

Riverford hosts NFU and Defra visit at Peterborough branch



A RECENT visit to Riverford Organic provided an opportunity for the National Farmers' Union (NFU), NFU members and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) officials to explore the upcoming National Organic Plan for England and how industry and the Government can collaborate to build a thriving, resilient organic sector.

The NFU welcomed a recent opportunity to join organic stakeholders, NFU members, Defra officials and Dame Angela Eagle (pictured left), Farming Minister at the time of the visit, for an on-farm visit to Riverford Organic's Cambridgeshire site. The visit provided an opportunity to showcase the scale, ambition and innovation within the organic sector, and to discuss how the Government and industry can work together to support its future growth.

Former Farming Minister and guests were welcomed with an organic lunch before heading out on a guided tour of the farm.

Riverford's site at Sacrewell Farm, near Peterborough, spans 500 acres of fully organic farmland and includes a bespoke packhouse that supports the firm national vegetable box operation. Riverford has been farming there since 2007, and it was the first 'sister' farm to its original headquarters in Devon at Wash Farm, near Buckfastleigh.

During the tour, attendees saw leeks being planted and viewed several of the SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive) options that Riverford has incorporated into its land management systems. The Riverford team also highlighted the integrated farm management approaches they use to deliver on the firm's organic commitments, demonstrating how environmental stewardship and commercial production can work hand in hand.

The NFU and Defra group then moved into the packhouse, where some visitors had the chance to help pack vegetable boxes and see the wide range of fresh produce harvested that day. This hands-on experience offered valuable insight into the scale and efficiency of Riverford's operation, the NFU declared.

NFU President hosts Labour's new minister

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step would be planning and regulatory reforms that supports our farmers and growers such as permitted development rights for reservoirs and flexible abstraction licences.

"We agreed there is much work to do, but only by working together can we strengthen national food security and invest in the future of Britain's farming sector to support the vital role it performs in producing food for 70 million people and protecting and enhancing the great British countryside."

Mr Morgan became the new Farming Minister following a ministerial reshuffle prompted by the resignation of both Defence Secretary John Healey and Armed Forces Minister Al Carns.

Mr Morgan was appointed on June 12, replacing Dame Angela Eagle, who moved to the Home Office and the Cabinet Office as Security Minister as the replacement for Dan Jarvis, who took over from Mr Healey as Defence Secretary.

Mr Morgan was previously Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Early Education) at the Department for Education. He was elected as the Labour MP for Portsmouth South in June 2017.

Mr Morgan said: "I am delighted to be appointed Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs. Being asked by the Prime Minister to

BNG survey shows swing

Hugh Townsend, FRICS, FAAV, FCI Arb is an expert land agent/surveyor who writes a regular column for the *Western Morning News* farming section

THE results of the May 2025 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) consultation by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) indicate the pendulum is swinging towards the loosening up of the hierarchy.

However, the market is still only steering purchasers to first try to find the units they need for their development in the same Local Planning Authority (LPA) or National Character Area (NCA) - soon to be Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) - without also looking nationally at far cheaper alternatives, where vendors are prepared to trade across borders and are currently bearing the spatial weighting (SRM) themselves. These competitive prices are one reason why Townsend Chartered Surveyors have such a high rate of success selling to purchasers, at over 70% of those who approach us, and we continue to be the "go to" broker to sell with.

Set out in the table accompanying this article are some of Townsend Chartered Surveyors units available from all over England, comparing them with the lowest prices advertised on Gaia and reported by Biodiversity Units UK.

Further Townsend Chartered Surveyors discounts can also be available, depending on lot size and the 'bundle' of the different habitats needed.

To illustrate the current 'two-tier' market, go to Gaia BNG Marketplace (<https://marketplace.gaiacompany.io/hub/marketplace>). Then, change the filter button in the top right from 'Relevance' to 'Price: low to high'.

This will bring the cheapest prices nationally to the top of your screen; and you will see that, at the

HABITAT TYPE			TCS PRICE	GAIA PRICE (June 2026)	BIODIVERSITY UNITS UK PRICE (February 2026)*
Grassland	Modified grassland	Low	£14,500	£19,500	None listed
	Other lowland acid grassland	Medium	£15,500	£22,000	None listed
	Other neutral grassland	Medium	£14,500	£17,500	£24,098
	Floodplain wetland mosaic & CFGM	High	£21,000	£27,000	£58,220
	Traditional Orchard	High	£21,000	£28,500	£30,189
Wetland	Lowland calcareous grassland	High	£18,500	£25,000	£42,708
	Lowland dry acid grassland	Very High	£18,500	£25,000	None
	Lowland meadows	Very High	£18,500	£19,000	£33,702
	Upland hay meadows	Very High	£18,500	None listed	None listed
	Reedbeds	High	£18,500	£50,000	None listed
Woodland and forest	Purple moor grass & rush pasture	Very High	£25,000	None listed	None listed
	Other woodland; broadleaved	Medium	£18,000	£21,000	£33,922
	Other woodland; mixed	Medium	£18,000	£25,000	£33,922
	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	High	£19,000	£40,000	£34,849
	Wet woodland	High	£19,000	£35,000	£50,157
Heathland & shrub	Mixed scrub	Medium	£15,000	£17,500	£27,779
Lakes	Ponds (non-priority)	Medium	£18,000	£23,992	£55,875
Individual trees	Rural tree	Medium	£20,000	£25,000	£28,455
Hedgerows	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	High	£17,000	None listed	£22,891
	Native species rich hedgerow	Medium	£17,000	£20,000	£24,677
	Native species rich hedgerow with trees	High	£18,500	£25,000	£22,891
	Native species rich hedgerow with - associated with bank or ditch	High	£18,500	£20,000	£22,891
	Native species rich hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch	Very High	£18,500	£20,000	None listed
Watercourse	Other rivers and streams	High	£140,000	£95,000	£141,450

* Prices from Biodiversity Units UK are split between North and South and the above prices are whichever is the lower of the two. Asking prices are per unit, subject to contract, LPA/RB approval, VAT, lot sizes and the 'bundle' of different habitats needed, with potential further discounts available including where the vendor bears the SRM.

moment, the top 12 are Townsend Chartered Surveyors sites.

The average price differential for area and hedgerow habitats as listed above/below between the advertised prices of Townsend Chartered Surveyors and the next lowest on Gaia is £7,300 and on Biodiversity Units UK is £16,000 cheaper per unit.

For some habitats, Townsend Chartered Surveyors is £37,800 cheaper.

To ensure purchasers obtain the most reasonable prices on Gaia BNG Marketplace, from the national market, search first by habitat type and not region, LPA or NCA.

Let us at Townsend Chartered Surveyors know what you are after and we will confirm whether this is one of our vendors who will bear the SRM, meaning the asking price will remain the overall cost of the developer receiving these units "delivered to the development site".



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'My focus will be clear: driving a green economy, protecting our natural environment and ensuring our rural and coastal communities truly thrive'

STEPHEN MORGAN MP

serve our country in this role is an immense privilege.

"Alongside the Environment Secretary and team, my focus will be clear: driving a green economy, protecting our natural environment and ensuring our rural and coastal communities truly thrive.

"I look forward to working with others backing our world-leading food, farming, and fishing industries," Mr Morgan concluded.

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