creates over 37,000 full time jobs and generates over £1 billion for the UK economy, but at its heart it's a much loved outdoor sport connecting people with nature. We've listened to anglers' concerns and improved the fishing licence to make the process of getting out and fishing legally simpler.

People who don't buy a fishing licence are not only cheating other anglers and the future of the sport but running the risk of criminal conviction and a fine. The Environment Agency urges anyone to report fisheries crime as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

For those who can't access the internet, fishing licences can still be bought

by phoning 0344 800 5386 or over the counter in the Post Office.

ENDS

Notes:

The Environment Agency publishes a detailed breakdown of how fishing licence money is spent in the annual fisheries report on GOV.UK. Read it here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-report-shows-how-21-million-of-rod-licence-money-helps-angling>

More on the changes to licences here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/free-fishing-for-children>

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[Press release: Flood protection options being presented to Yate and](#)

Chipping Sodbury

The Environment Agency is holding a public consultation in Chipping Sodbury to explain how it plans to reduce flood risk to local homes and businesses.

The Environment Agency is keen for local people to share their views on its proposals and any experiences they have of local flooding.

The consultation will take place at the Town Hall on 1 March 2017 between 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Fiona Geddes of the Environment Agency said:

This event is an ideal opportunity for people to study the flood alleviation options. There will be officers from the Environment Agency and South Gloucestershire Council on hand to explain the thinking behind each option and the steps people can take to prepare themselves against flooding.

We'd really like to hear the views of local residents and look forward to sharing ideas on how best to reduce flood risk in Yate and Chipping Sodbury.

The last major floods in Yate and Chipping Sodbury occurred in 1968. The Environment Agency estimates up to 100 homes and 40 businesses could be at risk of flooding from the River Frome and its tributaries. There's a 1 per cent chance of serious flooding each year. The risk is expected to increase as a result of higher river flows and climate change.

Flood warnings are issued to low-lying properties in both communities. In Yate these include:

- Bennetts Court
- Station Road
- Swan Field
- Treelease
- Orchard Close
- Milton Road
- Tyndale Avenue
- Celestine Road
- Blenheim Drive
- Whitley Close

In Chipping Sodbury the part of the town most at risk is the Blanchards Farm area.

Flooding occurs because the River Frome has insufficient capacity. Improvements have been made over the years alongside new developments in the river corridor, but these haven't kept pace with the growing flood risk.

Surface water run-off from heavy rain has added to the flooding problem.

The Environment Agency has carried out a preliminary study that identifies 3 options: flood storage, river channel widening and property flood-proofing. As well as exploring each option separately, a combination of all 3 is also under consideration. This final, most expensive, combined option would increase the cost of the scheme to approximately £4 million. The cost of the individual options are £3.7 million, £300,000 and £100,000 respectively.

An earlier option that involved the construction of 1.8km of flood walls was rejected on the grounds of being too expensive (£10 million). It also raised sustainability concerns.

For a successful scheme to go ahead, any benefits must outweigh the costs. In addition to reducing flood risk to a significant number of homes and businesses, the final scheme should reduce flooding on 3 local roads (A432, B4569 and B4060) and prevent flood damages estimated at £10 million.

Flood storage schemes are an effective way of providing flood alleviation. The Environment Agency has built several in recent years. Examples include Tubbs Bottom, that reduces flood risk downstream of Yate and Bruton in Somerset. Schemes are also being considered for Taunton and Wrington near Bristol.

The Yate and Chipping Sodbury scheme is still in its early stages. The Environment Agency must carry out a more detailed study before selecting a preferred option. It is hoped a scheme could be in place by 2021, but that will depend on the Environment Agency securing the necessary funding from the Government and other sources.

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