

OVER THE GATE

News from UK Farm Support Groups



SPRING 2020

News from Diane Spark, Farm Support Co-ordinator

In such uncertain and ever-changing times I appreciate you might be feeling overwhelmed by the amount of work that is needed in helping to provide safe and appropriate support within your patch. It is vitally important that you look after yourself too if you are to continue supporting others throughout the coming weeks and months as demands and pressure on us all will inevitably increase. You know what works for you and should you want or need to have good old rant, cry or share some good news – I'm available 24/7 on 07968 874968.

Managing the additional restrictions and responsibilities associated with coronavirus our time and thoughts may well be stretched. As schools close - young people in rural areas

may be spending longer periods on their farm and being called upon to help if family, friends or neighbours are older, vulnerable or have contracted coronavirus. The Farm safety Foundation have issued some very useful guidance for parents and students. **Please see page 7.**

Everyone wants to do something to help and there is a danger that we become overloaded with information coming from a wide range of sources. Those who are members of organisations such as the NFU and Tenant Farmers Association should have access to regular and current information and advice. AHDB also provide regular and current information which can be found [here](#).



Photo courtesy of John Millard/Country Life Picture Library.

FUNDING: Many funders are contacting their grant recipients to outline their willingness to be flexible in the circumstances. Some funders are also offering current grant recipients additional resources towards their coronavirus work. If you've not already been in touch with those funding your organisation it might be wise to do so as this could help you in your efforts to support others. A couple of potential sources of funding for you to check out:

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THE PRINCE'S
COUNTRYSIDE
FUND

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- [NATIONAL EMERGENCIES TRUST](#): Offering grant aid through local community foundations.
- [THE NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMUNITY FUND](#)
- [PEOPLES POSTCODE LOTTERY](#)

- [COMIC RELIEF COMMUNITY FUND](#): Offering grants through Groundwork
- [THE PRINCE'S COUNTRYSIDE FUND](#): see page 3.

Farmer Support Groups throughout the UK are doing a remarkable job during these difficult times - with

many acting as the main point of contact and co-ordinators of safe support services within their localities. Each and every one of you are truly amazing and precious human beings. Take care and stay safe throughout all of the unprecedented challenges and lets all look forward to better days ahead.

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THE PRINCE'S
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News from The Prince's Countryside Fund

Working from Home

The team at The Prince's Countryside Fund is hard at work, but owing to the outbreak of Covid-19, for the foreseeable future they are working from home. In light of this please try our emails first, not our landlines - find these [here](#).

GRANT FUNDING

The Fund is inviting applications for emergency funding from farming and rural community support groups, who are providing assistance to counter the effects of isolation during the Coronavirus pandemic. With thanks to Players of People's Postcode Lottery, groups can apply for grant funding of up to £2,500. Find out more [here](#).

Future Farmers Forum

The Fund held its first 'Future Farmers Forum', kindly hosted by Aldi at their headquarters in Atherstone on Wednesday 22nd January. Thirty ambitious young farmers from all around the UK attended the day to discuss the future of British agriculture.

#FacesOfTheFund

#FacesOfTheFund is The Prince's Countryside Fund's way of celebrating the incredible people that we have supported since 2010. Each week in 2020, we are sharing the story of one of our fantastic beneficiaries across our social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) - @countrysidefund). In the current situation, we

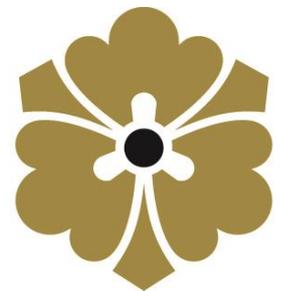
know that so many of our amazing beneficiaries are working together to help those most at risk and in need. We are going to highlight some of these incredible examples of kindness that come from our rural communities in times like these through #FacesOfTheFund. See the latest post below.

Jordans Sustainable Agriculture Bursary

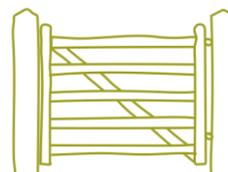
The Bursary is available to six lucky winners who plan on studying at the Royal Agricultural or the University of Reading in September 2020. Find out more and [apply now](#): bit.ly/JordansSAB



The Detling Community Store said: "We have received a generous grant from The Prince's Countryside Fund to support the salary of our Manager, and I am pretty certain that without the grant we wouldn't have been able to continue in the current circumstances. We have organised a food/grocery delivery service to Detling and two other nearby villages. Our villages have a significant proportion of over 70's, so we hope to provide a lifeline for the isolated. Currently Tesco is taking orders for delivery in two weeks, we will deliver on the day of the order or the day after. Interestingly our sales are remaining strong, partly because we have a professional manager thanks to your grant and partly because we have stocks of what residents want, whereas the supermarket shelves are stripped!"



THE PRINCE'S
COUNTRYSIDE
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Farming Help

03000 111999

Confidential help for all in the farming community

Helpline operated by FCN

Farming Help providing support for farmers affected by Covid-19

The Farming Help Charities – Addington Fund, Farming Community Network (FCN), Forage Aid, Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution and RSABI, supported by The Prince's Countryside Fund - are working together to support the Farming Community during the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak.

We recognise that this could be an anxious time for many farmers and farming families and periods of poor health or self-isolation may result in temporary practical difficulties on farm.

This initiative is in conjunction with The

National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs, The National Farmers' Union, and the NFU Mutual Charitable Trust.

Utilising our Farming Help helpline (operated by FCN) and respective organisations/volunteer networks, we can offer the following local support. Get in touch on [03000 111 999](tel:03000111999) if you:

*Feel concerned or anxious and would like to talk to someone who understands farming, will listen to you and help you think through your options

*Would like help to draft a contingency plan to ensure you and your farm are

prepared, should you be unable to work for a time.

*If you or people you rely on become ill or are self-isolating and you need to find help locally- we will endeavour to find support for you in your local area. We will source contact details of local organisations and groups who may be able to assist you in finding help to feed livestock, collect shopping or collect prescriptions if you are unable to do so. This directory will be revised and updated in the coming weeks and months.

Call [03000 111 999](tel:03000111999) or visit www.farminghelp.co.uk



News from the TFA



It's Never Been So Important to Look Out for One Another

The Tenant Farmers Association (TFA) recognises the increased pressures being faced by those farming the land they do not own and offers the following advice during this difficult time.

As each day passes, it seems new challenges are presented to our farmers including Coronavirus and the impact of the measures to control its spread. While many write about saving lives not livelihoods, for those in the agricultural industry, when people lose their business, they can lose their homes, marriages, mental health and often their lives as well.

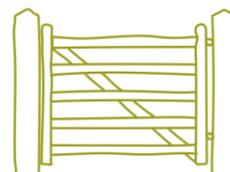
TFA Adviser, Adriana Vaux, said "It's of great concern that our farmers are finding themselves in yet another difficult and stressful

position this year. The Coronavirus follows weeks of challenges from flooding and volatile markets, to the growing veganism and anti-meat agendas. What a lot of people do not realise is that stress can lead to compromised mental health. This can have significant implications not only to themselves but their family and business. It is vital that farmers, like workers in any other industries, are properly supported and know how to access help when they need it. Identifying stress, and looking after your mental health, is incredibly important for every single person, especially in these uncertain times".

"At a time in which farmers are already seeing a negative impact on their income, now more than ever farmers

need support, especially those who farm land they do not own. It is incredibly important that the difficulties faced, such as the ability to pay farm rent is acknowledged. Each and every farmer needs to be supported, whether this is by their landlord, landlord's agent, membership organisation or Government," said Miss Vaux.

"It's a fact that self-isolation and social distancing is going to be a huge part of our daily lives for some time to come. While many in the UK are facing restrictions on their freedom, for once farmers have a huge advantage over many. They have the space around their holding to get on, and to some degree, carry on," said Miss Vaux.



News from R.A.B.I

In February, R.A.B.I celebrated its 160th anniversary. Everyone at R.A.B.I is rightly proud of our longevity and what we've achieved in the past, but we recognise we have an even greater role to play in the months and years to come.

Farming isn't a job that you can clock on and off from, it's a lifestyle that people live and breathe. R.A.B.I sees close-up the commitment given by our farmers to managing our landscapes and environment, looking after their livestock and producing food to some of

the highest standards in the world. The farming world is changing and R.A.B.I has a responsibility to change with it, so that we can continue to provide support to people that is flexible, relevant and easily accessible.

As an organisation, it's fair to say we're still best known for providing grants to farming people in financial need because historically, that's been our focus. Progressing forwards, we know we must now also develop more rounded programmes of support that better address emotional and practical

needs, as well as financial ones. That's why we are about to undertake a major piece of research work that will enable us to better understand what farmers are going through and feeling. Building on this knowledge, we can then begin the process of determining what our services need to look like in a rapidly changing world. There's lots to consider and changes won't happen immediately, but our vision is that no member of the farming community should ever have to face adversity alone.



News from the Farm Safety Foundation

Following the Government's decision to close schools, colleges and universities, the farming industry is facing another new challenge in an already testing year...

It has been well documented that farming continues to have the poorest safety record of any occupation in the UK however, in an industry where two children were among the 39 people killed on farms last year, the closure of schools means that there needs to be a clear focus on supporting those children and young people in rural areas who will be spending longer periods on their farm and being called upon to help if family, friends or neighbours are older, vulnerable or have contracted coronavirus COVID-19.

Here at the Farm Safety Foundation we acknowledge that schools do not just close and send students home without a good reason and, with the increased threat of the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) the Government realises that this is no joke... and so should we!

Unfortunately, we have had to postpone delivery of our new virtual reality education programme until September. We feel however that, at this time, it is more important than ever to ensure that children are being protected as the reality is, with the closure of schools, there will be more children spending time on farm for longer periods than ever before. We thought it would be a good idea to put together a simple, easy to read booklet to remind everyone of the risks they will face on the farm every day. We have



Proudly supported by



prepared one for parents and one for all the young farmers out there who may be called upon to help out.

These guides have been sent to all rural primary schools, land-based colleges/universities and national Young Farmers Clubs in the UK to be shared with their pupils, students and members.

Please see the guides attached here: [temporary workers](#), [parents](#) and [young farmers/students](#).



News from UTASS



What a different world we all find ourselves in! As we try to adapt to be able to deliver services remotely in light of the coronavirus COVID-19 restrictions that we all face today, at UTASS we are working harder than ever to ensure that our farmers, their families and our wider dales communities have the support that is so essential at the moment.

As the newest member of the team, having just joined in February as the Strategic Development Officer, I am tasked with sustainability, looking to the future, developing and implementing plans so the organisation can continue to thrive and provide services for many years to come. Sustainability has quickly however taken on a very different meaning and attention is focussed on how we can maintain and indeed increase our capacity very quickly to deliver community support, as we see that more and more people will need our support as we move

through the coming weeks and months .

We have significantly altered our working practices, as I know we have all had to and have really focussed our attention on:

- *Initiation of a new campaign 'In It Together Teesdale'- focussed on bringing people together to support our local communities (pictured Gillian and Thomas Anderson, our first volunteers helping distribute leaflets)

- *Creation of a new Facebook group 'In It Together Teesdale'- developing a network for community support and a place for information, advice and guidance

- *Recruitment of an 'In It Together' volunteer force- advertising for volunteers to support UTASS to be able to deliver community support over the coming months (at present we have over 80 people willing to get

involved which is just fantastic!)

- *Development of a plan that will drive communication with our members, community members and young people to ensure that people within the dales feel supported, valued and will reach out to us should they need help

We have also extended our telephone support line to 9am- 5pm seven days per week, continued our out-of-hours helpline offering support at whatever time of day it's required and launched a young person's helpline.



Behind the scenes a lot of work is underway developing systems to help support our revised service delivery plan, discussing support with partners to coordinate the approach across our communities and of course, liaising with funders to help us deliver our work in such a challenging time.

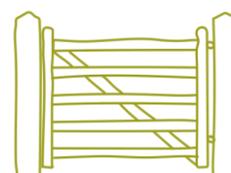
Since the system opened for applications in mid-March

we have supported our hill farmers on Basic Level Payment Scheme and Higher Level Stewardship applications and the team worked tirelessly to get through as many of the applications as possible, prior to enforced restrictions coming into place, which has now moved to remote assistance.

I'm sure we're all trying to navigate our own ways to

help within the new world we are facing, but alongside our other Farming Support Group colleagues we are truly in it together, so we would always welcome a call or email from you!

Grace Crawford, Strategic Development Officer (Part time), UTASS
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News from Exmoor Hill Farming Network

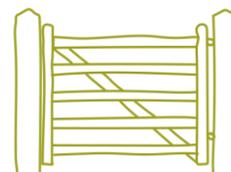


New 100% Farmer-Led Network Has Community at Heart

The Exmoor Hill Farming Network has established itself as a Community Interest Company (CIC) and will be running as an independent, 100% farmer-led organisation from 1st February 2020. The move will mean greater independence for the Network, which already works with around 318 farming businesses, with opportunities to reinvest assets in the community and attract new sources of funding. The newly appointed board consists of 11 directors and 4 advisory board members, led by Dave Knight, who has been Chair of the Network since its establishment 5 years ago. Until now, the Network has been hosted and supported by North Devon +, an economic delivery agency for North Devon and Torridge, which runs a number of rural development programmes in the area. **Dave Knight, EHFN Chairman of Directors** said "We are immensely proud of

the progress the Network has made under the auspices of North Devon + so that it is trusted by farmers and other land managing businesses in the Greater Exmoor areas as a source of valuable advice, training and support in these uncertain times". **Dave added** "North Devon + has played a key role in this success and we hope to continue a close working relationship going forward." The Network was established in early 2014 to improve the viability and sustainability of Exmoor farming businesses. It does this through knowledge-transfer, peer-group support, training, and co-operation to safeguard upland farming, rural employment and landscape management. It has become one of the most sought-after initiatives on Exmoor, providing the 'go-to hub' of information and contacts for land-based businesses, overseen by its highly regarded Network Officer, Katherine Williams. The

majority of the costs of running the Network are met by funding from The Prince's Countryside Fund, Exmoor National Park Authority and North Devon Council, due to run until 31st January 2021. Other key partners and sponsors include Masons Kings, NFU, Dunster Show Society, Exmoor Farmers Livestock Auctions, Baldwins and Towergate Insurance. During the past 18 months, the Network steering group has undertaken a Governance Review set out by the Exmoor National Park Authority. The Group took advice from other organisations such as Farm Cornwall and The Cumbria Farmer Network, who operate a similar structure, to build confidence that a fully-fledged independent route was in the best interest of Exmoor's farming communities. **Sarah Bryan, Chief Executive of Exmoor National Park Authority,** said "It's been a pleasure to see the Exmoor Hill Farming



Network grow from strength to strength and we're pleased to see them complete their independence through this next step. Having a strong voice for the farming community on Exmoor is vital to sustaining the

traditional farming practices and ways of life that make our landscapes special. We look forward to continuing to support them in this next venture." The Network hub will remain at Cutcombe Market by kind permission of Exmoor Farmers Livestock

Auctioneers and will continue to aid farmers with its flagship Exmoor's Ambition project feeding into DEFRA's Test and Trials of its new Environmental Land Management Scheme.

Defra Trial Gets Underway on Exmoor Farms

25 farmers and foresters in Exmoor National Park will this month (March) begin trials of a potentially transformative approach to rewarding farmers for delivering key public benefits, such as improved soil, water and habitats.

The proposal is one of around 50 Defra Tests & Trials going on around the country to help inform the development of the government's future Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELM), due to be rolled out in 2024. A public consultation on the draft scheme is open until 5th May.

During a visit to Exmoor in 2018, former Environment

Secretary Michael Gove toured two Exmoor farms and met with representatives from the Exmoor Hill Farming Network CIC (EHFN), Exmoor National Park Authority and consultancy firm *Rural Focus*, who co-designed the scheme.

Defra has since agreed to fund work on Exmoor to demonstrate the concept in practice, with the trial expected to run from now until early next year.

Key objectives include a thorough on the ground test to catalogue the range of 'public goods' that each farm could potentially deliver. This would be central to farmers being able to

balance the books in terms of delivering environmental benefits alongside productivity and other strands of business.

Mapping the value of natural capital right across the National Park to maximise the delivery of public goods and work towards a system of awarding payment for different environmental outcomes will also be primary activities.

Dave Knight, EHFN Chair of Directors, said: "The Exmoor farming community has worked extremely hard to get this initiative off the ground. We believe the kind of grassroots approach Defra is trying to create will really benefit Exmoor's farmed



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landscape. It will better support farmers to deliver environmental benefit alongside traditional farming practices, allowing them to play an even greater part in the delivery of public goods in the National Park.”

Robin Milton, Chair of Exmoor National Park Authority, said: “With our environment and our climate in crisis, it’s vital we do more to support and enhance the great work many of our farmers are already doing to make our National Parks

greener, healthier, happier and even more beautiful places. We’re extremely grateful to Defra for the opportunity to demonstrate what our concept could deliver to help inspire greener ways of farming right across the country.”

