

## FARMING AND PROPERTY BULLETIN 2023 – ISSUE NO. 8

### Renters Reform Bill

The Government has recently announced that the changes proposed by the Renters Reform Bill to section 21 repossessions will not be enacted until improvements have been made to the way courts handle possession cases.

Currently it can take over six months for the courts to process possession claims where landlords have good cause, such as tenant rent arrears or anti-social behaviour. The amendments mean that section 21 will now not be abolished until reforms to the justice system are in place.

There are also proposed revisions to create grounds for possession to protect the yearly nature of student accommodation with the aim of ensuring that new students have sufficient access to housing.

The National Residential Landlords Association has consistently argued that without quicker court processes, responsible landlords would simply leave the private rental market following the abolition of section 21, at a time when renters are already struggling to find a place to live.



### EPC Reforms Delayed

The Government's recent review of many of its Green pledges has impacted the private rental sector with a softening of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) reform targets. The prime minister, in his party conference speech, has rowed back on the idea of EPC minimum requirements moving from E to C for new lease agreements by 2025, and all properties by 2028.

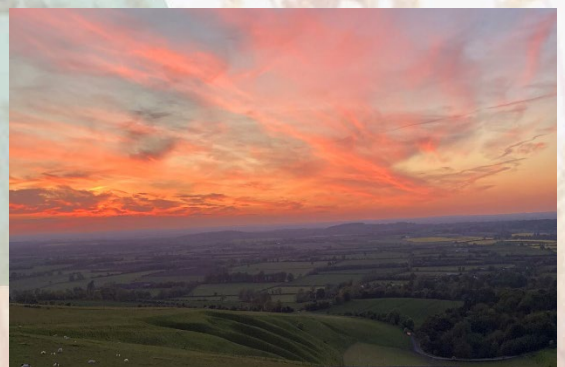
Mr Sunak said: "Under current plans, some property owners would have been forced to make expensive upgrades in just two years' time. That's just wrong. So those plans will be scrapped and while we will continue to subsidise energy efficiency, we'll never force any household to do it." Whilst this announcement will prove frustrating for those landlords who have already made costly improvements or even disposed of their rental portfolio it will provide respite for others, particularly those with older properties that may require substantial investment in order to improve their energy efficiency.

The National Residential Landlords Association is again calling for the government to develop a plan that supports the rental market to make improvements. It says: "This must include appropriate financial support and reform of the tax system which currently fails to support investment in energy efficiency measures."

### Rural England Prosperity Fund

South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) have secured funding through the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund (Rural Fund) which sits alongside other Government schemes such as the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) fund and the Farming Investment Fund.

The Rural Fund was designed partly to replace the EU administered LEADER scheme and aims to benefit rural communities and businesses through supporting actions designed to increase productivity as well as providing assistance to farm businesses seeking to diversify their activities.



There is currently £733,000 available through SODC for qualifying proposals which includes capital grants for small scale investment in micro and small enterprises in rural areas, grants for growing the local social economy and supporting innovation and supporting investment in capacity building and infrastructure support for local civil society and community groups. Subject to take-up, the fund will be available until March 2025.

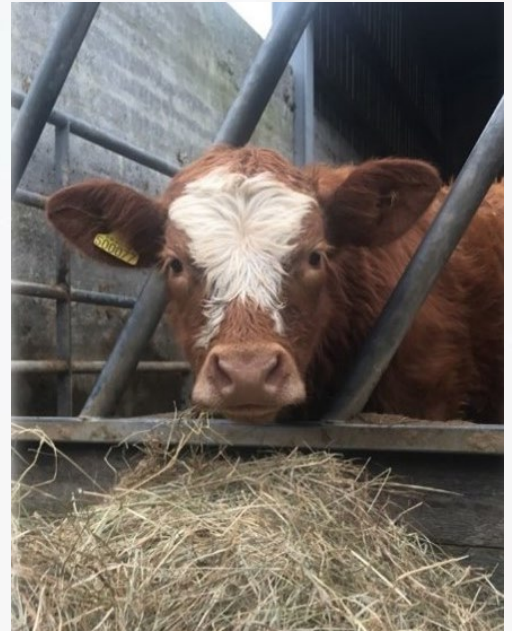
## Calf Housing for Health and Welfare Grant

Adkin are helping clients apply to the RPA for funds from the Calf Housing for Health and Welfare grant which forms part of the Farming Transformation Fund.

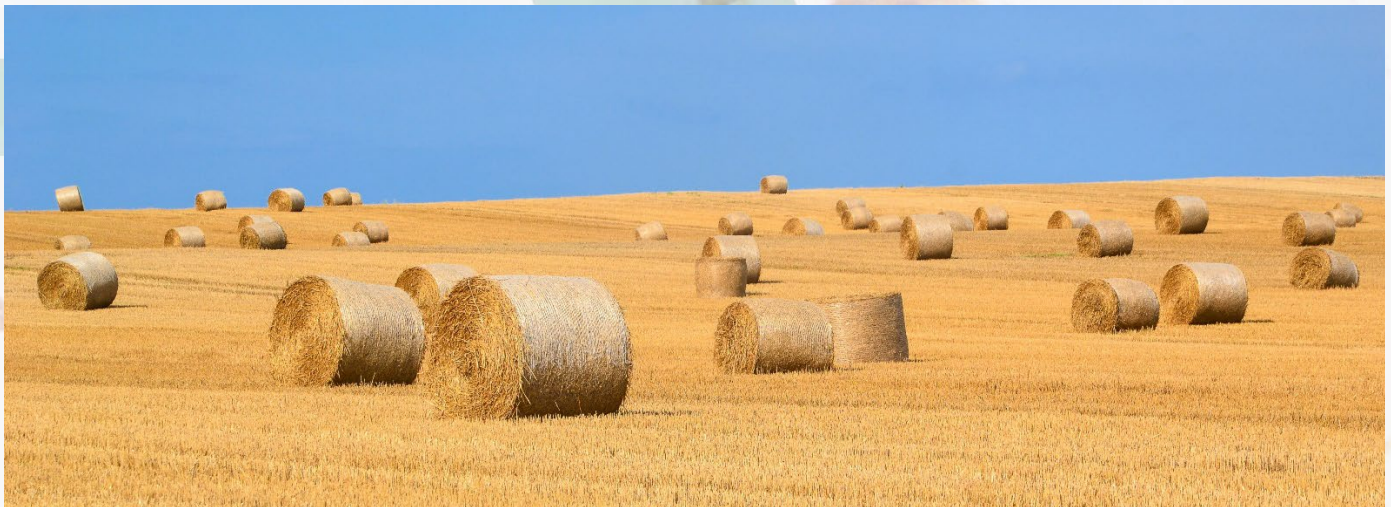
Designed for the benefit of domestic cattle up to six months old, any funded housing must provide a good ambient environment and facilitate social contact through pair or group housing. It must ensure good air quality, temperature, and humidity within the building through choice of suitable location, ventilation, and other building features.

As the grant is competitive successful applications will likely show how they improve calf health and welfare, enhance environmental sustainability and introduce a degree of innovation.

Up to 40% funding is available, with the minimum size grant being £15,000 up to a maximum of £500,000. Applications are required to address funding, planning permissions and building costs with a fast-approaching deadline for the current round of 30th November 2023.



## Annual Hay & Straw Sale 2024



The Annual Hay and Straw Sale is now conducted by Thimbleby & Shorland of Reading. The next Live and Online sale will be held on: **Tuesday 9th January 2024.**

Thimbleby and Shorland are currently taking entries for this auction. Entries for inclusion in the catalogue to be received by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

Online Entry Form: [www.tsauction.co.uk/entry-form-hay-straw/](http://www.tsauction.co.uk/entry-form-hay-straw/)

If you required a paper entry form this can be downloaded from the Thimbleby and Shorland website or call the office.

**For further information please contact Chris Boreham at Thimbleby & Shorland**

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