

Hampton Wafre Farm

A working Herefordshire farm turning steep arable slopes, once prone to soil erosion, into a Biodiversity Net Gain scheme, without giving up the farming.

ABOUT THE SCHEME

Hampton Wafre takes its name from Robert le Wafer, a Norman knight who held land here. The Domesday Book lists the farm, and a medieval village stood on the land until the Black Death emptied it around 1369.

Adam and Jane Lewis took on the farm in 1995. Steep arable slopes had been ploughed straight up and down the banks, sending silt into the watercourses below. Adam introduced contour ploughing, cover crops, minimum tillage and direct drilling, and the farm entered Countryside Stewardship in 1996.

After three decades of positive management, the soil itself has changed colour, from clay orange-red to a darker, loamy brown thick with worm holes. The farm hasn't used insecticides for 12 years, and Devil's Coach-horse beetles, absent for two decades, have returned as a result. Otters now live in the farm's lakes, alongside great crested newts whose numbers add to a county population considered internationally important. A goshawk hunts the land.

The Lewises are now extending that work into a formal, 30-year Biodiversity Net Gain scheme covering just over 28 hectares of the farm. The scheme converts seven hectares of cropland to species-rich grassland and a mixed orchard of apples, pears, damsons, walnuts, mulberries and cherries, including heritage Herefordshire varieties. A further 18 hectares of existing woodland, grassland and ponds moves into active management to reach good condition, including Lodge Coppice, one of the farm's two blocks of irreplaceable ancient woodland and the site of the ash dieback Adam and Jane have watched take hold over the years.

Caroline and Emily Lewis, Adam and Jane's daughters, already help with the farm and will take on its management as the scheme continues.

SCHEME BNG

Status:

Taking Allocations
Herefordshire Council LPA
Herefordshire Plateau NCA
Secured via Conservation Covenant
(Fera Science, Responsible Body)

CONTACT

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HABITATS AVAILABLE

Broad Habitat	Metric Habitat	Distinctiveness	Condition
Grassland	Other neutral grassland (created)	Medium	Moderate
Grassland	Traditional orchard (created)	High	Moderate
Woodland and forest	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (enhanced)	High	Good
Grassland	Other neutral grassland (enhanced)	Medium	Good
Lakes	Ponds (enhanced)	Medium	Good
Hedgerows	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees (enhanced)	High	Good
Watercourses	Other rivers and streams (secured/managed)	High	Maintained

TOWNS & CITIES

- Bromyard
- Leominster
- Hereford

NCAS

- Herefordshire Plateau (NCA 101)

LPAS

- Herefordshire Council

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