

Conservation Grazing Policy for Public Open Spaces

September 2023

Foreword

South Gloucestershire Council owns or manages a wide range of public open spaces across our area. This land is managed in line with statutory requirements, Council priorities and policies for the environment communities, and budget.

There are rising and new threats for nature which require our collective action in response to the Climate and Nature Emergency, which is at the heart of the Council Plan, associated priorities and commitments.

Protecting, restoring, and increasing biodiversity is a fundamental priority to safeguard the natural systems on which all life on earth is part of and depends.

This Conservation Grazing Policy explains how the council will assess the open spaces we are responsible for and where appropriate use grazing to manage suitable semi-natural open spaces to improve biodiversity and other benefits. The Policy aims to raise awareness and provide information about grazing so that the benefits and the risks are understood, and a clear process of assessment, management and action by the council is set out.

Grazing can be a sustainable method of land management that reaps huge benefits for nature and sustains traditional land management that is a core part of our landscape and cultural heritage. This policy explains why and how South Gloucestershire Council aims to increase semi-natural open space management through grazing where suitable to help restore nature, increase soil carbon, support local food production, and protect valued landscapes and heritage skills.



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Part One – Setting the scene

1.1 Introduction

South Gloucestershire Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019, recognising that the global climate is in a state of breakdown. We need to urgently prepare for the local impacts of a changing climate, reduce our carbon emissions and protect and restore nature.

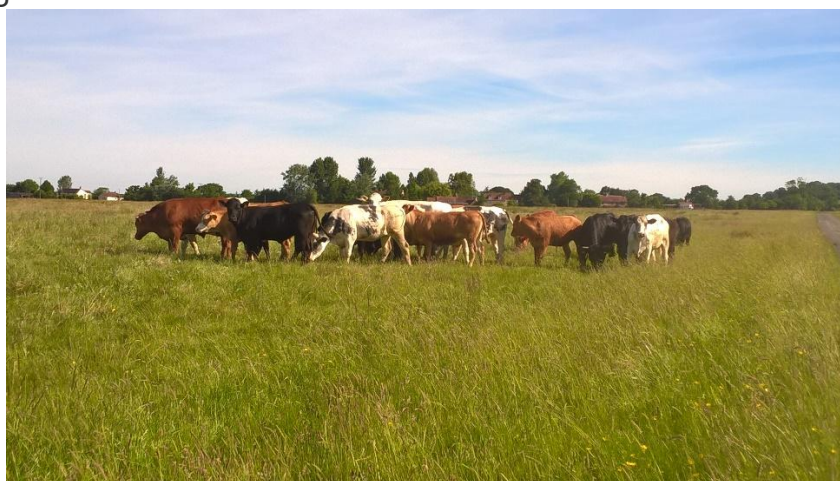
We also know that climate change along with other factors is having a significant impact on the health of nature and ecosystems, and that this is a critical part of the wider environmental crisis. For this reason, the council has taken an integrated approach and is taking action in response to the [Climate and Nature Emergency](#).

Changing how we manage our assets and work with our partners and communities will play a key role to help us to tackle this emergency together.

Management of semi-natural open spaces through grazing is a historical practice that is once again increasing in popularity in recent years because of the benefits it can provide for biodiversity, local food, heritage, and landscapes. We have come to appreciate what we have lost. The loss of grazing through changes to farming practices has had many negative consequences for nature conservation. Before the second World War, farming practices were less intensive and more conducive to an abundance of meadow plants and creatures that depended on these meadows. However, since the 1930's, 97% of these species-rich grasslands have been destroyed¹. The remaining 3% is at risk of scrub encroachment and needs protecting. The meadow-dependent plants and creatures are now often quite scarce, critically endangered, or even already extinct.

The return of grazing with the emphasis on nature conservation will help maintain the habitats that are of greatest wildlife value.

Grazing (of appropriate numbers/density and breeds) can have many benefits including improving biodiversity, managing hard to reach areas, supporting sustainable local food production, and reducing carbon emissions. However, grazing is not suitable for all open spaces and thorough assessment is needed regarding the suitability of the open space, including engagement and consultation with stakeholders.



Grazing cattle, Inglestone Common

1.2 Purpose

This policy outlines how South Gloucestershire Council can integrate conservation grazing as a land management tool. It summarises what grazing is intended to achieve and the best practice to achieve the benefits of grazing. It provides a methodology for assessing the suitability of public open spaces for grazing and the steps required to implement and manage grazing management.

This policy is aligned with the council's Pesticide Policy and Pollinator Action Plan which sets out how the council is taking action to reduce use of herbicide and increase pollinator habitat. The Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy 2021 sets out the commitment to reduce our carbon footprint within management of green infrastructure and the Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan to 2030 includes a commitment to update the Council Grazing Policy

1.3 Legislation & duties

Key legislation relevant to this policy includes:

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

[NERC Act, 2006:](#)

Its purpose is to raise the profile of biodiversity and make it a natural and integral part of policy and decision making.

- Section 40 – 'every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.'

This is often referred to as the Biodiversity Duty. The Act also identifies Habitat and Species of Principle Importance. The Environment Act will amend Section 40 of NERC to conserve and enhance biodiversity once the relevant provisions have come into force.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006

The [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#) is the principal law relating to animal welfare of all vertebrate animals. Owners and keepers have a duty of care to their animals and must make sure they meet the animal's welfare needs aligned with the '*Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare*' code:

- for a suitable environment and place to live
- for a suitable diet
- to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- to be housed with, or apart from, other animals (if applicable)
- to be protected from pain, injury, suffering and disease

The welfare of farmed animals is additionally protected by [The Welfare of Farmed Animals \(England\) Regulations 2007](#) (as amended), which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to any animal. The regulations contain specific requirements such as inspections, record keeping, freedom of movement, buildings and equipment and the feeding and watering of animals.

There is [additional guidance](#) to accompany the Welfare of Farmed Animals Regulations 2007 includes information on the application of the legislation to common land.

South Gloucestershire Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Plan to 2030

The councils GI Strategy 2021 and [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan to 2030](#) includes actions this Conservation Grazing Policy will deliver and support including:

- Action F7 - Grazing policy for council owned land
- Action N9 - Manage our grassland areas to improve nature
- Action N10 - Reduce the use of pesticides

This Conservation Grazing Policy also supports and links to the following policies and actions from the councils GI and Nature Recovery Action Plan including:

- South Gloucestershire Council Pesticides Policy
- South Gloucestershire Plant Biosecurity Policy
- South Gloucestershire Ragwort Policy
- South Gloucestershire Verge Management Programme
- South Gloucestershire Pollinator Action Plan

1.4 Responsibilities

In line with 1.3 above, South Gloucestershire Council has the duty to have regard for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in the discharge of its normal functions. The duty applies to all local authorities, community, parish and town councils, police, fire and health authorities and utility companies.

“Protecting and enhancing the environment for future generations is a cross cutting value within the South Gloucestershire Community Strategy and is one of the core values that underpins all our work.” South Gloucestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2021.

1.5 Benefits of grazing

Grazing is used as a management technique to maintain grassland and prevent scrub and bramble encroachment. It has been used for centuries and has played a crucial role in shaping precious landscapes. Meadows have co-evolved with herbivores. Before human interaction, herbivores roamed the land, maintaining areas of open grassland allowing niche plant and animal species to thrive.

Many of the open spaces managed by the council are managed as grassland and therefore have the potential to provide an ideal habitat for pollinators and other flora and fauna. Globally, 75% of human food production relies on insect pollination and yet insect populations are plummeting.

Species-rich grassland is important for biodiversity and for soil carbon storage. It is a declining habitat and needs careful management, grazing is ideal. If there is no management, succession takes place with bramble and scrub quickly growing impeding access, reducing biodiversity, and dominating the landscape.

Benefits of grazing include:

Increased plant biodiversity - Grazing animals eat selectively and often choose more dominant and abundant plant species. This allows the less competitive and less commonplace plants and wildflowers space to grow. Wildflowers encourage insects, which are in turn eaten by birds and mammals.

Sustainable - Low density grazing can be a more sustainable, cost effective, natural, and lower carbon management approach than using machinery, and grazing animals can often get to areas that machinery is not able to reach.



Cattle grazing, Hawkesbury Common

Increased micro-habitats - As they graze across the landscape, the cattle create a variety of different grass sward heights and a mosaic of habitats for plants and animals.

Lying and rolling also helps increase structural diversity. This can be important for ground-nesting birds like lapwing and snipe that need a variety of grass heights to successfully rear their young.

Microstructures such as ant hills are not damaged by grazing animals compared to when machines are used for mowing.

Creating bare ground - Trampling creates areas of bare ground, producing nurseries for seedlings that might not otherwise survive and providing basking and hunting opportunities for warmth-loving invertebrates and reptiles.

Introduction of dung – This generates an ecosystem in its own right. More than 250 species of insect can be found in or on cattle dung in the UK and these in turn provide food for birds, badgers, foxes, and bats.

Increased carbon sequestration – Soils are an important carbon sink with grasslands storing approximately 34% of the terrestrial carbon stock. (R. P. White, S. Murray, M. Rohweder, *Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems: Grassland Ecosystems*. World Resources Institute, 2000). Species rich grassland has higher levels of soil carbon than species poor grassland. Management by grazing to improve biodiversity and create species rich grassland will also increase the amount of carbon stored in the soil carbon compared to cutting grass by machines. There is net carbon sequestration within grassland systems in general, but in a mixed grazing and cutting system there is less carbon sequestration than under a pure grazing system.' (European Innovation Partnership Agricultural Network, Grazing for Carbon Report 2018.)

Although carbon storage of the soils of moderately grazed grassland is higher than mown grassland, the net carbon and greenhouse gas output of grazing compared to cutting by machinery is not easy to calculate due to there being many variables. For example, there are methane emissions from grazing animals and carbon emissions in vehicle movements associated with animal welfare checks.

Improved soil health – reduced use of machinery reduces soil compression which protects soil structure, health and function regarding water storage and drainage.

Grasslands managed through grazing as opposed to mowing will develop larger and longer root systems which improve soil stability and permeability.

Encourages food production - Local farmers benefit from the grazing opportunity to graze their animals in a cost-effective way, supporting local and sustainable food production.

Supports culture - Historically, grazing was a popular management tool, particularly on commons, many of which South Gloucestershire Council own or manage. Revitalising this historic practice recreates people's link to cultural heritage.

Improves people's health and wellbeing – grazing will often add to visitor's experience. A well-used and loved open space tend to attract less vandalism and abuse. It also creates a direct interaction between people and nature which has many positive benefits for health and wellbeing. However, to reduce risks of injury to public users of sites or PROW on grazed land, considerations regarding breed, stocking density, fencing, potential signage etc are important to avoid potential conflicts or incidents to both people (walkers, cyclists, horse riders), cattle, pet dogs, horses etc

1.6 Current Practice

At the time of writing, South Gloucestershire Council currently has grazing on a small number of public open spaces that it owns or manages.

These include:

- Cattle, horses, donkeys, and sheep on Hawkesbury, Inglestone, Hareley and Assley common
- Goats on the wildlife site, Parkway Station
- Goats on Wick Golden Valley
- Cattle at Woodwell Meadows



Horses, Inglestone Common

The Council is looking at additional sites for grazing including reintroducing grazing on Siston Common.

The current grazing that is occurring on council owned or managed land is with animals not owned by the council. This involves either graziers that have commoner's rights putting their animals out on the commons or working in partnership with Street Goat, an urban goat farming cooperative.

The council's principal grassland management technique is mechanical mowing. The Council uses different mechanical mowing techniques from frequently cut amenity grass to less frequent cutting for a hay meadow cut. Mechanical mowing has a cost in terms of machinery purchase, maintenance and running, staff costs and grass disposal costs as well as producing carbon emissions.

Part Two – Scope

In scope

Grazing on public open spaces managed or owned by South Gloucestershire Council is included within the scope of this policy.

Out of scope

Land owned or managed by third parties is not included in this policy. Fly grazing which is illegal grazing on council land is not included in this policy. Grazing on smallholdings or Grimsbury Community Farm is not included.

Part Three – Vision and Objectives

3.1 Vision

South Gloucestershire Council's vision for grazing is to incorporate grazing where appropriate on semi-natural open spaces. By doing so, it is hoped to improve the habitat in a sustainable way, help nature to recover, improve biodiversity, and where appropriate, promote, and support local food production.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy aligns with the council's [Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Action Plan to 2030](#), and work being done as a result of the council declaring a Climate and Nature Emergency.

1. Examine the feasibility of introducing grazing when managing semi-natural open spaces with an aim to better manage open spaces to achieve increased biodiversity and other benefits.
2. The council will identify potential council owned sites that may be suitable for grazing.
3. Incorporate grazing opportunities into funding bids to progress the introduction of more grazing.
4. Consider grazing opportunities on suitable commons taking into account Commoners' rights.
5. Investigate the feasibility of using animals from Grimsbury Community Farm on other open spaces.
6. Review the success of grazing that is currently in operation on sites that the council own or manage.

Part Four – Grazing Assessment

This section of the policy details the considerations for South Gloucestershire Council to assess its open spaces and evaluate whether management by grazing is appropriate. Each open space will be different with its own considerations.

Thorough assessment, site preparation and public communication is key to successful grazing management. The majority of South Gloucestershire Council's semi-natural open spaces are accessible by the public, therefore comprehensive and timely public consultation and engagement is an essential key step in the process.

4.1 Feasibility Study

Producing a feasibility study is an important first step. This will specify the funding and resources required.

A feasibility study needs to incorporate a full assessment of the site defining its boundaries and the scope of grazing. It should include details of all the items listed below and be fully costed to determine the up front and long-term costs required.

4.2 Partnerships

Consideration should be given to working in partnership. This can provide benefits including sharing resources, assisting with external funding, and sharing expertise.

The first steps to forming a partnership are detailed in the extract from 'Local Grazing Schemes: working towards sustainable grazing systems. A best practice guide.'

4.2. Initial steps - Working Together - Forming Effective Conservation Partnerships

Issue to be resolved	Details and description
1. Objective setting and identification of need	Defining overall aims; giving priority to bio-diversity objectives, but not undervaluing others; establishing boundaries to area of operation; registering partners' commitment
2. Audit Assessing number, size, location, and scatter of wildlife (and other) sites;	Assessing scale, structure, and types of agricultural system; identifying sources of livestock, farming expertise, other skills, and practical facilities; reviewing potential markets for produce and sources of funding or support
3. Partnerships Identifying common aims and potential conflicts amongst partners;	developing co-operative ethos on basis of mutual benefit; sharing of knowledge, effort, resources, and responsibilities to improve efficiency and / or effectiveness; linking with other relevant sectors outside conservation
4. Networking / communication	Sharing information to avoid 'reinventing wheel'; gathering expertise; building commitment; facilitating understanding of / sympathy with farming and other sectors
5. Establish project structure	Developing organisation & infrastructure; assigning responsibilities to specific partners; identifying lead organisation, key person (e.g., project officer), etc.; keeping structure and scale appropriate to aims

4.3 Assessment of the site and risks

Assess the site thoroughly prior to grazing. Identify the biodiversity and commercial objectives for the site and map the area to take into account terrain, access, water sources, vegetation, fencing and any hazards.

Existing habitats and historic features

The site should be selected and thoroughly assessed for suitability. Use information such as species data from the Bristol Environmental Records Centre, nature, and historic designation information from Magic Map to determine what is present on the site.

Up to date habitat information is important part of site evaluation. A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) can be a useful tool for evaluating the site's current biodiversity.

Assessing conservation objectives for the site will determine many other details such as what stock are required, where and when.

Site history

This is an important consideration. Implementing grazing can restore and support the area's culture, heritage, and tradition. Reintroducing grazing to a site is often more popular with local residents than introducing grazing to a new site.

Buildings and handling facilities

What is existing? What may you require? Is there ample shelter from sun, wind and rain or does some form of shelter need to be installed? Is there a requirement for handling facilities to assist with getting animals on and off site? There are mobile handling facilities available if leaving facilities on site is an issue. Some graziers are reluctant to leave handling facilities on site for fear of these being used to steal their animals.

Fencing

Walk the boundaries and assess the current security. Note that different animals have different requirements for fencing. Sheep and goats get through smaller gaps and goats can be very determined climbers! Assess who is responsible for the fencing, does it belong to the council or a neighbouring resident?

There are different types of fencing available including physical fencing and virtual fencing which involves collars with transmitters placed on the grazing animals.

Equipment

There is a range of equipment that may be required or beneficial. For example, GPS trackers may be useful for large sites to track the animals and keep track of their welfare, water bowsers and a nearby water source may be needed for drinking water.

Animal welfare

The '*Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare*' code in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 states that animals must have:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury, or disease
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour
5. Freedom from fear and distress

Risk assessment

The risk assessment must incorporate the five freedoms of animal welfare, ensuring sources of potential risk to animal welfare are eliminated or, at the very least, kept to a minimum.

A risk assessment is essential to identify risks for example, steep banks, water courses, wet ground, and roads. Some areas may need to be excluded from grazing if they are high risk.

4.4 Stock

Determine what stock is required on site. Plan the stocking densities, grazing patterns, and the type of animals best suited to that site. Hardy breeds may be needed if winter grazing is desired. Docile breeds and individuals that are used to interactions with humans and dogs may be a high priority for some open spaces.

More information can be found on the Grazing Animals Project [Breeds Profile Handbook](#).

4.5 Graziers

It is often most efficient and effective to engage local graziers. They will already have stock and skills. They are likely to have their own cattle handling and transporting equipment. They should be able to work with the site requirements to move animals to where and when they are needed for the conservation benefits.

Some local authorities have taken ownership of their own grazing animals, but this can be complex with animals needing to be moved regularly or seasonally and a high skill level being required for stock husbandry. Grimsbury Community Farm have animals that may be suitable for grazing semi-natural sites.

For grazing on council owned or managed land a grazing licence will be required.

The most appropriate channels for making contact with livestock producers will need to be identified for each situation (e.g. National Farmers Union, local agricultural societies and discussion groups, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups, Natural England project officers, farm advisory services, consultants, auctioneers, land agents, etc.)

The Grazing Animals Project produced a '[Finding a Grazier](#)' leaflet about working through the key considerations and then sourcing grazing animals or contracting graziers

4.6 Skills and staffing

Detail the skills that will be required to assess, introduce, and manage the grazing. This may include ecological surveying of the site, practical work to make the grazing possible such as installing water or fencing. Consultation and public communications before grazing is implemented is an important skill to ensure that grazing is successful.

Stock husbandry skills are essential. This should be shared so there is not just one person with these skills. An experienced stock person can be supported by less experienced people for example through a Looker or Watcher network of local volunteers who have basic skills to identify and report issues.

Volunteers can be a valuable source of support and information. They may be regular walkers who know the site and animals well. Training is available through Lantra for basic Looking skills.

4.7 Public engagement

Initial engagement:

Introducing and maintaining a successful grazing scheme will often depend on effective public engagement. Site users can make a huge difference and be a real benefit to a successful grazing scheme being supportive of monitoring animal welfare and site maintenance. Consultation before the introduction of grazing is important to ensure that all views and information is taken into consideration. Locals often have in depth site knowledge that is not recorded elsewhere which may be of use e.g., areas that flood or bird nesting sites.

Dog walkers often have more specific concerns than other site users with queries regarding the interaction between the grazing animals and dogs.

It is important to ensure that all stakeholders have been involved with plans to introduce grazing. Stakeholders to involve include, but are not limited to:

- Residents living adjacent to the site
- Site users
- Council teams for example rights of way, highways, drainage.
- Ward and parish councillors
- Specific interest groups such as horse riders through the Horse Society, wildlife groups
- Adjacent landowners
- Police
- Residents Associations
- Local groups who may use the site on an ad hoc basis for example schools, nurseries, cycling and walking groups, community centres.

The council's communications team should be involved from the beginning to assist with design and planning engagement, press releases and social media.

A formal consultation may be useful. This could be meetings on site or in a local building, an online questionnaire and consultations sent direct to stakeholders. This will give people the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the plans.

Continued engagement:

Regular engagement is helpful to build and maintain relationships with site users.

Information that may be useful to share throughout grazing includes:

- A point of contact for grazing and site issues. To be displayed on site as well as online.
- People may like to know when and where the animals are grazing. An updated map with grazing timings or even online GPS tracking may be appropriate.
- Social media is often used so people can get up to date information on grazing animals.
- Regular communication with active volunteers helps to keep people keen and well trained.

4.8 Maintenance

The feasibility study should include details of the long-term maintenance of the site and grazing.

Site infrastructure:

This is key to successful grazing. Regular checks need to be made on the fencing, gates, any shelter, and water. Ensure that you have a budget and ability to repair these if needed and have a back-up plan for example a water bowser for use if a water trough is out of action.

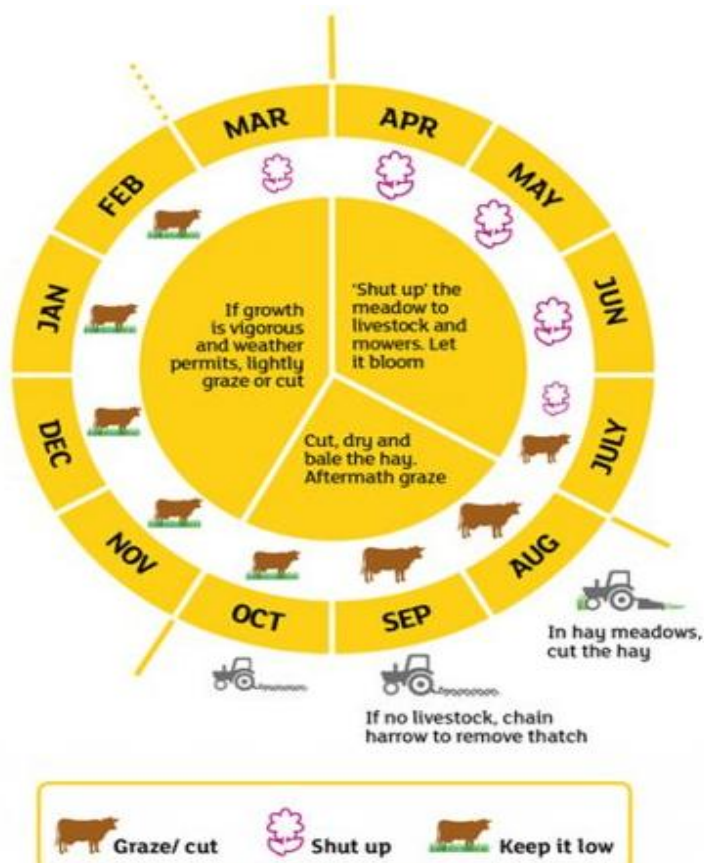
Grassland maintenance:

Grazing for part of the year is the optimum regime for creating a species-rich flowering grassland. This will allow plants to flower and set seed, providing a food source for pollinators and a seed source for future plants.

A combination of grazing and cutting for hay is a maintenance method that can be used, alternatively if a hay cut is not practical, grazing the site from July until February.

This will depend on your site, the weather and the hardiness of the animals used for grazing. For example, heavy clay areas may not be suited to having grazing animals out throughout the year.

More information on grazing and hay making for meadow maintenance is



available through [Magnificent Meadows, Hay and Pasture Management](#)

Image from Plantlife,

[Managing a flower-rich pasture with grazing](#)

Monitor site:

Regular checks of the area are important to assess the success of grazing. It is common for it to take five years or more for there to be a change in plant populations so you may need patience!

Check the area for over or under grazing. Compaction or poaching of the soil or large bare areas are a sign of over grazing. Although some bare ground is beneficial for nesting sites for bumblebees and ants and hunting ground for beetles, it can result in the spread of problem species such as thistles and docks. You may want to consider less animals, for a shorter time period or moving them to other areas.

Annual monitoring of the plant or animal populations can be a useful way to monitor the successes. There are different survey techniques to monitor the grassland as identified by Plantlife:

- identify the types and extent of meadows.
- monitor the condition of meadows.
- monitor different taxa (groups of species like invertebrates, plants, and mammals) or individual species.

Economic viability:

Keep a budget sheet with the spend on the grazing. Monitor this to assess the costs of grazing. You may wish to compare this to alternative methods of grassland management for comparison.

Communication:

Have regular communication with the grazier to maintain two-way feedback and make any changes that are needed as soon as possible.

Further information

- Training, links to other organisations, animal welfare and health and safety information

- Best practice guide to local grazing schemes
[Microsoft Word - lgs best practice guide 2ed.doc \(rbst.org.uk\)](#)
- Everything you ever wanted to know about making meadows.
[Plantlife Meadows' Hub](#)

Appendix One: Sample Risk Assessment

This risk assessment is specifically designed to help assess the suitability of a marginal site for stock grazing or to formalise a risk assessment for a site already being grazed. (reproduced with permission from the National Trust)

1.0 BACKGROUND: Site Information	
Site name and property:	Area (ha):
Designations:	Number of grazing compartments:
Agri-environment schemes:	CPH number:
Registered organic:	Brief description of site:

2.1 PHYSICAL FEATURES: Hazards and boundaries
Are any of the following or similar features present? (Please specify). cliffs, quarries, significant surface rock, mineshafts, steep slopes, combs, unstable slopes, bogs deep water bodies.
Are these dangers hidden from sight by scrub?
Do these or any other features present a significant risk to livestock?
What has been done to reduce the risk? e.g. Fully/ partial/ electric fencing, clear some scrub, sourcing stock from similar terrain, sourcing, calm stock, sourcing older stock/matriarch
What other steps could you take to reduce the risk?
Are there any pinch points? Narrow paths on steep slopes or next to other hazards?
Can the hazard be fenced, or the pinch point widened/fenced out?
2.2 PHYSICAL FEATURES: Shelter and Forage
Does the site have a well-drained lying area and shelter all year round?
If not, can this be provided, or stock removed in winter?
Does the vegetation present enough good nutrition for the stock for the period they are due to graze? If not are arrangements in place for supplementary feeding?
Does the vegetation / terrain present problems for checking stock?
What measures aids can realistically be used to improve locating livestock?
2.3 PHYSICAL FEATURES: General
Do site conditions preclude cattle / sheep/ equines for any reason? If so, please expand.
Severity of risk (Low/medium/high):
Likelihood of Event:
Adequacy of controls:

3.0 POISONOUS PLANTS AND INJURIOUS WEEDS
Legally controlled injurious weeds:

If present, underline the quantity of injurious weed present D – Dominant, A – Abundant, F - Frequent, O - Occasional, R - Rare Common ragwort: Spear thistle: Creeping or field thistle: Broadleaved dock or curled dock:
Is there a plan in place to eradicate/ control injurious weeds from the site?
Is spread controlled through practical or chemical means?
Does the remaining population present a risk to stock?
Other poisonous plants on the site:
Are the following plants present in the grazing areas: bracken, yew, hemlock, hemlock water dropwort, laurel, rhododendron, woody, black or deadly nightshade? Are there large amounts of nuts/fruit lying on the ground? Acorns and apples can cause severe illness if ingested in large quantities. Does anyone dump garden waste in the area? Lawn trimmings, laburnum, lupins, privet etc can all cause poisoning – assume any garden waste to be toxic.
If any of these are present on the site, what actions will you take to reduce risk? Can these species be removed or access to them restricted? Can animals be removed at risky times, acorns and apples collected or the dumping of grass trimmings be stopped? If bracken is present, source stock from a bracken rich area. List actions: Overhanging vegetation that poses a risk is cut back to the boundary.
Severity of risk:
Likelihood of event:
Remaining risk after control measures:

4.0 DISEASE RISKS AND EMERGENCY PLANNING
Is the site known to have any particular livestock disease risk? e.g. Bovine TB, fluke, red water, new forest eye, flystrike?
Can this risk be reduced by good health plans, parasitic control programs or varying time of year to graze? Please explain
Do you have an emergency action plan for dealing with livestock incidents, injuries, and illness?
Severity of risk:
Likelihood of event:
Remaining risk after control measures:

5.0 WATER
Does the site have adequate water supply in all compartments, all year round even in summer?
Do you have access to an alternative supply (bowser etc) if the supply dries or freezes?
Do you check water supply every day?
If inadequate can the current supply be improved?
Severity of risk:
Likelihood of event:
Remaining risk after control measures:

6.0 OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE
Does the site have a stock proof ring fence suitable for the stock type used?
Straying livestock: Are gates / fences secure at all times?
In the event of escape, would straying livestock pose a heightened risk to traffic?
Are there appropriate temporary or permanent facilities to safely load animals on site – a double gated track way accessible by vehicle, or square pen at exit gate as a minimum?
Do you have adequate safe handling facilities for the type of stock held?

Do you have access to layback grazing and housing facilities on site or nearby that can be used for the treatment of casualties?
If the current facilities are inadequate, can they be improved?
Severity of risk: Likelihood of event: Remaining risk after mitigating measures:

7.0 STAFF SKILLS AND CAPACITY
Does the stock manager have the necessary skills, experience, and enthusiasm to manage stock? Give details of training and experience.
Is more training needed?
How far is the site from the normal place of work?
Is there the capacity for stock to be checked every day, all year round, by a capable person?
Severity of risk: Likelihood of event: Remaining risk after mitigating measures:

8.0 CROSS COMPLIANCE
Have any particular cross compliance issues been identified and remain unresolved?
Severity of risk: Likelihood of event: Remaining risk after control measures:

9.0 RISK TO ANIMALS FROM PUBLIC ACCESS
Is there public access to the site? What type of user and use occurs? Is the use heavy or light?
Is there the anticipation or history of problems with public access and livestock on this site?
Can the risk be reduced by the following methods? Physical works to widen/fence out pinch points Increasing compartment size to give livestock avoidance space Temporary signage all access points Taking stock off in school holidays and other busy periods Choosing stock used to coping with people and dogs Removing livestock esp. ponies that mug' visitors for food Re-siting of water/feed points Fencing stock away from the public Other measures:
Severity of risk: Likelihood of event: Remaining risk after control measures:

10.0 RISK SUMMARY

Risk Section	High / Medium / Low
2. Physical Features	
3. Poisonous Plants	
4. Disease Risks and Emergency Planning	
5. Water	
6. Other Infrastructure	
7. Staff Skills and Capacity	

8. Cross Compliance	
9. Risk to animals from Public Access	

This risk to animals grazing this site is considered to be **unacceptable / acceptable** (delete as required)

Subject to the following actions taking place:

-

This assessment has been undertaken by:

Dated:

Job Title:

Appendix Two: Site Audit

Table 1: Example of a site audit spreadsheet – useful for initial audit and to record, monitor and report on project implementation.

List of grazing sites	Status e.g., SSSI, SNCI, LNR	Owner name	Size (ha)	Grazing area (ha)	Habitats fenced? Y / n	Watered? Y / n	Handling facilities available? Y / n

Stock lookers available? Y / n	Grazing period needed	Preferred grazing animal (species)	Preferred number of animals	Site constraints	Neighbouring sites or issues

References:

1 (Fuller, R.M. (1987) The changing extent and conservation interest of lowland grasslands in England and Wales: a review of grassland surveys 1930-84. Biological Conservation 40: 281-300.