

Benenden School Stewardship Scheme



- **Estate Management** Stewardship
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The Challenge

A surprising number of schools with land don't have a structured land management plan in place and they could be missing out on various potential income streams. They may also be running the risk of getting into trouble with an existing occupier.

The Solution

Schools should therefore consider the possibility of environmental stewardship schemes as an income stream. Changes to the existing environmental stewardship payment schemes from 1 January 2013 were designed to make them more effective and to encourage take up of those most environmentally beneficial.

For land to be considered for a scheme, it needs to be either currently farmed or kept in a good agricultural and environmental condition. Therefore playing fields would not count. At the moment payments for qualifying land start at just £30 per hectare but can increase substantially.

Role of BTF

We recently worked with Benenden School and successfully applied for a Parkland Plan under the Higher Level Stewardship scheme. This contributed a substantial amount towards the cost of a detailed study/plan of the entire grounds of the school. The plan not only included detailed arboriculture and archaeological studies but also took into account the priorities highlighted by the school. This included the potential restoration of a walled garden, the best location for an all-weather hockey pitch and consideration of replanting a line of trees to the original house as a feature. The plan produced is now an encyclopedia of information which can be used for many purposes including future development plans with the local planning authority, as it addresses many of the issues that would be raised during the consultation process.

Environmental schemes don't have to be as detailed as this and sometimes very little is needed to achieve a benefit. There are not just financial rewards as these schemes are designed to preserve the local environment for the future. Getting it right at school is the first step to inspiring future generations to do the same.