

FARMING REPORT FOR CVPC MEETING ON 19,7,21

Tree planting continues to gain a lot of public interest but with uncertainty over Brexit UK agriculture trade arrangements and ELMS the high levels of uncertainty means its a difficult time for anybody to take the risks and access any financing- with current grants not offering enough of an incentive to take productive land for planting. Meanwhile good grants do exist for small diverse tree planting schemes across broader landscapes, but the high squirrel and deer numbers make the costs of establishment too high, and the rates of tree failure are also high.

Grants are also available for developing wildflower meadows. These can be enhanced by further reseeding to encourage more wildflowers and grasses. There will be a good grant per hectare to do this. Fields that do not have the same density of wildflowers will qualify to smaller grants per hectare. All of these wildflower meadows should have only a dusting of manure and no artificial fertiliser, so that the soil is not improved.

Intensive farming has always relied on fairly high levels of artificial fertiliser to ensure good yields but the new trend with ELMS is to gradually change to extensive farming with lower inputs.

Farmers are also encouraged to grow plots of wild bird seed to further encourage wildlife.

Whereas in the past most farmers would cut the sides and tops of their hedges ever autumn or winter they are now being asked to only to cut the sides and tops every two years to increase the habitat for wildlife.

Cllr. Johnson