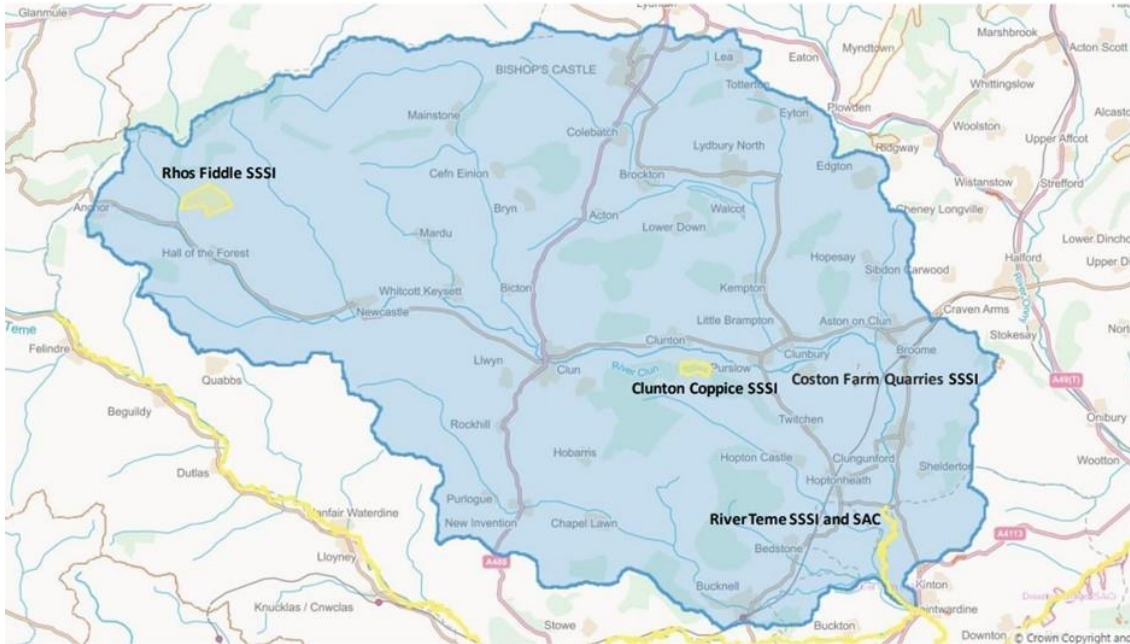


Do you farm in the Clun catchment?



Project FINCH is now underway in your area and looking for farmers to participate.

FINCH is one of only five national pilot projects Natural England (NE) are running as part of their Protected Sites Strategy (PSS) development. The name is an amalgamation of the starting letters of 'Facilitating Investment in Natural Clun Habitats'*. The Clun is an undulating, tranquil, rural and sparsely populated area where land use is characterised by traditional farming methods for food production and timber crops.

'Green Finance' is increasingly mentioned as a key component in plugging gaps in financial support to farmers following DEFRA's Agricultural Transition Plan. FINCH will look at the conditions, knowledge gaps and barriers which need to be addressed to enable farmers like you to take up opportunities around these green finance markets. These markets are said to be able to contribute to addressing the pressures on the Clun SAC and this project aims to find out if this is true and how Natural England's Protected Sites Strategy for the Clun can help with that.

Participating farmers will get a fully paid for audit of their field parcels** by a qualified ecologist to give an assessment of their investment potential. A green finance specialist will then assess what actual opportunities each farm has to access green finance, all in an individual confidential report.

Natural England wants to develop their PSS in collaboration with landowners in the area. **Your voice is extremely important in this process** and participation in this project is your chance to influence, steer and co-design something that works for all.

Beyond the FREE farm audit and assessment and sharing your views to help shape the PSS, participation doesn't commit you to anything else, but at least you will be better informed!

Shropshire Wildlife Trust has been actively running and supporting projects in the Clun for many decades. We are delighted that Natural England have asked us to lead this pilot project for them. We are acutely aware of the pressures farmers are under with funding streams falling away under the uncertainty of new schemes that have taken several years to even emerge. We have been hearing a lot about these new green finance opportunities and would be very keen to find out what this actually means for farmers in an area like the Clun. With Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) having become a reality on the 12th February 2024 for larger developments, farmers like you need to be as informed as possible to make the right decisions for your future.

For food security, for nature and for thriving rural communities.

We are now actively looking for farmers to be part of this pilot.

Get in touch to find out more. It won't commit you to anything. We can arrange a mutually convenient time to have a more detailed chat and answer your questions and see if you are interested in being part of this exciting pilot project opportunity.

Contact Renée Wallace,

renew@wilder marches.org.uk or on 07983 539916.

*More info here [Springing into Action with Protected Site Strategies for Nature's Recovery - Natural England \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

**We will discuss with you which fields have the most potential, but you ultimately have the choice which areas of land you want us to survey, and this does not have to be your entire farm. It may also depend on capacity on our side, and overall take-up. A reason to get in touch as soon as possible if this sounds like an interesting opportunity for you.