

## Oakbank E-News January 2021

We normally start the January enews with 'Happy New Year' to all our enews subscribers! We are very aware that this latest lockdown will mean anything but a Happy New Year for many of you so the message is 'stay positive' and we wish you all a safe, healthy and happier 2021 than we endured in 2020.

**ELS JANUARY** – hedge and ditch bank cutting continues as does ditch cleaning. **EF23 (supplementary feeding in winter for farmland birds)** – food must be spread on the ground at designated sites at least once a week from 1<sup>st</sup> January. This is in addition to any hopper feeding. Don't forget to keep your 'feeding diary' up-to-date in case of inspection.

**Mid-Tier Countryside Stewardship – AB1 (nectar flower mix)** – if you haven't done so already you have until 30<sup>th</sup> March to cut your nectar flower plots. Lots of customers don't have the facility to cut and remove. If that is you then the best advice is to wait until a dry, frosty day and cut very steadily with a flail mower (not a rotary) as this will smash the woody material and is less likely to leave a carpet of mulch. **BE3 (management of hedgerows)** – if you have gone for the one in two rather than one in three year cutting option then you can now cut half of your hedgerows up until 28<sup>th</sup> February.



**New (2021) Mid-Tier Agreements** - we are aware that a number of clients have yet to receive their CS offers for this year. If that includes you then please contact the office asap.

**Winter Feeding** – even if you don't have EF23/HF24 or AB12 options under your ELS/HLS or Mid/Higher tier stewardship agreements, we would urge everyone to undertake some winter feeding for our declining farmland bird species. Whilst feeding wheat is better than nothing, some smaller seeds such as rape, linseed and millet would be far more beneficial for many of our passerines.

**GWCT Big Farmland Bird Count:** 5<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> February (<https://www.bfbc.org.uk>)

Please get counting! The more counts the GWCT receives the more they can do with the data. It's also a great opportunity to see for yourself the wildlife that relies on your help through the winter.

**Huw Lloyd joins the Oakbank Woodland Team** – we are delighted to announce that Huw Lloyd, formerly a regional officer for BASC and forestry consultant at Lockhart Garrett, has joined the Oakbank team as a forestry consultant. Huw will be based from his office in Chipping Norton and will work closely with Kirsty, enabling Oakbank to deliver woodland management to clients in Oxfordshire and surrounding counties. Huw is a keen shooting man, running a shoot near home as well as training cocker spaniels. He is also a keen rugby man, turning out for Chipping Norton RFC (when covid restrictions allow). Of greater concern is his passion for Welsh rugby and in particular the Scarlets and Wales. We could have some interesting debate in the Oakbank office during the Six Nations!



### **Woodland Creation and mitigating the impacts of deer – a new FC publication**

For guidance on mitigating the potential impacts of deer on both new plantings and restock sites, see this new [Forestry Commission Publication](#).

### **A Lyme disease vaccine sometime soon?**

The French company Valneva (a company developing a vaccine for coronavirus) has said it plans to accelerate research into its Lyme disease vaccine early in 2021. This [scientific article](#) from Pharmaphorum explains more.

### **Trees are totally dependent on fungi - The wood-wide web**

An excellent 7-minute video on the vital relationship between all trees and the subterranean network of mycorrhizal fungi is available here from the [Ancient Tree Forum](#).

### **FC admits it was wrong to allow trees to be planted on peat bogs**

The Forestry Commission admit it was a mistake to authorise a planting grant on private peat-rich land in Cumbria. Watch this short [Channel 4 clip](#) to learn more and about the importance of our peat bogs.

### **GWCT EVENT 21<sup>st</sup> January 7-8pm. [Shooting Matters - an online discussion to be held on Zoom](#). Tickets £5.** Speakers include

**Dr Tracey Latham Green:** Author of Understanding the Social Impact of Participation in Driven Game Shooting in the UK

**Sir Jim Paice:** Chairman of the GWCT and former UK Minister of Agriculture and Food

**Dr Mike Swan:** GWCT Advisor and Head of Education

**Sue Evans:** Director of GWCT Wales

**SPRING NEWSLETTER** We will be sending out our spring newsletter and product guide in February. If any of your address details have changed since last year, please contact the office to ensure your details are updated and you receive your copy.