

Pleasant Farm nutrient neutrality scheme

Pleasant Farm historical use

Pleasant Farm is a parcel of land of 127 hectares in Lenham, Kent. It was purchased by Forestry England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Defra in August 2019. The potential for nature-based finance opportunities from development was a consideration in assessing the affordability of the farm purchase.

At the time of purchase, the land was being used for arable crop production by a tenant farmer, and had been for at least the previous ten years, as evidenced by the Farm Business Tenancy agreement (FBT) which commenced in November 2009. The FBT was provided during the purchase. Maidstone Borough Council planning department has been provided with a copy of this agreement.

The tenancy was continued by Forestry England until September 2021 on approximately half of the 57.65 ha which sits within the Upper Stour catchment and until November 2022 on the remainder. Tree planting commenced in the planting season of 22/23 and will be concluded in the 23/24 planting season.

Nutrient neutrality scheme

The district team responsible for managing the site became aware that 57.65 hectares of Pleasant Farm was in the Stodmarsh catchment area for nutrient sensitivity and thus there was potential for the provision of nutrient credits to developers of new residential development within the Stodmarsh catchment to offset pollution.

Advice was sought from Natural England on the use of their nutrient calculator, and it was calculated that the cessation of agricultural (cereal) production on the 57.65 ha site would provide annually 8.38 kg of phosphate credit and 1624.6 kg of nitrate.

Negotiations with developers

Negotiations commenced with a developer to agree terms for a credit purchase agreement. The developer has secured nitrogen and phosphate credits with a deposit. The receipts for nutrient credits at Pleasant Farm will be used to fund the woodland creation scheme and support the ongoing management of the woodland.

A careful record of the credits secured has and will be maintained and there will be no duplication of sale.

Planting and future use of the site

Forestry England has commenced the planting of trees on the site. A planting scheme for the 57.65ha (comprised of a combination of 47.97 ha tree planting and open space) has been designed and planting on site commenced in November 2022 and will conclude in planting season 23/24.

Existing land use type(s)	Area (ha)	Annual phosphorus nutrient export (kg TP)	Annual nitrogen nutrient export (kg TN)
Cereals	44.38	7.33	1383.79
Cereals	13.27	2.19	413.76
Total:	57.65	9.53	1797.55

Stage 3

User Inputs

New land use type(s)	Area (ha)	Annual phosphorus nutrient export (kg TP)	Annual nitrogen nutrient export (kg TN)
Woodland	44.38	0.89	133.14
Woodland	13.27	0.27	39.81
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Select post-development land use types from the drop down list.			
Total:	57.65	1.15	172.95