



Wadlens Farm, Sherborne Vision & Letting Particulars



Available to Let by Tender



Farming for food and nature...

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...High Nature Status



1. The Opportunity

The National Trust invites management proposals and tenders for the Farm Business Tenancy of Wadlens Farm located on the Sherborne Park Estate in Gloucestershire.

The farmland at Wadlens is home to a variety of habitats including parkland, pasture, ponds and hedges. This is an exciting opportunity to significantly improve the habitats, joining them up across the landscape and to create a thriving farm business with nature at its heart.

The National Trust has a bold national vision and strategy for enhancing and restoring nature across farmed landscapes and this opportunity at Sherborne is presented with a strong emphasis on nature-friendly farming, and management that enhances nature even further on the Holding.

We understand that there is no single approach to what nature-friendly farming may look like, so we are keen to see applicants demonstrate an innovative, resilient farming system that delivers great habitat management through livestock grazing, whilst providing a sustainable farm business.

For examples of existing National Trust farms being managed with nature in mind, please see the following web page:

[Nature-friendly farming | National Trust](#)

2. Vision for Wadlens Farm

The National Trust has reviewed the priorities for delivery of its charitable purpose in its 130th year. These are captured in our new strategy 'People and Nature Thriving'. More details can be found at [Our strategy to 2035 | National Trust](#).

Our ambition for Wadlens Farm includes;

- Creating a richer, more joined up natural environment with an improved network of habitats, including hedgerows and species-rich grassland.
- Demonstrating that farming with nature can be successful and that each can complement the other.
- Improving soil health by increasing organic matter, carbon capture and water infiltration within the soil.
- Providing a habitat for some key species already found on the estate to thrive, such as lapwings and raptors.

- Engagement with visitors to enhance their enjoyment of the estate and to provide more opportunities to connect the public with the land, farming and wildlife.

Over the 15 years of this new tenancy, the vision is that Wadlens Farm will be rich in colour from its diverse flowering plants, have variety in vegetation structure, be buzzing with insect life, and the sounds of breeding birds will be common. It will be a key nature hotspot to connect habitats across the wider Sherborne estate.

We are looking for a Tenant....



...who shares our vision for wildlife and nature

3.1 Background to Wadlens Farm

Wadlens Farm is 88ha of Grade 3 permanent grassland and forms part of the Sherborne Park Estate in Gloucestershire which lies within the Cotswold National Landscape. Sherborne Park was left to the National Trust in 1987 by Charles Dutton, 7th Baron Sherborne, and is a large lowland estate of over 4,000 acres of mixed farmland, woodland, various water bodies and water meadows.

It is an exciting time at Sherborne as we undergo transformative change through the project 'Big Nature Better Access' to create a Cotswold landscape for everyone where nature and people can thrive, and where we celebrate the landscape which is rich in both history and beauty.

We have recently taken the opportunity to rework the boundaries of some farms on the estate and Wadlens Farm is a newly formed farm combining areas from two previous holdings.

The current land use is permanent pasture and has been grazed predominantly with sheep and some cattle over the years. Although there are some areas of nice habitat, the level of diversity within the sward has not yet reached its potential. We would like to see a species-rich grassland across the farm providing excellent examples of flower-rich grassland for local wildlife and to provide the livestock with a rich and varied diet.

The soil type across the Holding is predominantly loamy and clayey over limestone but there are also some sandy areas to the west of the Estate. The results of recent soil tests will be made available once completed.

The Sherborne Brook runs through several fields on the Holding and provides a vital habitat for wetland birds and water voles. Careful management will be required alongside the Brook to restrict any bankside poaching. There is also the opportunity to create more ponds in areas of fields which naturally pool up in the winter.

There are buildings on the Holding which can be used to house livestock as well as provide storage. If additional buildings are believed to be required then this should be made clear in any tender alongside a proposal for costs and any return expected. The Trust is also open to having a conversation regarding proposals for housing if Wadlens Farm is not additional land to add into an existing holding. The Trust own a variety of residential properties in the village and any requirement should be made clear within the tender, but will be by separate negotiation.

3.2 Background to the National Trust

The National Trust is an independent conservation and access charity which cares for special places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/>

We are supported by some 5 million members and 65,000 volunteers. We are one of Europe's leading conservation bodies and one of the largest landowners in the UK, managing approximately 247,900 hectares or around 1.5% of land across England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the benefit of the nation.

The National Trust manages land to achieve an array of objectives ranging from the protection of historic landscapes and features to creating and managing wildlife habitats, with sustainable farming an important mechanism.

Conservation of biodiversity and landscape has always been part of the Trust's charitable purpose. The National Trust is committed to delivering *"sustainable land management, meeting society's needs today while keeping land and its resources in good condition for ever, for everyone"*

3.3 The Holding

The area proposed to be included in the letting is shown edged red on the attached plan.

The Holding is to be let on a Farm Business Tenancy for a duration of 15 years. The Tenant will be required to personally farm the Holding. Sub-letting, share farming or taking in livestock belonging to another person is prohibited unless previously agreed in writing with the Trust.

Location	Sherborne Park Estate
The Land	88ha of permanent grassland
The Buildings	There are several buildings in a farmyard which can be included within the Tenancy if required.
The Tenancy	The Holding will be let on a Farm Business Tenancy
Commencement Date	To be confirmed but aiming for November/December 2026.
Duration	15 year term
Rent	Payable in advance either monthly or quarterly as agreed. VAT VAT is payable.
Break Clause	The agreement will include a mutual break clause in the 3 rd and 5 th year.
Water	Mains water supplies the Holding, Tenant responsible for bills.
Electrics	There are electrics in the farmyard, Tenant responsible for bills.

Repairs	The agreement will include landlord and tenant repairing obligations. Full details of these will be made available at the viewing day.
Outgoing Tenant	There is no outgoing tenant.

A tenant who can enhance habitats as part of a successful farm business...



...growing amazing food within nature rich habitats

3.4 The Farmhouse

No housing is to be provided under the proposed letting, however residential accommodation could be made available on the Estate if Wadlens Farm is not additional land to add into an existing holding. This would be a separate agreement to be agreed in discussion with the Estate Manager and Lettings Officer.

3.5 Farm Buildings and Yard

The farmyard at Wadlens Farm is known locally as the Old Dairy Units. It consists of a main cattle shed, a cubicle shed, a hay/straw barn and 2 old silage clamps. However, please note that these are not for storing clamped silage due to drainage holes in the walls, but baled silage would be acceptable.

We will be interested to hear in a proposal how these buildings are proposed to be used, if at all. They do not all need to be included in the Tenancy if they are not required as part of the farming business. We are also aware that some work may be needed to the buildings, so we are interested to hear what improvement work may be proposed or new building requirements. This proposal should include an outline of cost responsibility proposed and expected return.

Any tenant will be expected to conserve and protect features of historical interest from harm or alteration and would need to seek written permission from the National Trust prior to undertaking any alteration, modification or additions to any buildings.

3.6 Stock Handling Facilities

Other than the farmyard, there are no stock handling facilities provided on the Holding. The Tenant would be expected to provide their own.

3.7 Farm Infrastructure

The Trust have been undertaking improvement work to many field boundaries across the Holding. However, there are several that may still need work depending on the proposed management of the fields. The Tenant will be responsible for repairing and replacing fences as needed; however, the Trust will work with the Tenant to find and secure suitable external funding to support this work in the first year of the Tenancy if required.

Similarly, additional water troughs may be required in certain fields.

3.8 Woodlands

There are no woodlands on the Holding. Any in-field trees are managed by the National Trust and the Trust reserve the right to all timber. Successional planting for trees may be required but will always be done in consultation with the Tenant. Critically, it should be noted that the Trust has a policy of retaining dead wood in situ when it falls.

If the Tenant is interested in planting trees for the creation of orchards, agroforestry or wood pasture, we would be keen to hear the proposals and work with the Tenant to help achieve this.

3.9 Archaeology

In several fields on the Holding there is evidence of ridge and furrow. There are also some earthworks showing an area of medieval settlement.

The Tenant must farm the Holding in such a way that it protects and is sympathetic to the archaeological features. Ground works must only take place after permission from the Trust has been given.

3.10 Environmental Stewardship Scheme

The Holding is not currently in any agri-environment or stewardship scheme. We recognise that there have been a number of changes to Environmental Land Management Schemes in recent months. However, we would encourage anyone managing the land to enter into a scheme once available in order to help them achieve the nature ambitions on the Holding.

3.11 Management Restrictions

Although there will not be a requirement for the Holding to be certified as organic, our expectation is that in order to deliver our vision for the Estate to be an extensively farmed landscape with species-rich grassland, the land is managed with minimal inputs and no artificial fertilisers, and we want to hear your ideas of how this can be accomplished. It should be noted that a large part of Wadlens Farm is in an NVZ for groundwater and surface water.

Similarly, we do not expect there to be any slurry produced in the farmyard. The farmyard itself does have scope for FYM storage (either installing new storage or making use of existing facilities where compliant) to facilitate any over-wintering that may be required to fit the proposed farming system.

The site is within a TB high risk zone and the National Trust have not been part of any badger cull on its land and do not permit culling on National Trust land. However, we have been part of a badger vaccination scheme at Sherborne which has been taking place for a number of years. There are cattle grazing elsewhere on the estate but there are currently no points for nose to nose contact.

3.12 Value Added Tax

It is important that we all understand where Value Added Tax (VAT) may be chargeable.

In the case of Wadlens Farm, the land **is** opted to tax for VAT. This means that VAT will be payable on the rent.

3.13 Public access

There are several public footpaths and bridleways on the Holding as shown on the Plan.

The Trust may look to add permitted footpaths across the Estate over time but this will be done in consultation with all farm tenants to ensure routes are appropriate for the holding.

3.14 Diversification

We are interested in hearing any proposals you may have for including diversification enterprises as part of your farm tender proposal. If you are including a diversification proposal as part of your tender, please include as much detail as you can of the relevant enterprise costs and income and any planning or legal considerations you have made.

If we provide our consent as a Landlord to a diversification activity, we may need to issue a Licence to Diversify in addition to the Farm Business Tenancy for the Holding.

3.19 Off Farm Income

The Trust recognises that a tenant may need or want to supplement their income off the Holding and this will not be a barrier to applicants. However, the delivery of the required land management outcomes must not be prejudiced by these other activities and applicants must be able to demonstrate how the various activities will work together to benefit Wadlens Farm.

Farming for food and nature...



...High Nature Status

4.1 Essential & Desirable Skills and Resources

We are looking for a tenant who is committed to delivering nature conservation through an appropriate farming system by managing the land sensitively and reactively.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have the necessary understanding to manage the farmland in a sustainable way. Applicants must also show that they have the ability and desire to work closely with the National Trust to deliver our core conservation aims.

You will need to be an innovative farmer and be willing to adapt your farming business depending on how the land reacts to different grazing, and to respond to potentially challenging external factors.

We are looking for someone who can fulfil the following:

- Willing to be part of the community and understand the importance of the role of farming in creating the landscapes that we see today.
- Understand the importance of soil health and building organic matter in the soil.
- Have knowledge of livestock management or access to a mentor.
- Have an enthusiasm and understanding of wildlife and the natural environment, including the need to safeguard water quality across the landscape.
- Share the National Trust's objectives and want to work in partnership with local staff and the community.
- Have a robust and realistic business plan.

4.2 New Ideas and Approaches

We are not providing a detailed prescription of how the farm should be managed as we do not want to constrain applicants. We want to hear your innovative ideas and approaches, which are defined to help us deliver our vision for nature and conservation outcomes across the Holding.

5.1 Viewing Days

Viewings are strictly by appointment and shall be held on the following dates:

19th and 26th August 2026

Potential applicants should email **phoebe.parkinson@nationaltrust.org** or telephone **07484907711** to confirm a date and time to attend.

It is important that appointments are made to ensure that a National Trust representative is available on site to provide access and answer any questions or queries that may arise. Representatives from the National Trust, including the Estate Manager and Countryside Manager who are familiar with the layout and condition of the land, will be available in the farmyard on viewing days to answer any queries. Interested parties may then walk the land unaccompanied on the viewing days.

We recommend that you allocate up to **2 hours** to fully inspect the land and buildings. It is important that you follow all instructions provided in the safety brief and we respectfully request that dogs are not brought along to a farm viewing open day.

5.2 Application & Tender Process Details

Tender application forms are available to interested applicants at the viewing day. Applicants for the Tenancy of Wadlens Farm must inspect the Holding before submitting a Tender.

All applications should be submitted using the prescribed application forms which are to be signed, marked as *Private & Confidential* and either emailed to;-

phoebe.parkinson@nationaltrust.org.uk or posted to:

WADLENS FARM TENDER
c/o Phoebe Parkinson, Estate Manager
National Trust
Sherborne Estate Office
Sherborne
Cheltenham
GL54 3DW

The deadline for receipt of all applications, by email or post, is **5pm on 11th September 2026**

The National Trust is not giving a guide rent for Wadlens Farm. It is up to each applicant to assess the Holding for themselves and reach their own assessment of the rent to tender.

Please note that the National Trust does not bind itself to accept the highest or any tender. The Trust shall not accept tenders from applicants who have not visited the Farm on one of the viewing days. Applicants should provide any relevant additional information required to substantiate and justify proposals.

Applicants should complete full budget and cash flow projections for their proposals in addition to being willing to provide details of their financial and agricultural resources. Emphasis should be made on how you will deliver towards the farm vision.

5.3 Interviews

Shortlisting will be based upon the tender submissions and applicants will be notified by **email** whether they are to be invited for interview. Primary interviews will be held **w/c 21st September 2026** and applicants should make sure that they will be available to attend if invited. Following the initial interviews, it may be necessary to undertake secondary interviews or visits to prospective tenant's current land holding (if any).

It is envisaged that the tenancy will be offered to the successful candidate in November 2026 with occupation commencing as soon as possible thereafter or as agreed between the parties.

5.4 Making an Application, Top Tips

If you are making an application, we recommend that you review our web content below for top tips and to get to know us, our strategy and our vision.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/farm-lettings>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/farming>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/seven-of-our-best-nature-friendly-farms>

These external links may also help you craft your farm proposal and vision for nature.

<https://www.nffn.org.uk/>

<https://farmwildlife.info>

6.1 Disclaimer

The purpose of these particulars is to be used only as a guide hence meaning that it does not comprise or form part of any offer or contract.

All descriptions, dimensions, references to condition and necessary permission for use and occupation are given in good faith and are believed to be correct but any intending tenant should not rely upon them as statements of representations of fact and must satisfy him/herself by personal inspection or otherwise of the correctness of each item.

No responsibility can be accepted for any expense incurred by an applicant in inspecting the property and preparing submissions, irrespective of whether it is let or withdrawn.

6.2 GDPR

Your privacy is important to us, so we'll always keep your details secure and never use them for marketing communications that you haven't agreed to receive.

Our full Privacy Policy can be found online at:-

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/privacy-policy>

We may need to collect personal data from you to enable us to communicate with you and send details of the Farm Open Days and the tender process if requested.

Should you proceed to make an application for the farm tenancy, we will only use the data you provide for the purposes of evaluating applications and selecting a Tenant.

Information you submit may be retained in accordance with our Retention Schedule.

If at any stage, you change your mind and don't want us to hold your information anymore please email phoebe.parkinson@nationaltrust.org.uk

7. Appendices

7.1 Property Photos



7.2 Yards and Buildings



7.3 Property Maps

