

MOORE ALLEN & INNOCENT

AGRICULTURAL UPDATE

DECEMBER 2021

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS OF MAI



Last year, Moore Allen & Innocent celebrated its 175th birthday. We wanted to mark the occasion by giving something back to the local community, as after all, it's been our Clients and the local businesses that have supported us for all of these years. We will be planting 175 native trees in the grounds of Cirencester Hospital in the hope that they will be enjoyed by the local wildlife and the future generations of Cirencester.

Last month, members of the MAI team, together with NHS volunteers, spent a day clearing scrub, fallen trees and rubbish from the hospital grounds in preparation for the tree planting. Some of the fallen branches were used to make a dead hedge that bounds a path through the woods. Despite the cold winter temperature, there were some very red faces at the end of the day!

The tree planting will commence in January, updates to follow!



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OIL BOILER BAN

One of the less well publicised outcomes from COP 26 was the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) public consultation regarding a proposal to “phase out the installation of fossil fuel heating systems in homes off the gas grid”.

The proposed legislation would see a ban on the sale and installation of new oil or LPG boilers in homes from 2026, with the proposals targeting “homes off the gas grid,” which largely means isolated or rural homes. The suggested alternative heating systems are heat pumps (air or ground source), solid biomass burning systems or “renewable alternatives”.

Heat pumps may be a viable alternative in some rural properties, but many older or historic buildings will not be able to utilise heat pumps effectively without owners investing heavily in additional improvement works which could also require listed building consent. Ground and air source heat pumps may require the installation of new radiators and pipework to work properly which increases the installation costs further still. Heat pumps will also result in a higher electricity demand which, combined with the push towards electric vehicles will require a marked increase in generation capacity prior to the current 2030 ban on the sale of new diesel and petrol vehicles.



The alternative of solid fuel biomass heating systems is likely to be expensive, with homeowners needing sufficient external space for a hopper and auger system to feed the boiler or enough external space to store wood pellets to manually feed the boiler. The initial cost of installing many solid biomass boilers can be very high and there remains the issue of pollution caused by burning solid fuels; this may be manageable for isolated properties, but air quality could be compromised by high concentrations of solid biomass boilers.

Whilst cost is clearly an issue with the proposed changes, there is also a question of fairness; it appears that mains gas boilers will be ‘banned’ from 2025 but this largely relates to the installation of new systems in new properties. A homeowner with an existing gas boiler will be able to buy and install a like for like system until 2035.

The proposed changes for oil and LPG systems do not contain a provision for like for like replacement; if the oil or LPG system breaks and requires replacement after 2025 it has to be replaced with a new approved renewable heating system.

The proposals also seek to ensure that 'smart' integration is built into new installations to enable usage to be managed when electricity is in highest demand and to ensure that systems automatically make use of periods of low demand. As many rural areas suffer from poor mobile telephone reception and even worse broadband connectivity it is not clear how this can be easily integrated without additional infrastructure improvement.

Full details of the proposals can be found in the DBEIS document, "Phasing out the Installation of Fossil Fuel Heating in Homes off the Gas Grid".

We would encourage you to make your views known as part of the public consultation which remains open until **12th January, 2022** and can be accessed via

<https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/heat/phasing-out-fossil-fuel-heating-offgrid-homes/>

Your views can also be sent to offgasgridheatconsultation@beis.gov.uk

SCHEMES ROUND-UP

Hopefully, the vast majority of you who claim BPS will have received funds in December.

Stewardship payments are also filtering through slowly.

The following is food for thought over your turkey:

- Cross Compliance – The 2022 Cross Compliance Handbook has just been launched, with no significant changes to scheme rules for 2022.
- SFI – Two strands of SFI have been announced, effective from 2022, for the management of soils on arable land and improved grassland management. Further details should be announced in the new year. These payments are in addition to BPS.
- BPS Retirement Fund – The promised deadline of October 2021 for further details on the Retirement Fund has passed. We await further details early in the new year.
- Sheep and Goat Inventory – Those of you who keep sheep or goats must return the annual inventory, either online or by post, by 31st December.

And finally, do not forget the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) which closes on 7th January, 2022.

THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK, GLOUCESTERSHIRE FARMING FRIENDS & THE ROYAL AGRICULTURAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION

For most, the festive season is a time of sharing, thanksgiving and happiness - whether with family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances.

For some, however, Christmas and the Winter months can be a particularly lonely time with increased feelings of isolation, depression and hopelessness. Thankfully, there are many organisations that can and do provide support and assistance to anyone who seeks their help, regardless of whether the issue is personal or business-related.

The agricultural community is particularly fortunate to have three wonderful charitable organisations whose hundreds of committed volunteer members share an understanding of the issues and pressures that many farmers, farm workers and farming families regularly face.

These charities provide free, confidential, pastoral and practical support. They have helped thousands of people deal with a wide variety of issues, whether financial difficulties, animal disease, mental health, housing problems or family disputes.

We publish their details below should you wish to find out more about their wonderful work, or if maybe you – or someone you know – might benefit from their help.

Farming Community Network - 03000 111 999 - www.fcn.org.uk

Gloucestershire Farming Friends - 0845 300 6886
<https://gloucestershirefarmingfriends.wordpress.com>

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution - 0800 188 4444 -
www.rabi.org.uk

From everyone in the Agricultural Team and at Moore Allen & Innocent, we thank you for your support and to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Our Agricultural Team: Mark Hill, Paul Oughton, Stuart Milsom, Peter Kirby, Amy McDonald, Jack Ayres-Sumner, Richard Dell, Hollie Byrne, Emily Shorter, William Jones, Nicola Windell, Lucy Kernon, & Tina Breakspear.

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