The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS): online application guidance

May 2015 v4

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas

SRDP Scottish Rural Development Programme

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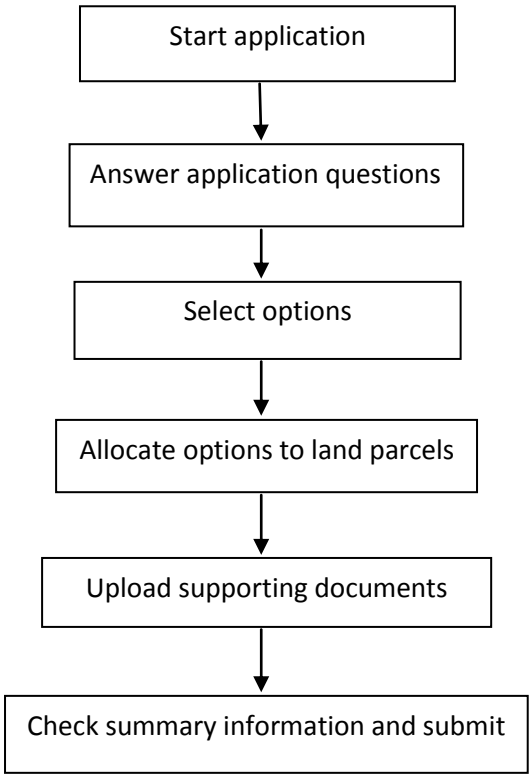
Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS) online application process: guidance for customers

Before you get to the point of beginning your online AECS application, you should:

- consult the guidance for individual options
- consider the targeting information to see which options are appropriate for the land
- consider any issues over designated sites, ancient monuments or water catchment areas including any consultation with SNH, SEPA or HS
- carry out the Farm Environment Assessment as detailed in the guidance (including drawing up any maps)
- consider what management options are appropriate for the land in question and the farming or land management regime
- consider what capital items are required to support the management options which you wish to undertake (including getting quotes if any actual costs are to be undertaken)
- draft any specialist grazing plans or similar which will need to be documented and supplied when the application is submitted

To be able to complete an online application, you must register on the new Rural Payments and Services system to get access. Agents must be mandated to start and submit an AECS application on behalf of your business.

The application system is designed as 'linear process' which means you progress through each section, one at-a-time.



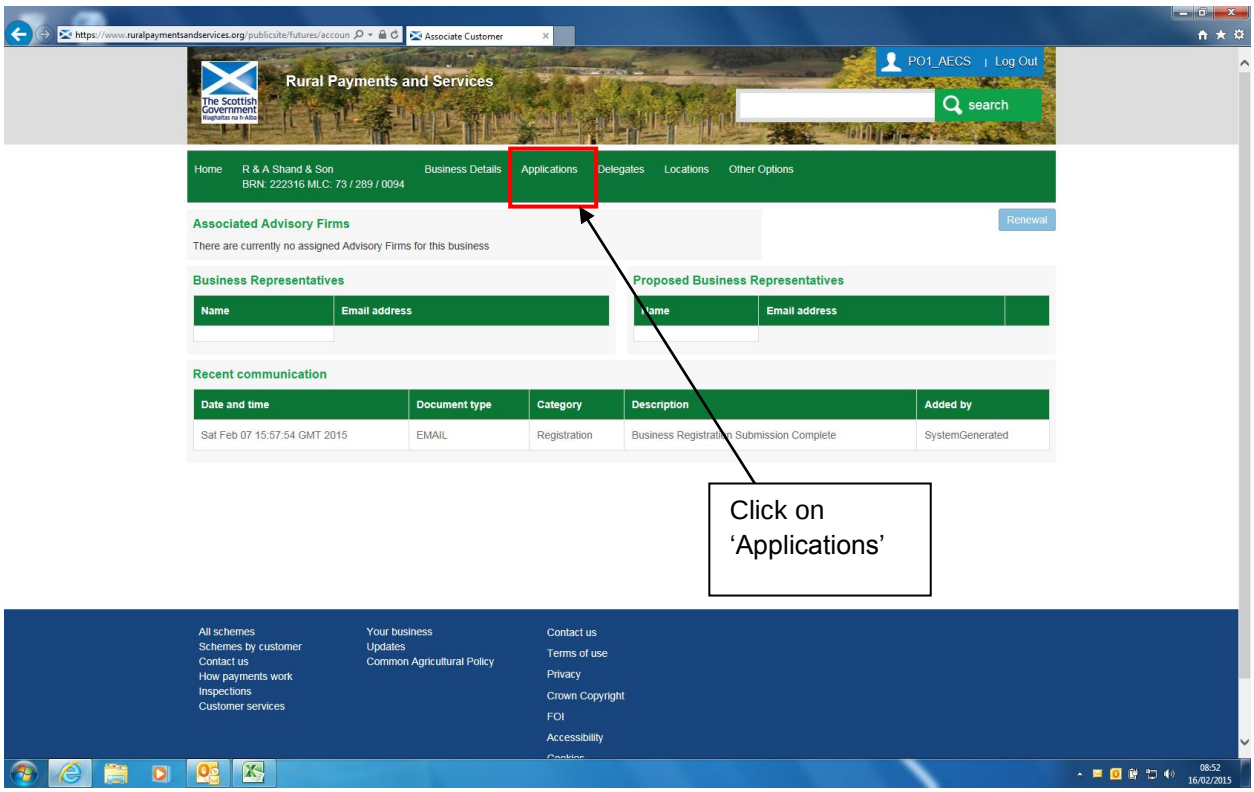
It is possible to move back and forward through the sections prior to submission.

The following pages provide a description of how to submit an online AECS application.

How to start your AECS application

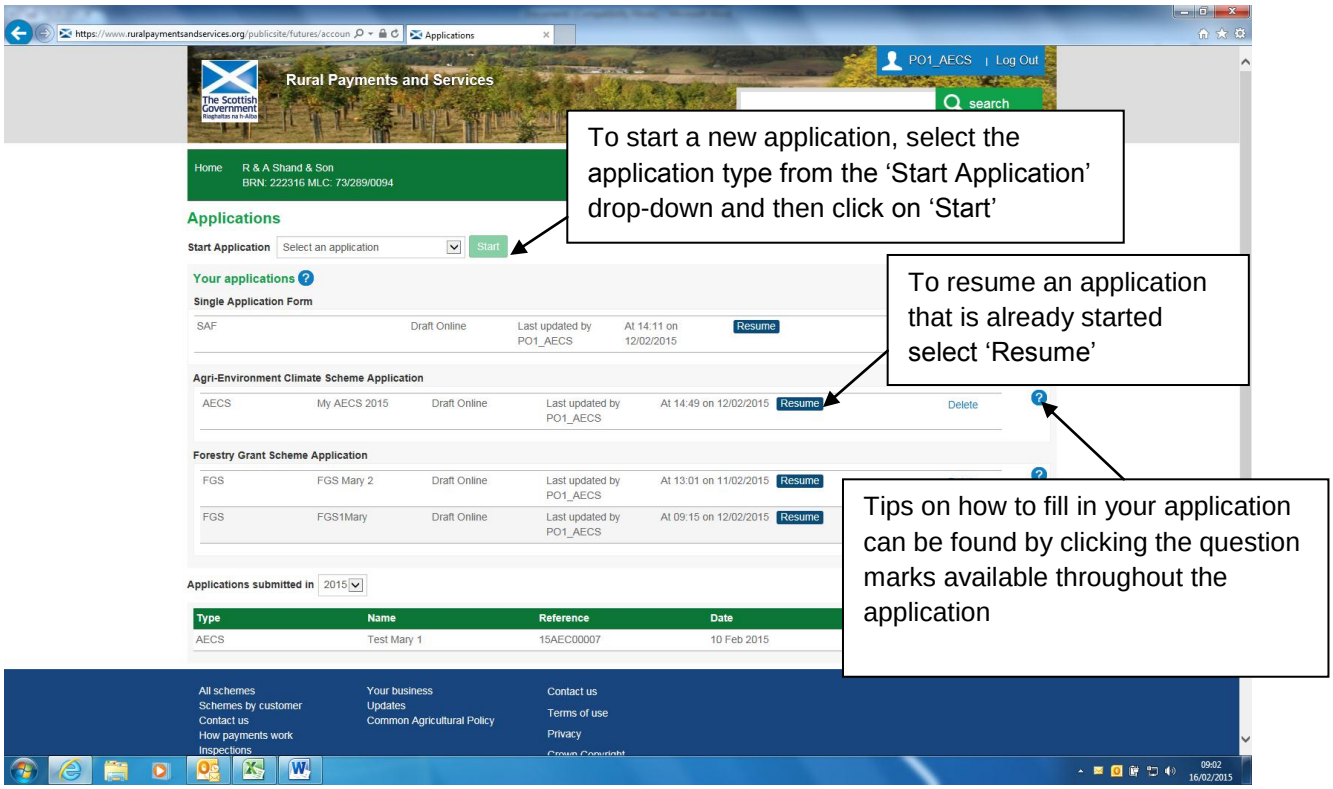
Once you've registered, log in to Rural Payment and Services.

The screen below shows what you'll see after logging in. There are several things that can be carried out from here including 'accessing applications'.



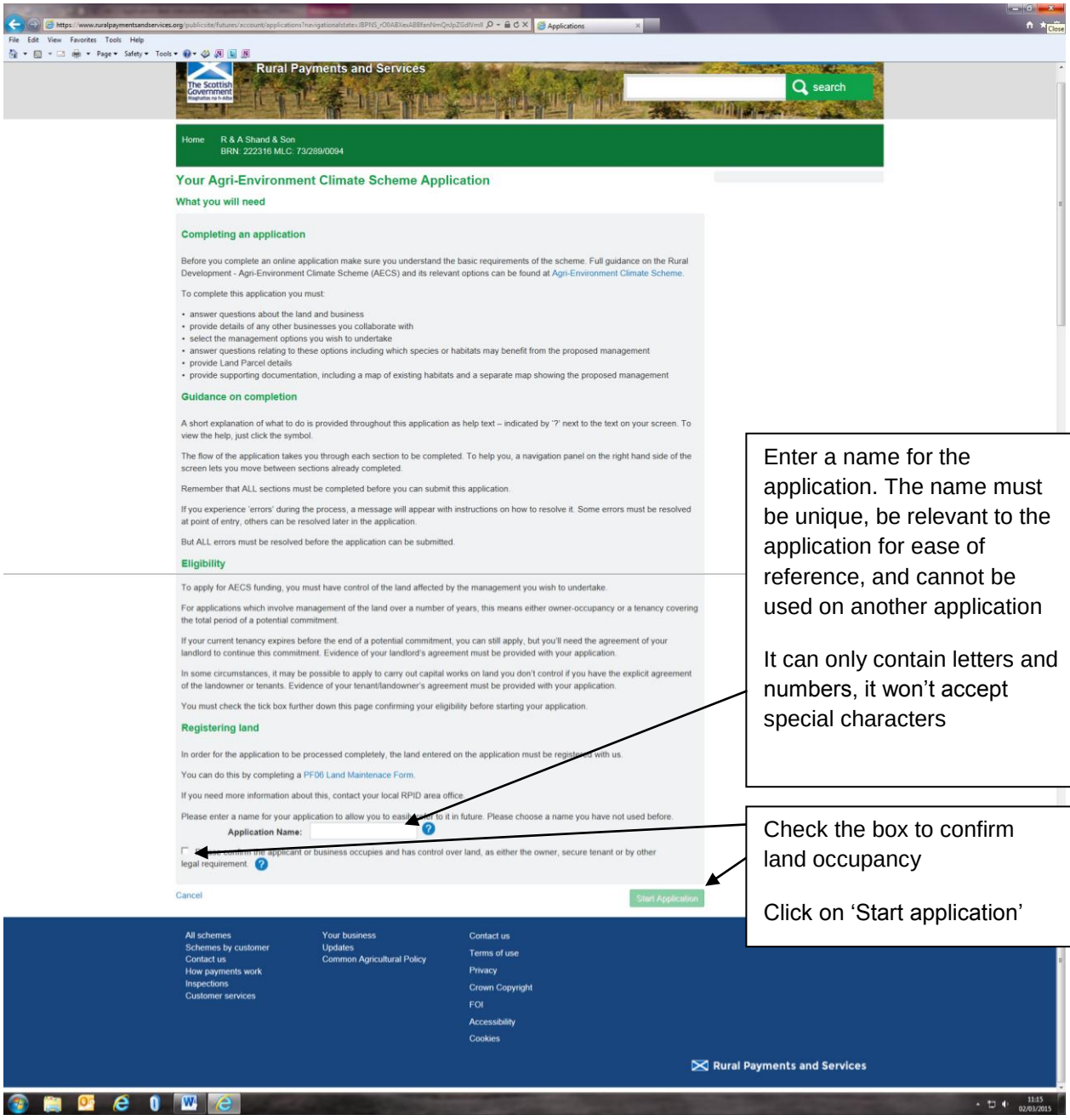
Manage my applications

After clicking ‘Applications’ a list of all the applications you have submitted or have in draft is shown.



Application start page

Essential information about what is required to complete the application is displayed on this page. Some hints and tips about screen navigation are also provided here. We recommend you read the details here before the ‘application name’ is entered and ‘control of the land’ confirmed.



Enter a name for the application. The name must be unique, be relevant to the application for ease of reference, and cannot be used on another application

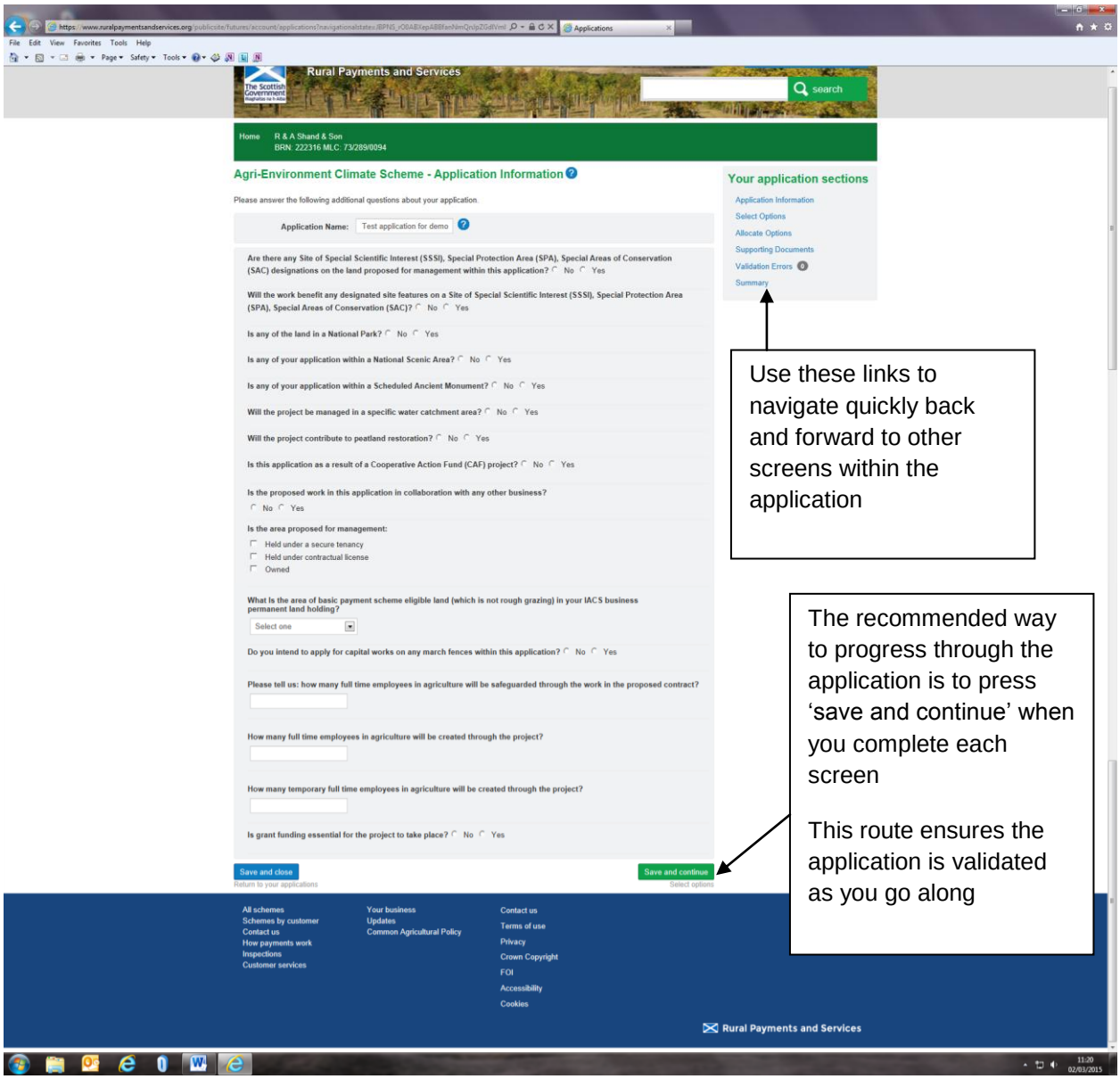
It can only contain letters and numbers, it won’t accept special characters

Check the box to confirm land occupancy

Click on ‘Start application’

Application information

A list of questions about the application will be shown.



All the questions must be answered. Depending on the answer to some of the questions, more questions will appear. See appendix 1 for details of all the application questions that may be asked.

Once all the questions have been answered, click 'Save and continue' or 'Save and close'.

- 'Save and continue carries out validation to make sure the format of the answers are correct and that all answers have been given. If no errors occur, the details are saved and the application moves to the next stage. If errors occur they must be sorted and then 'save and continue' selected again to revalidate, save and move to the next stage.

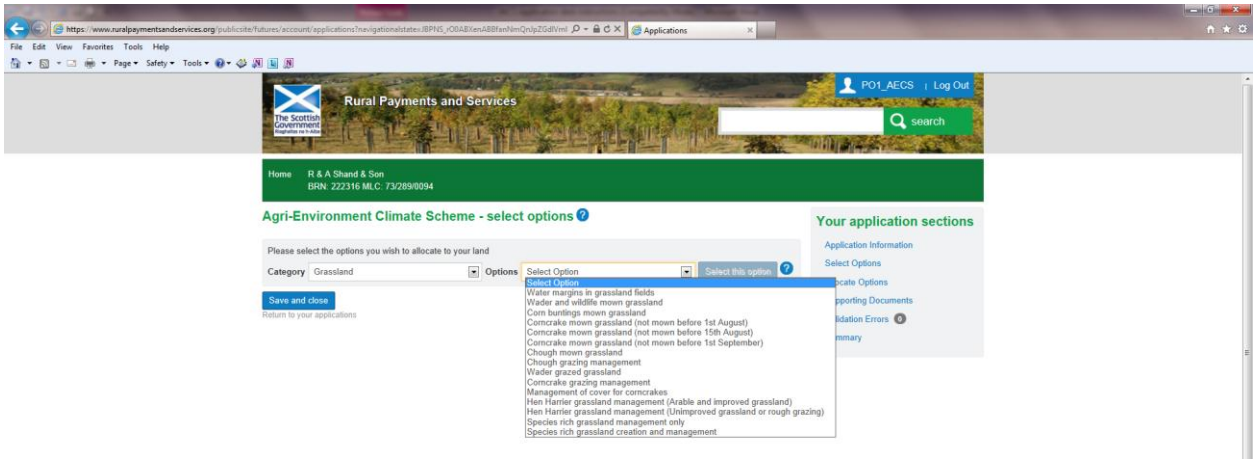
- ‘Save and close’ carries out validation to make sure the format of answers is correct. If incorrect, the errors must be sorted before the application can save and close. If no errors occur, but some answers have still to be provided, the application can still save and close. Answers already provided will be retained. ‘Save and close’ will return the applicant to the manage my applications screen.

‘Save and continue’ and ‘Save and close’ work in the same way throughout the application.

Note: Sometimes, the system takes a minute or two to save if there is a lot of validation to carry out. Please be patient as clicking on ‘save’ again can result in system errors.

Select options

This is where options are selected and any questions regarding the options are answered. A category must be selected first, see appendix 2. Then the list of options is displayed for the category selected, as shown below.



An option should be selected from the list, then click on ‘Select this option’. Some option questions will then display. The questions are intended to be a simple check on basic eligibility – information regarding which species will be benefited by the management is also required so that we can carry out basic monitoring of how much money is benefiting particular species or habitats.

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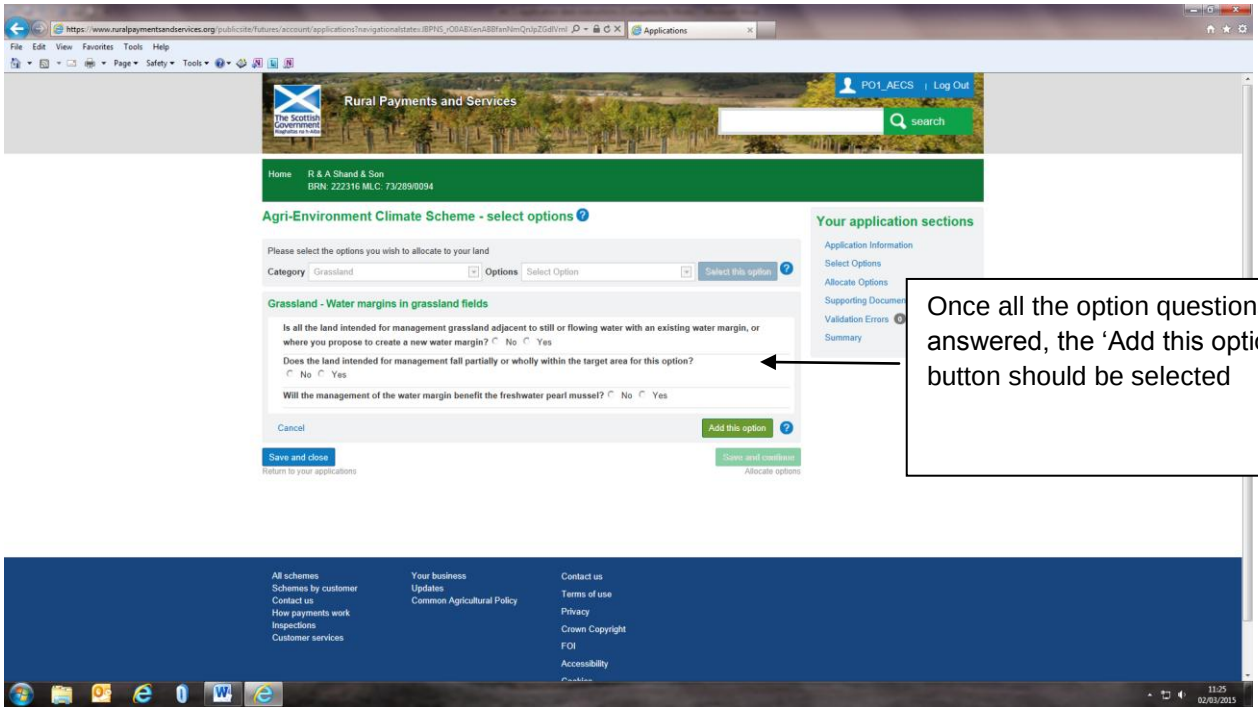
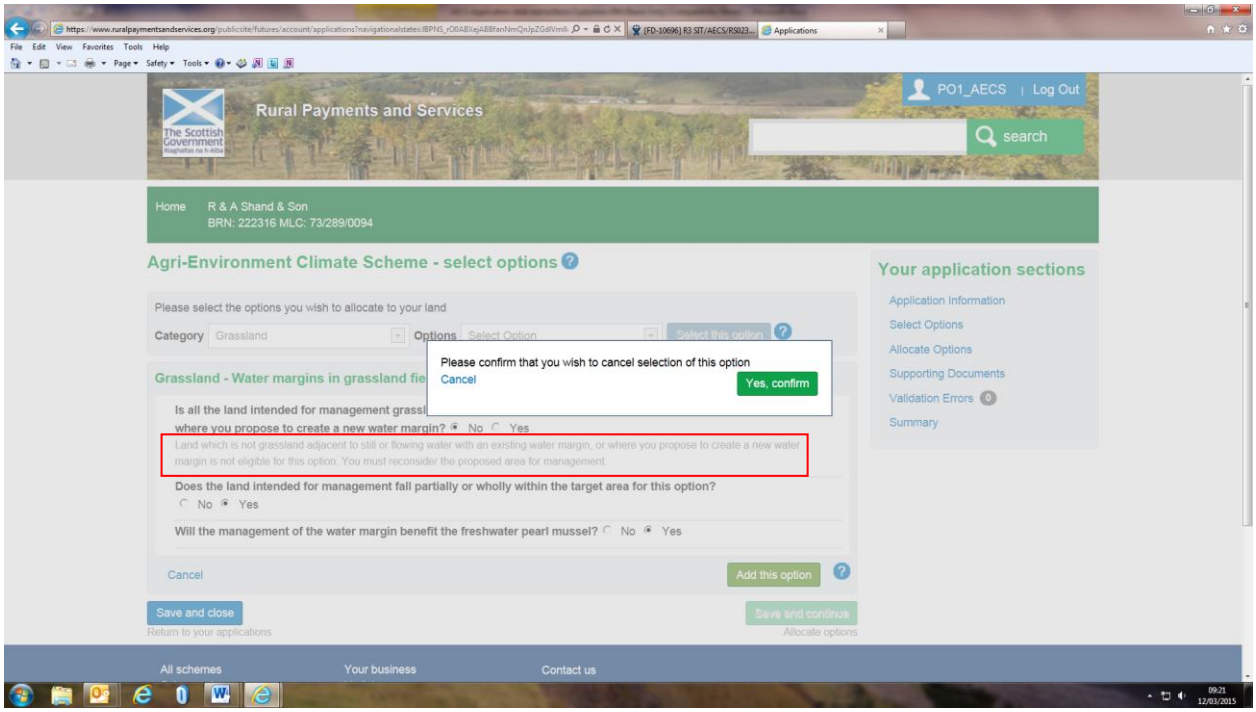
In this example the ‘Grassland – Water margins in grassland fields’ option is selected:

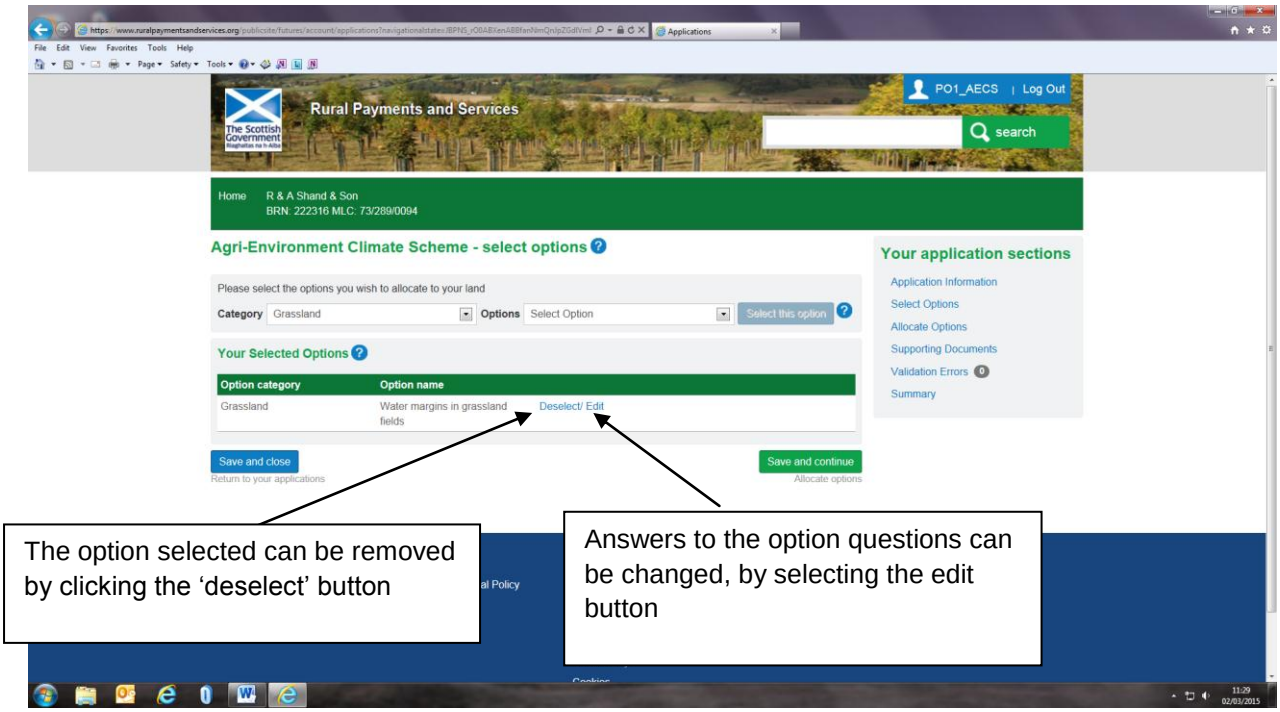


The option questions must all be answered before the ‘Add this option’ button can be selected.

If any of the answers make the option ineligible, a message will display below the answer to advise. To remove the option from the application select ‘Cancel’. A pop-up will display asking for confirmation.



Once the option is added the following screen will show:



If another option is to be added to the application, it can be selected on this screen. The category box will contain the category previously selected. If you need to change the category, choose from the drop-down. As more options are added this, screen will expand to show all the options on the 'Your selected options' table.

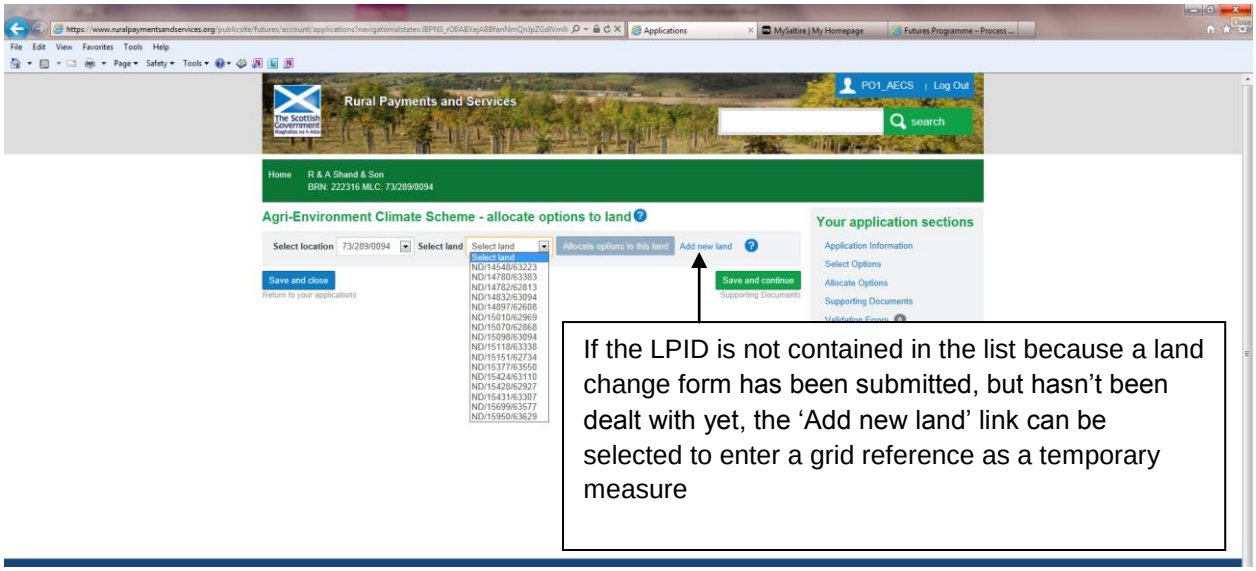
To advance to the next screen the 'Save and continue' button should be selected.

Allocate options to land

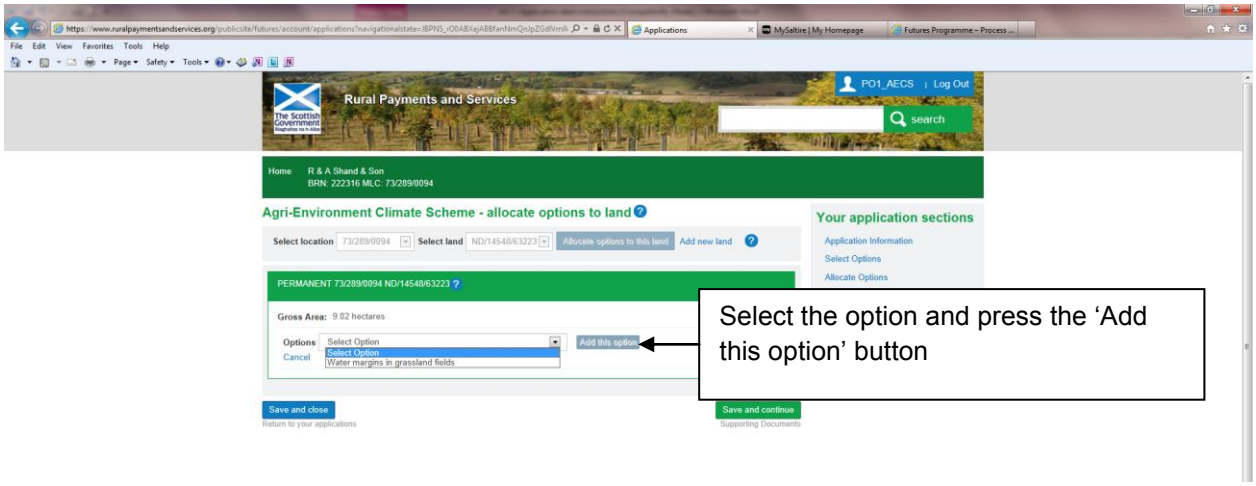
Once all the options that are to be contained on the application have been selected, the next step is to allocate these options to the relevant land parcels.

All the locations/holdings linked to the business on our system are contained in the ‘Select location’ drop-down. The Main Location Code is the default display but if more locations are linked to the BRN they can be selected from the drop-down. In this example only one location code is linked to the BRN.

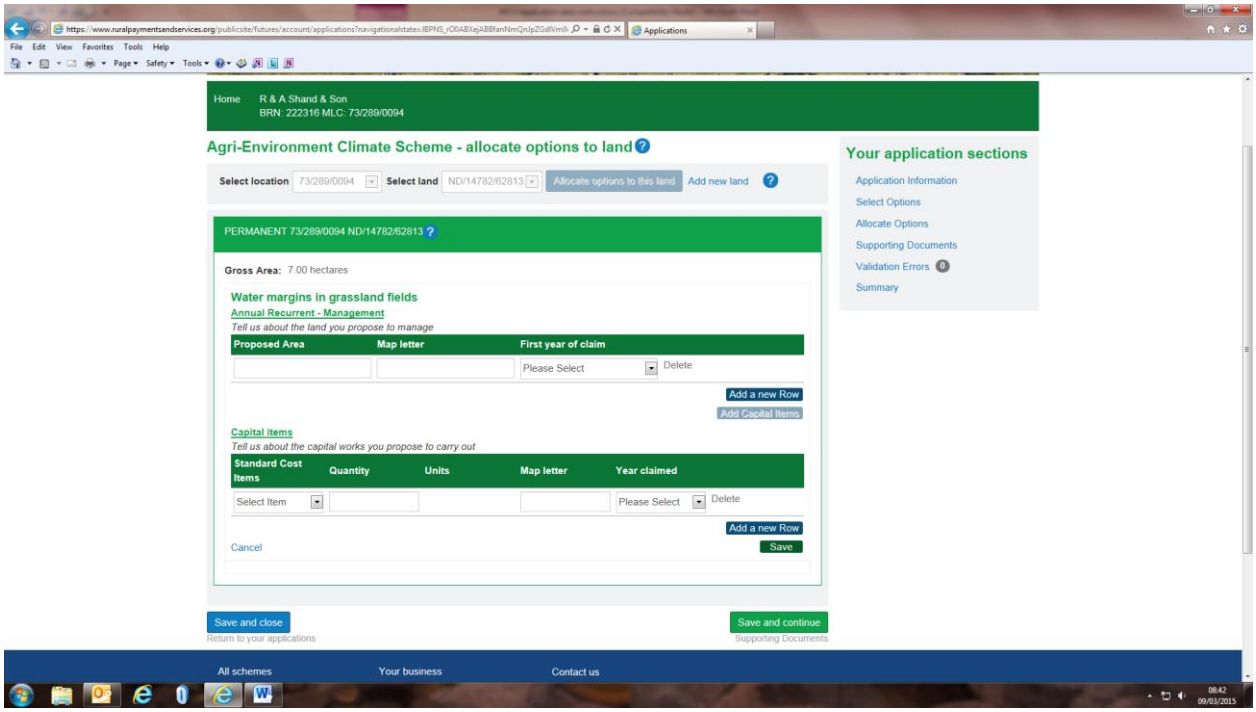
By clicking on the ‘Select land’ drop-down, all the Land Parcels (LPIDs) linked to the selected location code display. Only valid, active LPIDs display. A LPID should be selected from the list before clicking on the ‘Allocate options to this land’ button.



Once an LPID is selected and the ‘Allocate options to this land’ button clicked on, the screen expands. The option that has to be allocated to the LPID should be selected from the ‘Options’ drop-down. The ‘Options’ drop-down will only contain the options that were selected previously on the ‘Select options’ screen.



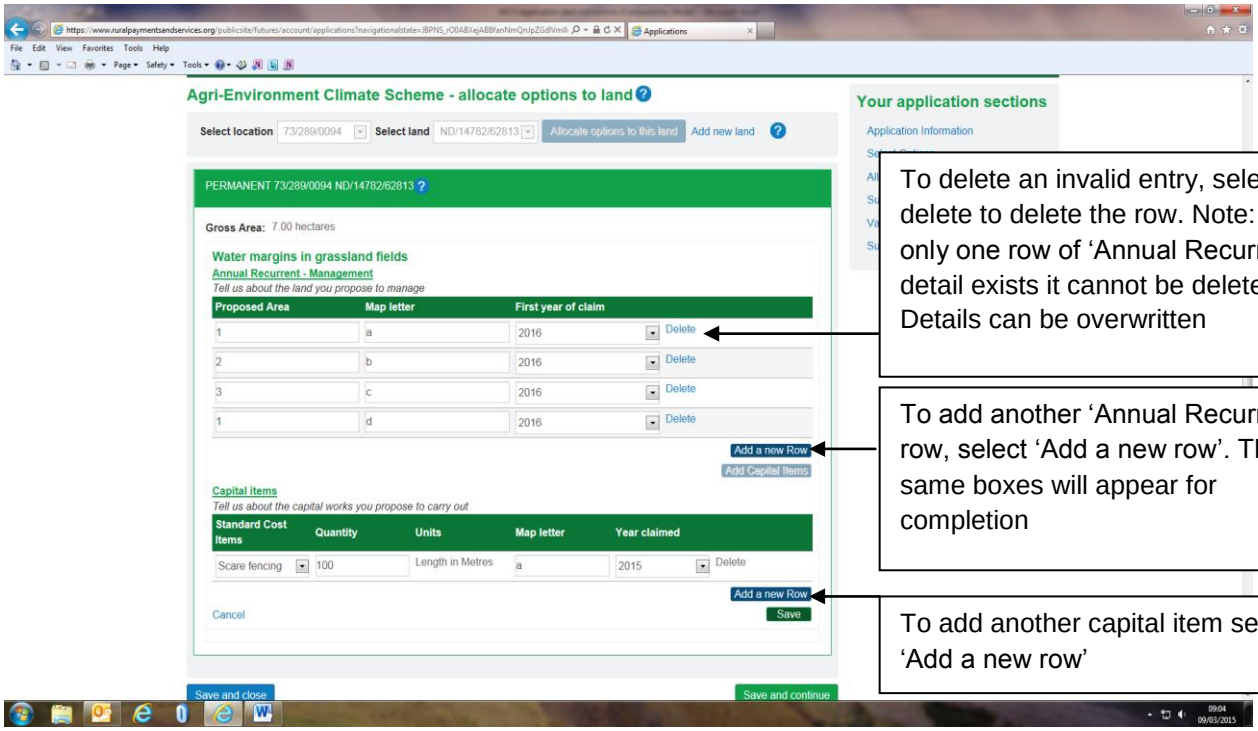
The screen expands further to display the ‘Capital’ and ‘Annual Recurrent’ tables that must be completed for the option selected. If an option is a capital-only option, no annual recurrent table will display.



The details requested on the ‘Capital’ and ‘Annuual’ recurrent tables differ depending on the option selected. One row will display at a time. To add another area of management or another capital item, select the relevant ‘Add a new Row’ button.

Note: If actual costs are available on the option, a separate table will display for ‘Actual cost’ items.

Detail should be selected/entered in each column. Most options require a quantity, map letter and claim year entered along with the name of any capital items. To change an entry made before exiting the screen the data entered can be overwritten.

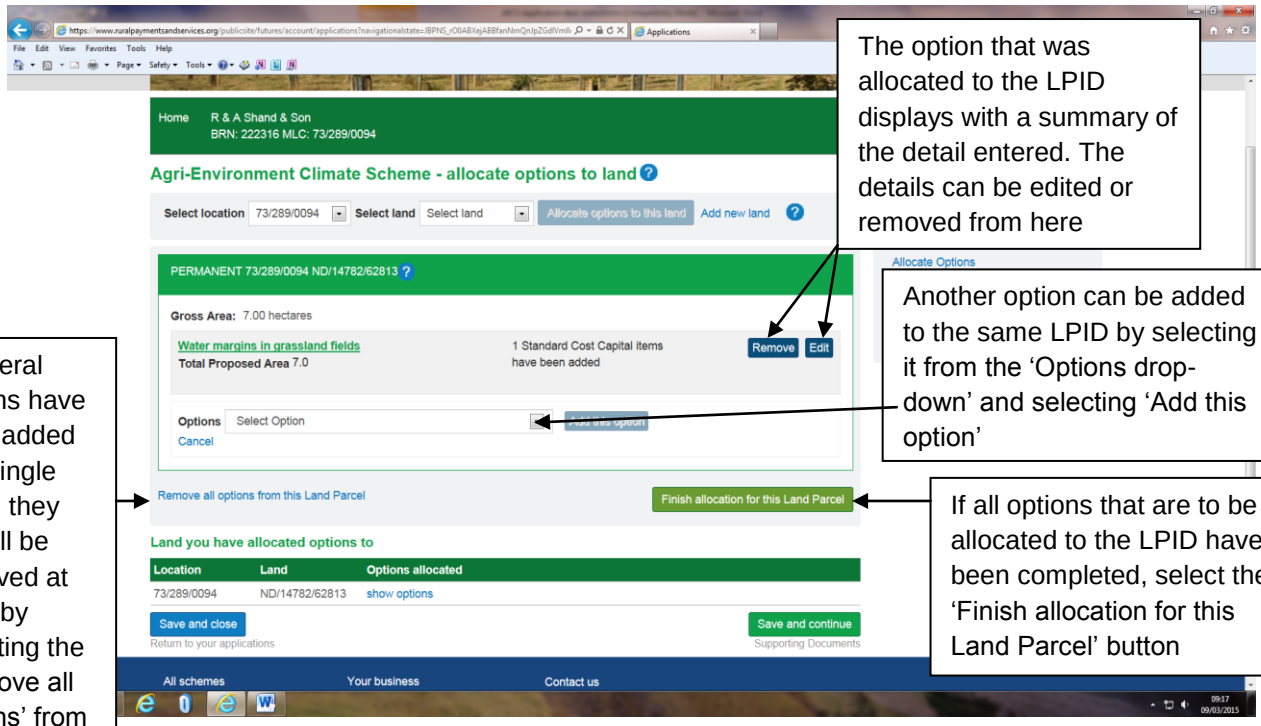


To delete an invalid entry, select delete to delete the row. Note: If only one row of 'Annual Recurrent' detail exists it cannot be deleted. Details can be overwritten

To add another 'Annual Recurrent' row, select 'Add a new row'. The same boxes will appear for completion

To add another capital item select 'Add a new row'

Once the tables are completed, 'Save' should be selected. On selecting 'Save', validation runs, if errors exist they will display. If there are no errors, the screen below will show:



The option that was allocated to the LPID displays with a summary of the detail entered. The details can be edited or removed from here

Another option can be added to the same LPID by selecting it from the 'Options drop-down' and selecting 'Add this option'

If several options have been added to a single LPID, they can all be removed at once by selecting the 'Remove all options' from this land parcel link'

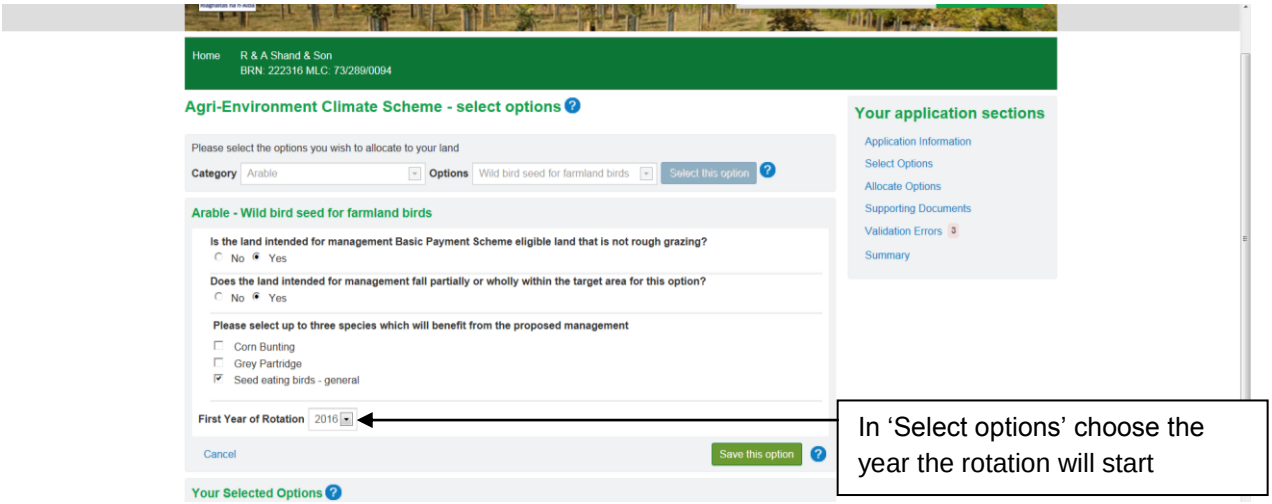
If all options that are to be allocated to the LPID have been completed, select the 'Finish allocation for this Land Parcel' button

Once the ‘annual recurrent’ and/or ‘capital item’ details for the options being added to a single Land Parcel have been completed, the ‘Finish allocation for this land parcel’ button should be selected.

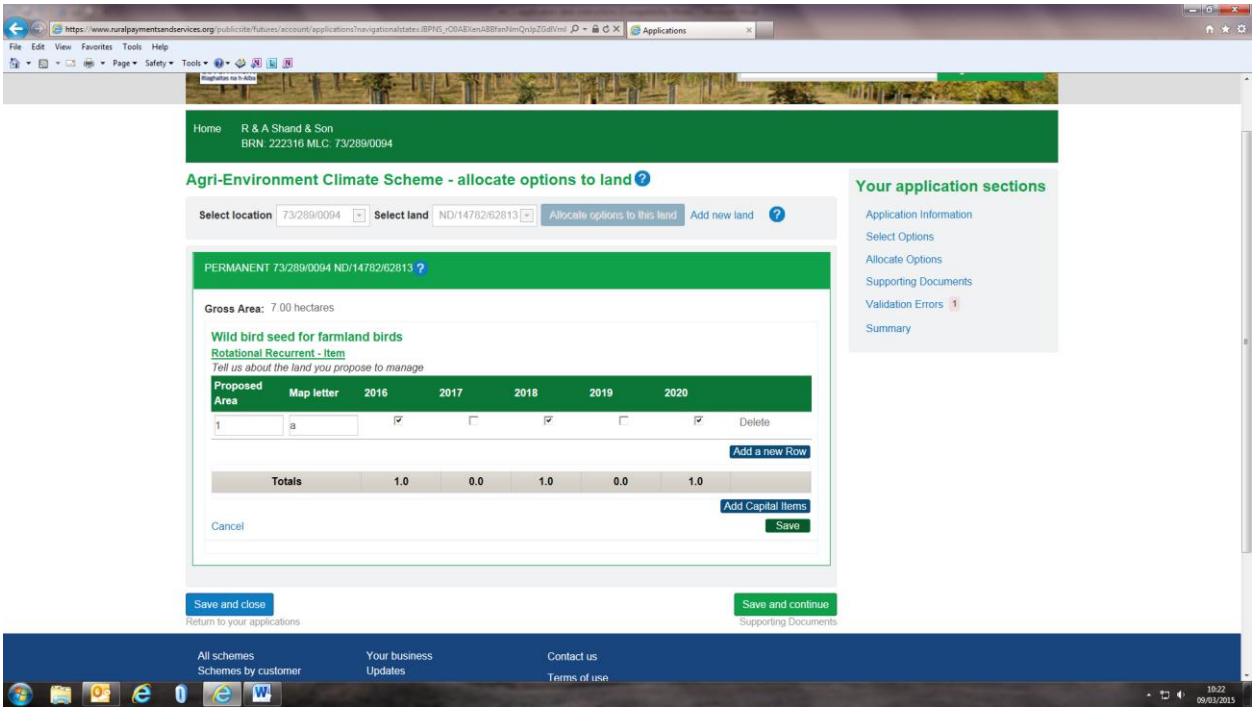
Validation will run to make sure that there is no conflict between the options added to the Land Parcel. If errors display, they should be fixed. If no errors appear, another Land Parcel can be selected to allocate options to. Or, alternatively, the ‘Save and continue’ button can be selected to move on to the ‘Supporting information’ screen.

Rotational options

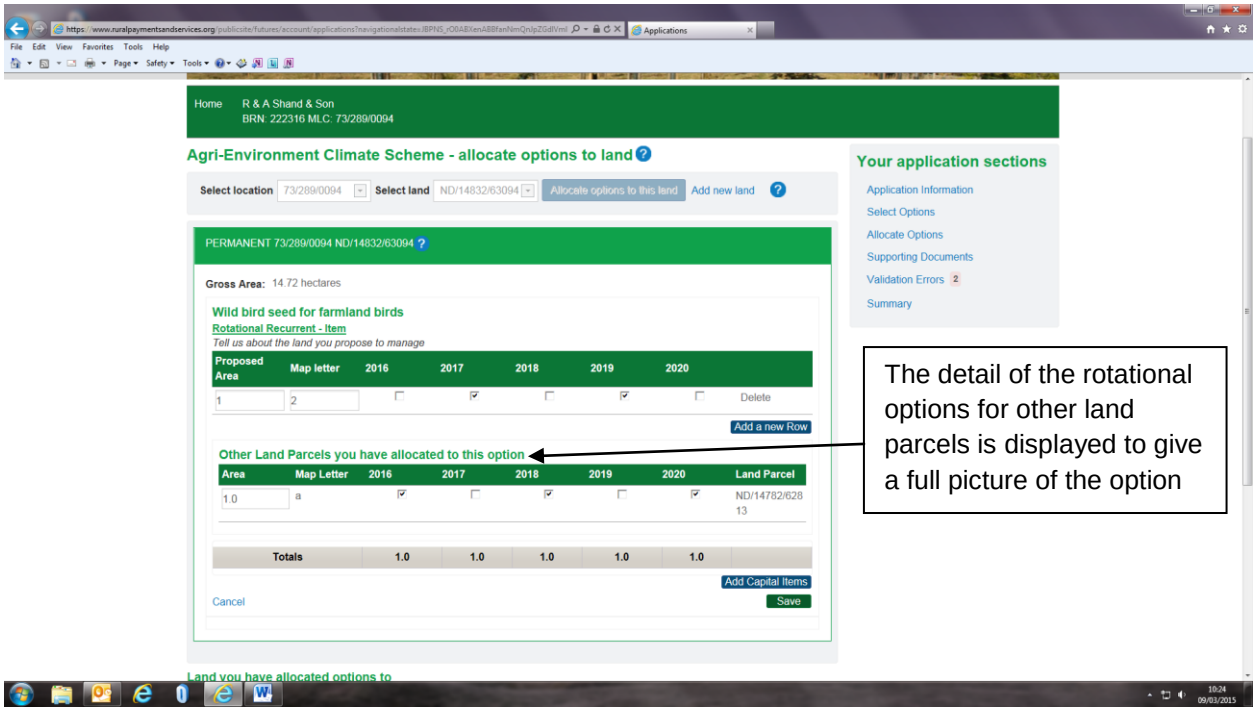
Rotational options are options which do not have to stay on the same area of land during the five years of management. Rotational options can be added to multiple land parcels and can vary in area over the five-year period as long as the area is never less than 90% of the area in the first year of management.



When allocating a rotational option to land you can choose the year you wish to have the option in the land parcel. In the example below, the land parcel chosen will contain the rotational option in 2016, 2018 and 2020.



The screen below shows the rotational option in another land parcel for 2017 and 2019 – making up the full five years of management.



Rotational options must have management for each of the five years presented.

Adding new rows of annual recurrent and adding capital items performs in the same way as adding any option.

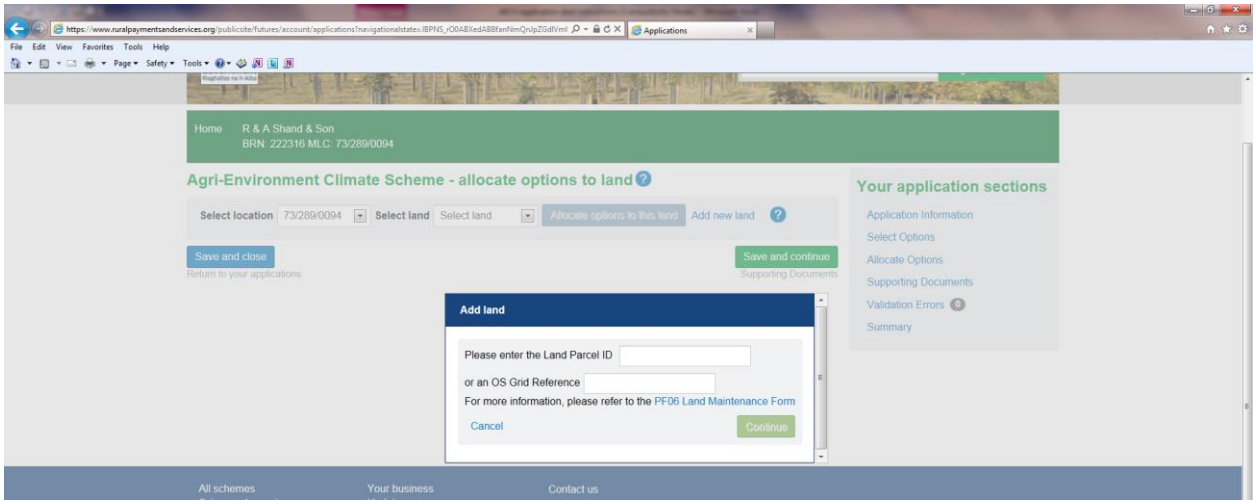
Add new land on the ‘Allocate options to land’ screen

If the ‘Select land’ drop-down does not contain the land parcel that the proposed work is to be carried out in, the ‘Add new land’ link should be selected. This could be for several reasons, including:

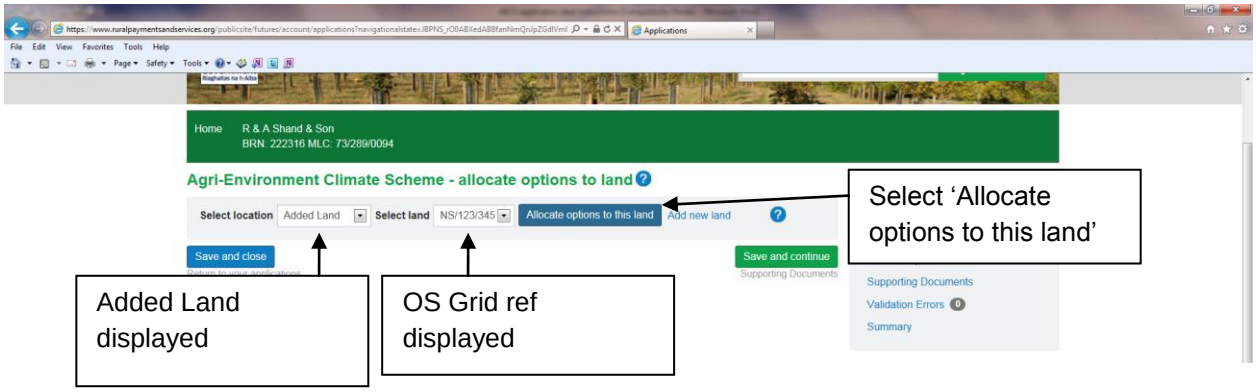
- land parcels are in the process of being re-mapped but the new land parcels have not been allocated yet.
- Land parcels have been purchased but the transfer of land on our system is still in progress
- a Land Maintenance and/or Registering a Business form is still to be submitted
- option does not require a Land Parcel Identifier (LPID)
- applicant does not hold the land permanently but has a contractual license or agreement that allows them access to the land to carry out the work

<u>Enter an LPID or grid reference</u>

If you know the Land Parcel Identifier, enter it in the ‘Please enter the Land Parcel ID’ box. It should be typed in the format XX/12345/12345. If you don’t know the Land Parcel identifier or the option does not require a land parcel to be entered, enter an OS grid reference in the box indicated for this. The OS grid ref should be in the format XX/123/456.



After clicking ‘Continue’, the LPID/OS grid reference will be inserted on the ‘Select land’ list. The location code list will contain a new entry called ‘Added land’.

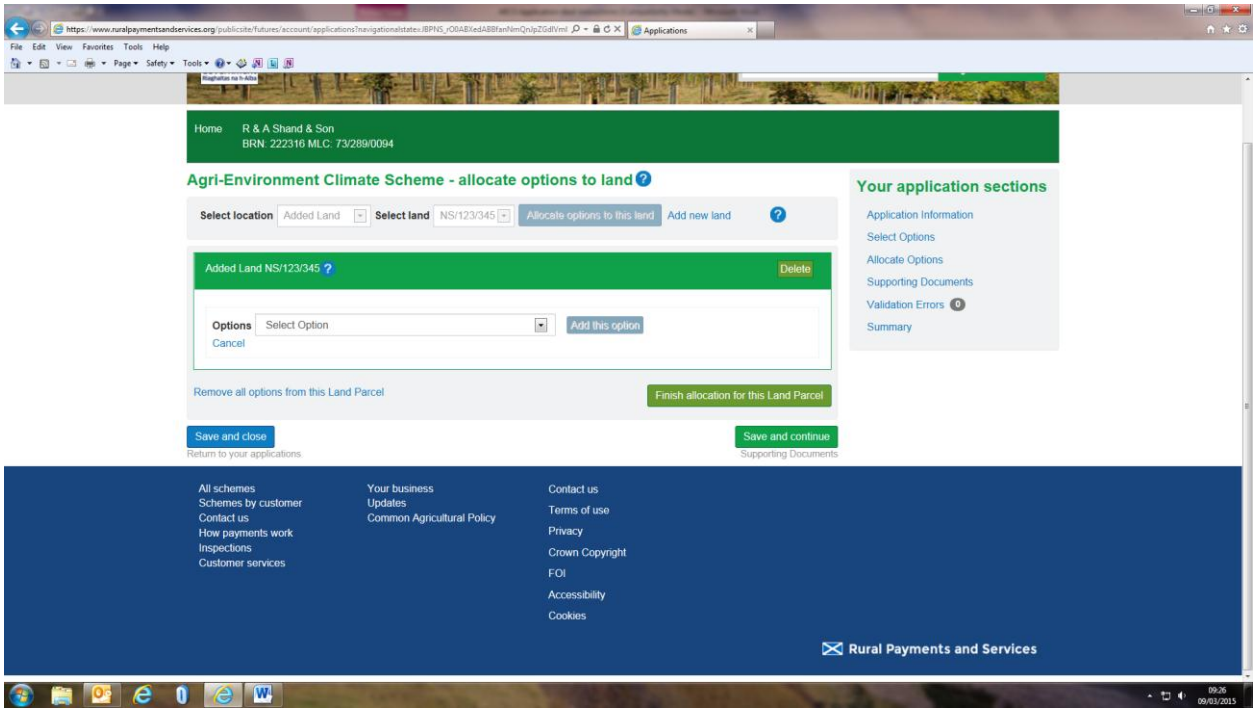


Select 'Allocate options to this land'

Added Land displayed

OS Grid ref displayed

To allocate options to the ‘Added land’ select ‘Allocate options to this land’. From now on the normal process described under the ‘Allocate options to land’ section can be followed.



Note: Adding new land to the application **only** allows you to submit your application, it does not register the added land. **If the option requires a land parcel to be entered on it, a valid land parcel must be registered before a contract can be issued.** If the land change has been instigated by the customer, a Land Maintenance Form (LMF) to move land, or have a new LPID registered must be completed, submitted and processed by RPID before a contract can be issued.

Supporting documents screen

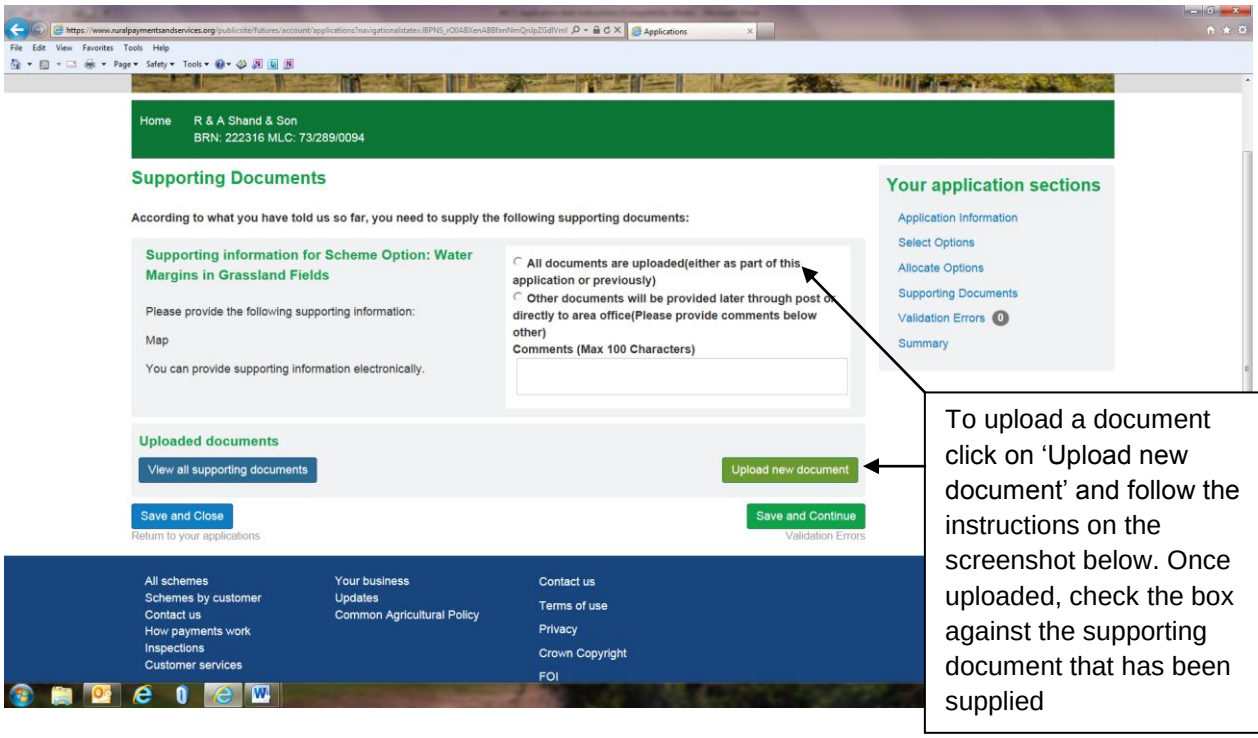
Each option has a supporting document requirement as does some capital items. Those that can be determined by the system will be listed on the supporting documents screen.

Each document listed on the supporting document screen must be supplied. Other documentation not listed can also be supplied if it is pertinent to the application.

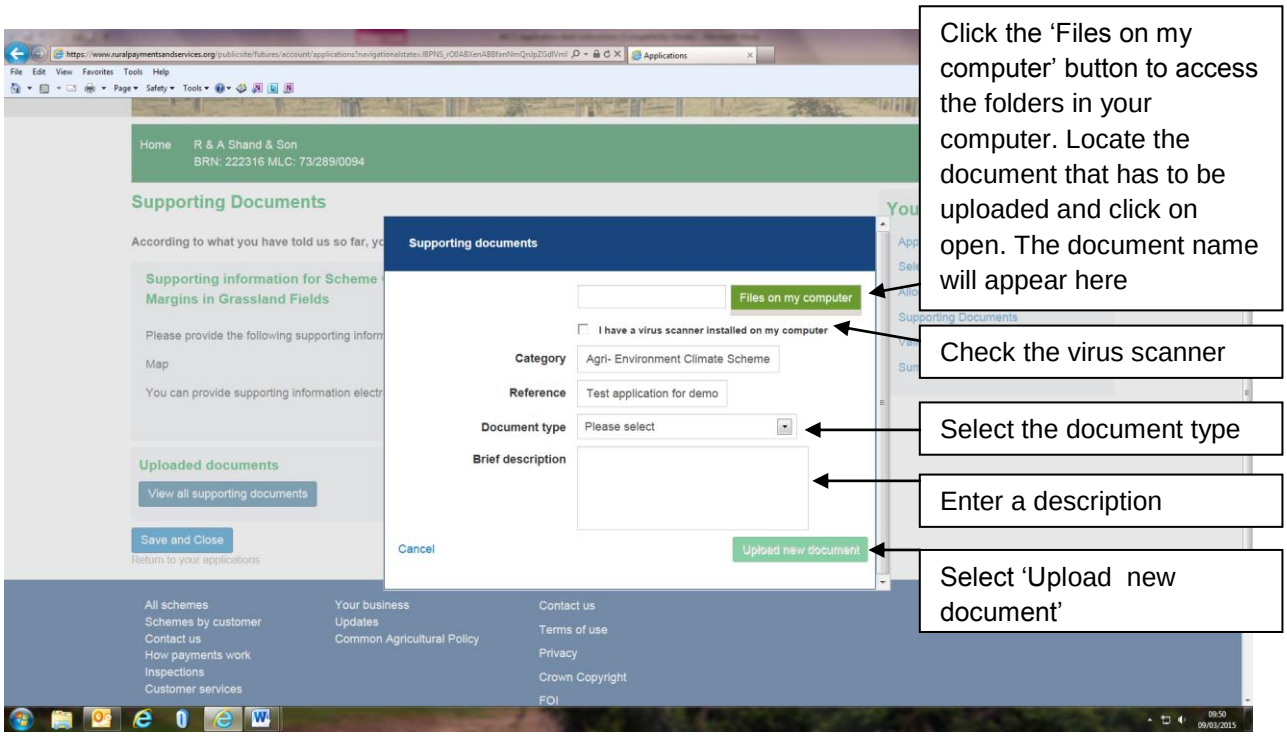
Documents can be:

- uploaded electronically
- emailed to the RPID or SNH area office. Where only paper versions exist they can be sent to the relevant office for upload
- if provided already for another application, this can be indicated. In the comments box please tell us which application it was provided for, so that it can be located easily

As a general rule, documentation should be uploaded electronically if possible. If there is a system issue, documents should be emailed instead.

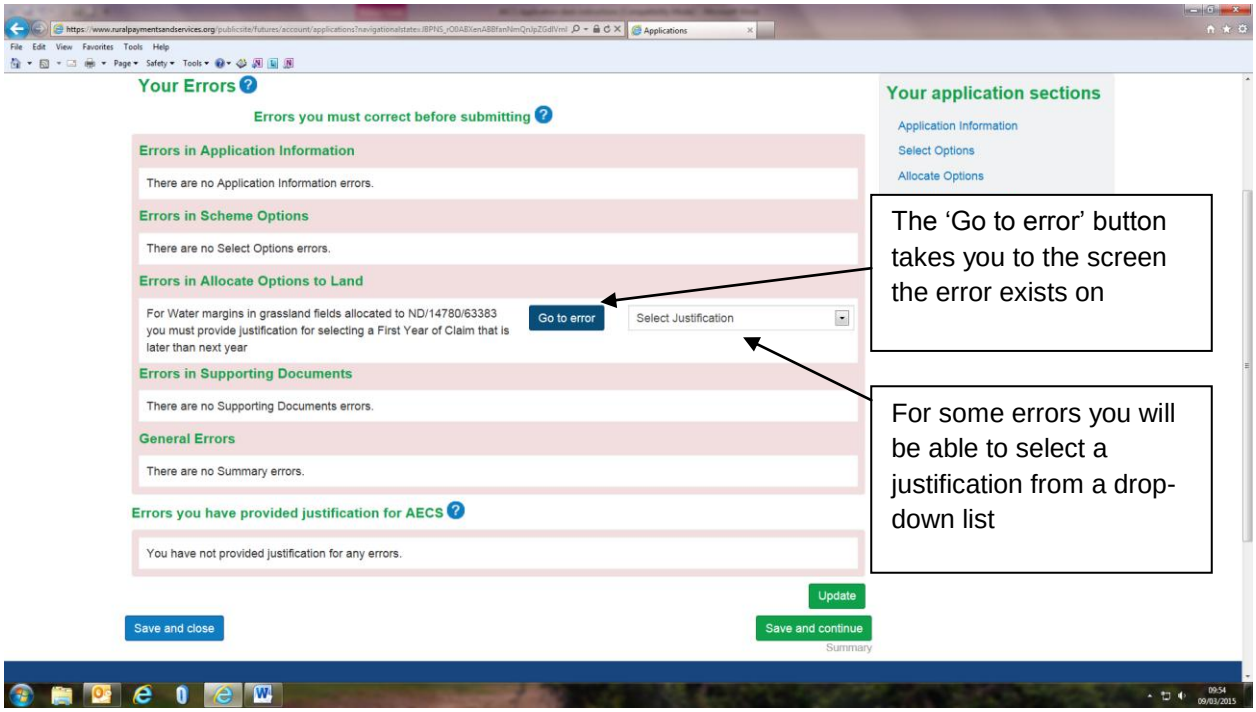


To upload a document click on 'Upload new document' and follow the instructions on the screenshot below. Once uploaded, check the box against the supporting document that has been supplied


Home
R & A Shand & Son
BRN: 222316 MLC: 73/289/0094
Supporting Documents
Supporting documents
Files on my computer
I have a virus scanner installed on my computer
Category
Agri- Environment Climate Scheme
Reference
Test application for demo
Document type
Please select
Brief description
Cancel
Upload new document
Uploaded documents
View all supporting documents
Save and Close
Click the 'Files on my computer' button to access the folders in your computer. Locate the document that has to be uploaded and click on open. The document name will appear here
Check the virus scanner
Select the document type
Enter a description
Select 'Upload new document'

Validation error screen

As well as validation errors appearing at the top of the page they occur on, in a pink banner, there is a validation error screen where all errors for the application display. In this example only one error exists. You can return to the page the error occurs on by selecting the 'Go to error' button beside the error message. The system is unable to direct you to the screen an error occurs in if it appears under the 'General error' heading. You must select one of the links on the right-hand side of the screen to be able to fix errors which show in the 'General error' section.

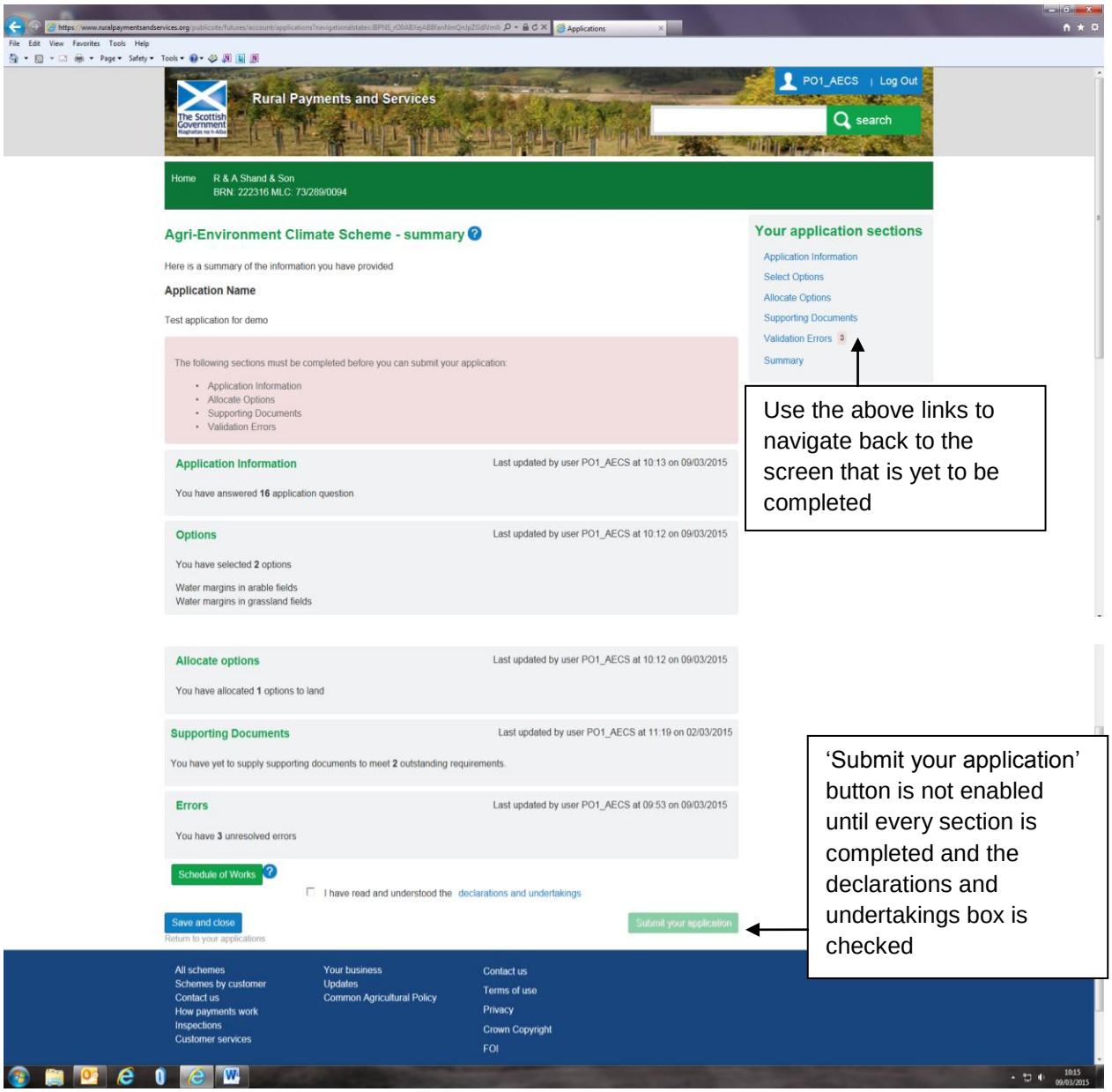


<u>Note. Some errors allow you to provide a justification for ignoring the error. The error may be displayed on the screen where it occurred but, you can only provide justification on the validation error screen.</u>

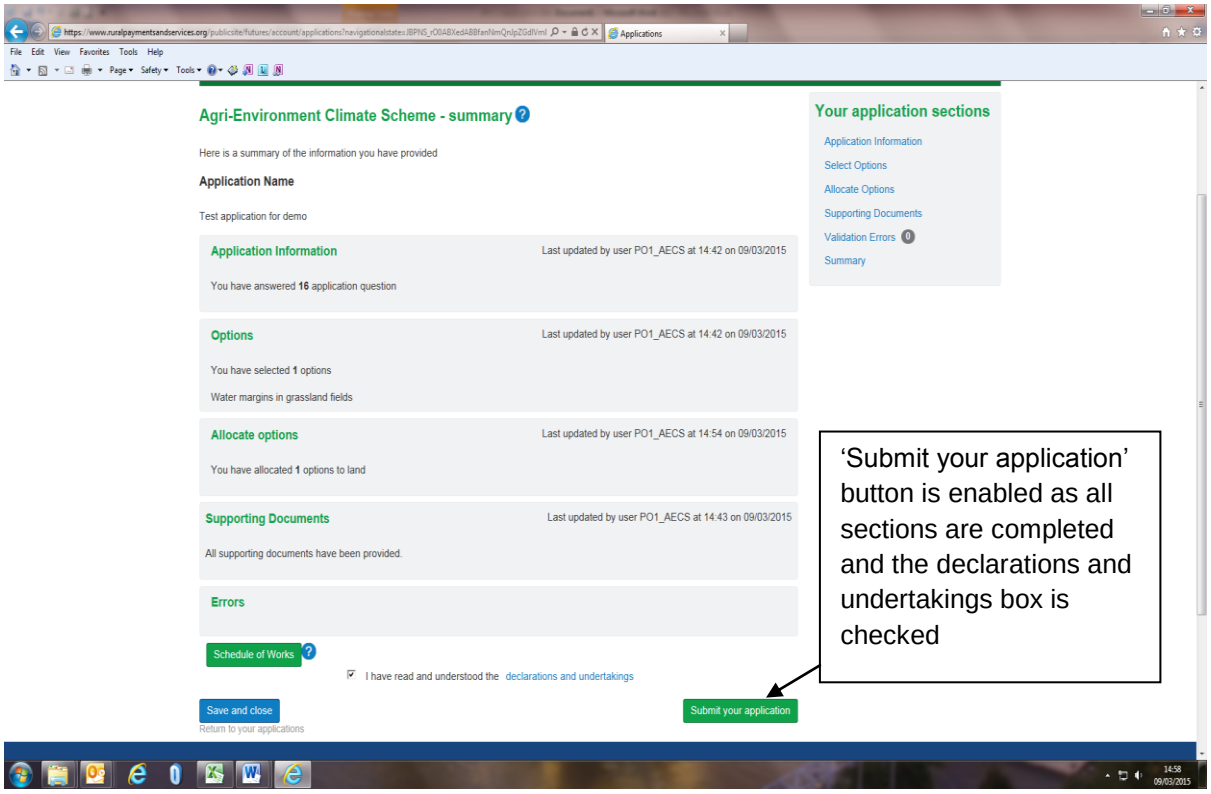
<u>To provide justification, select a reason from the justification dropdown and click the 'Update' button at the bottom of the screen. The error and the justification provided will move to the bottom of the screen under the "Errors you have provided justification for" section.</u>

Summary screen

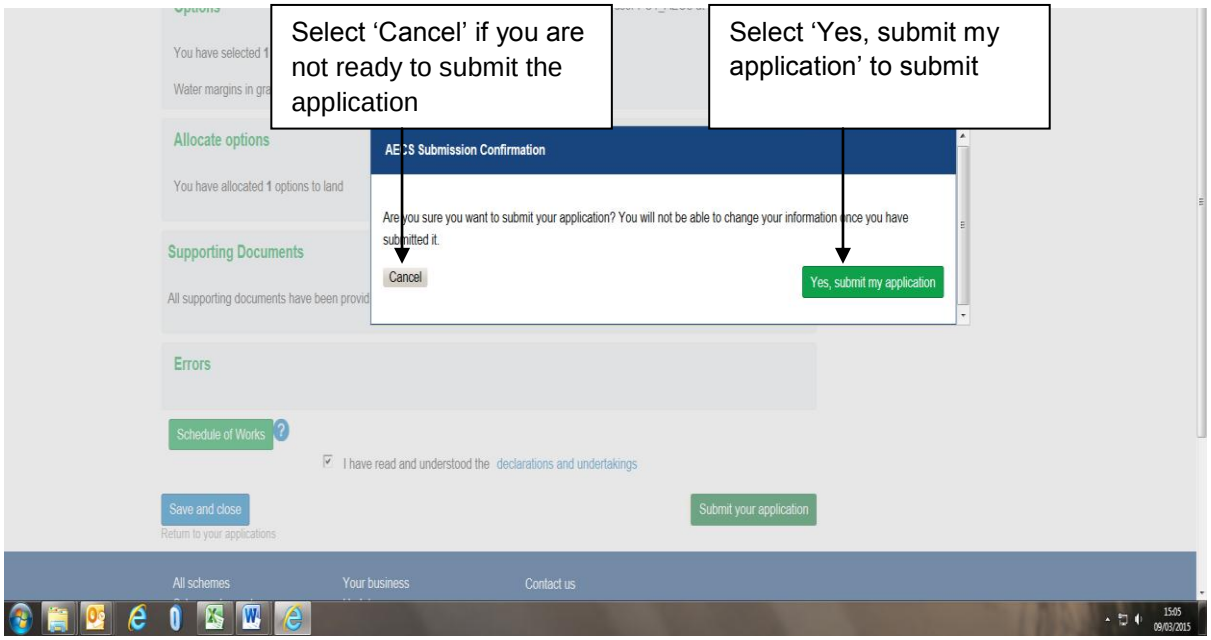
This screen builds up as the application is completed. The Draft Schedule of Works can be accessed from this screen. Each section of the application must be completed before the application can be submitted. The number of options allocated on the 'Allocate options' section must balance with the the number of options shown on the 'options' section. All supporting documents must be provided and no errors can exist before the Submit button will become available.



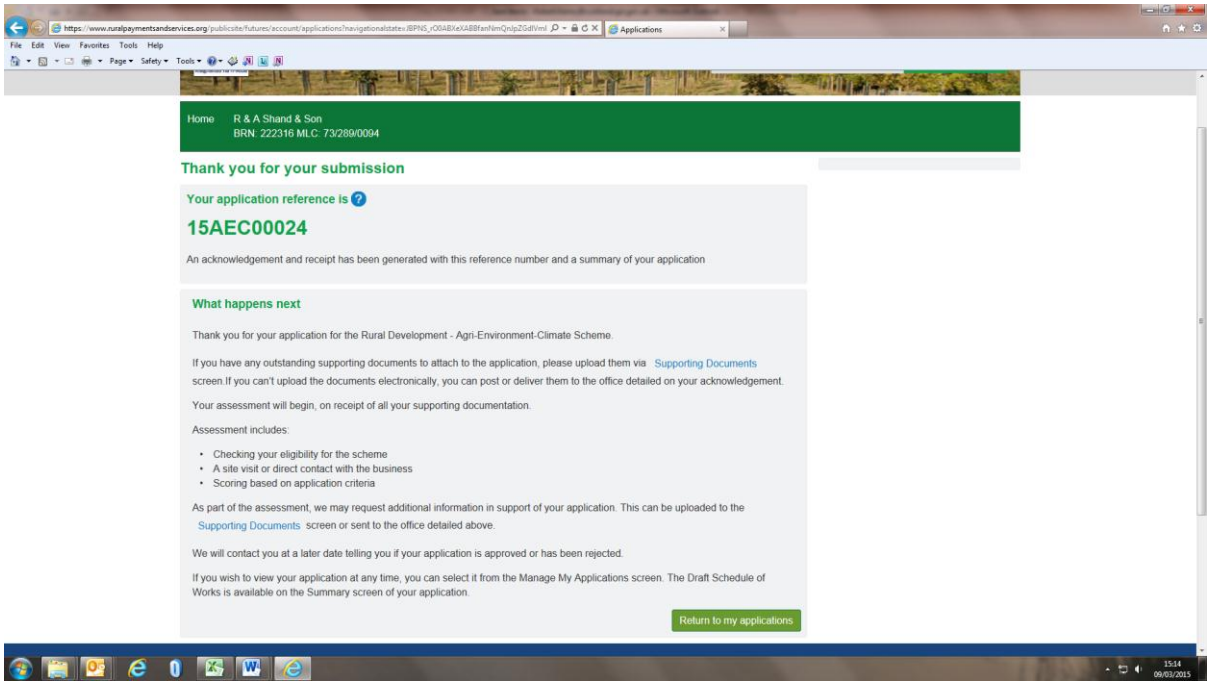
Example summary screen for a completed application.



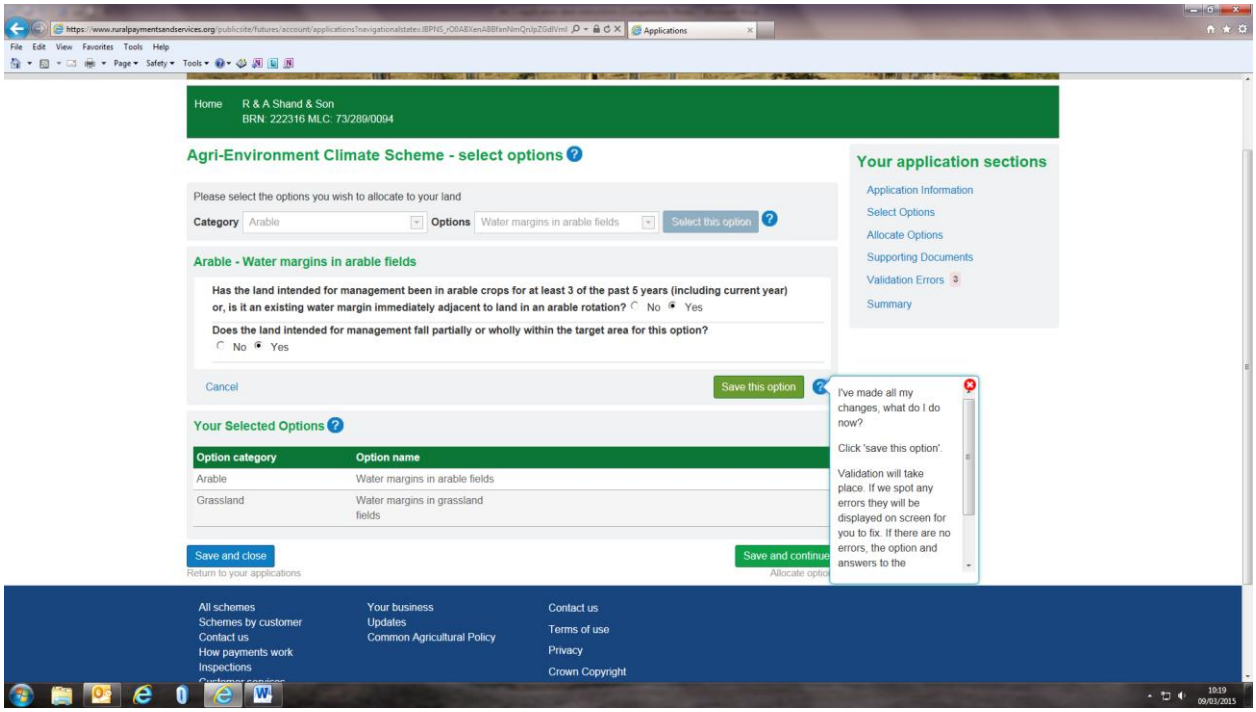
On selecting the 'Submit your application' button the following pop-up displays:



A receipt is displayed which includes the application reference number



Context sensitive help is available by clicking on the blue question marks dotted about each screen. This is not a replacement for the guidance but gives hints and tips as you progress through the application.



Appendix 1 – Questions contained on the application information screen

The table below provides the questions you must answer before moving to the next section of the application. The answer to some questions will dynamically produce supplementary questions.

Q1	Are there any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designations on the land proposed for management within this application?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q1a will be displayed and we will require the name of the SSSI, SPA or SAC
Q1a	What is the name of the SSSI, SPA, or SAC?	Free text to be entered
Q2	Will the work benefit any designated site features on a Site of Special Scentific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q2a and Q2b will be displayed and we will require the name of the SSSI, SPA or SAC and which features will benefit.
Q2a	What is the name of the SSSI, SPA, or SAC?	Free text to be entered
Q2b	Please tell us which features will benefit	Free text to be entered
Q3	Is any of the land in a National Park?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q3a will be displayed and we will require the name of the National Park.
Q3a	Please enter the names of the National Park	Free text to be entered

Q4	Is any of your application within a National Scenic Area?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q4a will be displayed and we will require the name of the National Scenic Area.
Q4a	Please enter the names of the National Scenic Area	Free text to be entered
Q5	Is any of your application within a Scheduled Ancient Monument?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q5a will be displayed and we will require the name of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.
Q5a	Please enter the names of the Scheduled Ancient Monument	Free text to be entered
Q6	Will the project be managed in a specific water catchment area?	This question is being removed from the application system but to progress an application now please always answer “No”.
Q6a	What is the name of the water catchment area?	Free text to be entered
Q7	Will the project contribute to peatland restoration?	Answers are yes or no
Q8	Is this application as a result of an Environmental Co-operative Action Fund (ECAF) project?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q8a will be displayed and we will require the ECAF reference number.
Q8a	Please give the ECAF reference number	Free text to be entered
Q9	Is the proposed work in this application in collaboration with any other business?	Answers are yes or no If answer is yes, Q9a and Q9b will be displayed and we will require the Business Reference Numbers of

		any businesses you are collaborating with.
Q9a	What is the Business Reference Number of the business you are collaborating with?	Free text to be entered Note that validation errors will be raised if you use your own BRN, the BRN is not valid or the format is not correct.
Q9b	What is the application ID of the business you are collaborating with?	The application IDs which are proposing collaborative work with you should be given. This question is optional to answer at the submission stage but we will need the information to allow us to confirm the collaborative approach
Q10	Is the area proposed for management: a) owned b) held under a secure tenancy c) held under contractual license	This question is being asked so that we can ensure we have evidence of your right to carry out the work on the land. You need to check a box to say which applies and any combination of answers can be entered. If (b) or (c) are checked you will need to provide evidence that your lease or licence covers the period of the contract. Either by supplying a copy of the lease or licence or providing a declaration from the landlord. We will be updating this question to include a response option for crofters – in the meantime, if a crofter is applying they should select the (b) response. The documentation required is explained in the "Ownership of land" section of the main guidance - we apologise for this oversight. https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-

		schemes/agri-environment-climate-scheme/agri-environment-climate-scheme-full-guidance-menu/agri-environment---ownership-of-land/
Q11	What Is the area of basic payment scheme eligible land (which is not rough grazing) in your IACS business permanent land holding? a) less than or equal to 5Ha b) between 5ha and 30Ha c) greater than 30Ha (NB. for crofting counties this limit includes the area of your croft, any in-bye apportionment and any arable cropped land on the common grazing, but NOT the remainder of the common grazing)	The information from the answer to this question will be used to carry out an initial assessment of whether you can apply for the Conservation of small units options. If you are able to answer either (a) or (b) then Q11 b will be displayed.
Q11b	Do you wish to apply for the conservation management of small units supplementary payment?	Answers are yes or no If you answer yes to this question, the supplementary payment will be added to the value you will receive for the relevant options if your application is approved.
Q12	Do you intend to apply for capital works on any march fences within this application?	Answers are yes or no If you answer yes to this question, then capital items which relate specifically to march fencing will

		be available for selection later in the application.
Q13	Please tell us: how many full time employees in agriculture will be safeguarded through the work in the proposed contract?	An answer must be given but it is acceptable to enter 0.
Q14	How many full time employees in agriculture will be created through the project?	An answer must be given but it is acceptable to enter 0.
Q15	How many temporary full time employees in agriculture will be created through the project?	An answer must be given but it is acceptable to enter 0.
Q16	Is grant funding essential for the project to take place?	Answers are yes or no If answer is no then Q16 a will be displayed.
Q16a	Will the grant funding enable the project to: a) be undertaken at a larger scale OR b) include new outputs or services that would not otherwise have happened OR c) be carried out to a higher standard than would otherwise be affordable OR d) be carried out at alternative sites and/or occur sooner	If one of the responses here is not selected you will be unable to take the application forward.

	than planned OR e) deliver to more beneficiaries?	

Appendix 2 – Select options

The table below shows the categories within which options are grouped in the online system The options have been grouped in categories to make selection of individual options easier.

Category	**Option name**
Arable	Wild bird seed for farmland birds
	Forage brassica crops for farmland birds
	Unharvested conservation headlands for wildlife
	Retention of winter stubble for wildlife and water quality
	Stubbles followed by green manure in an arable rotation
	Beetlebanks
	Grass strips in arable fields
	Water margins in arable fields
	Cropped machair
Cattle management on small units	Cattle management on small units (retention)
	Cattle management on small units (introduction)
Grassland	Water margins in grassland fields
	Wader and wildlife mown grassland
	Corn buntings mown grassland
	Corncrake mown grassland (not mown before 1st August)
	Corncrake mown grassland (not mown before 15th August)
	Corncrake mown grassland (not mown before 1stSeptember)
	Chough mown grassland

	Chough grazing management
	Wader grazed grassland
	Corncrake grazing management
	Management of cover for corncrakes
	Hen harrier grassland management (arable and improved grassland)
	Hen harrier grassland management (unimproved grassland or rough grazing)
	Species rich grassland management only
	Species rich grassland creation and management
Wetland and bog management	Wetland creation and management
	Wetland management only
	Lowland bog management without grazing
	Lowland bog management with grazing
	Management of buffer areas for fens and lowland bogs
Water quality and flood risk management	Management of floodplains
	Converting arable at risk of erosion or flooding to low-input grassland
Farmland habitats and features	Ancient wood pasture
	Managing montane scrub of conservation value
	Managing non-montane scrub of conservation value
	Creation of hedgerows
	Management or restoration of existing hedgerows
	Tall-herb vegetation management
	Habitat mosaic management

Upland, peatland, moorland and heath management	Moorland management (livestock only)
	Moorland management (deer only)
	Moorland management (deer and livestock)
	Stock disposal
	Stock Disposal (Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme supplement)
	Away wintering sheep
	Summer Hill grazing of cattle
	Heath management (coastal, Serpentine and special interest.)
	Heath management (lowland)
	Predator control (mammal and crow control)
	Predator control (crow control)
	Wildcat friendly predator control
Organic farming	Organic farming conversion - arable
	Organic farming conversion - improved grassland
	Organic farming conversion - unimproved grassland/rough grazing
	Organic farming conversion - fruit and vegetables
	Organic farming maintenance - arable
	Organic farming maintenance - improved grassland
	Organic farming maintenance - unimproved grassland/rough grazing
	Organic farming maintenance - fruit and vegetables
Control of non-native invasive species	Rhododendron control (capital only)

	Non-native plant control (capital only)
Environmental capital work with no associated management	Wetland creation (capital only)
	Ditch blocking (capital only)
	Bog management (capital only)
	Scrub control (capital only)
	Sand dune erosion mitigation (capital only)
	Upland, peatland, moorland and heath (capital only)
	Farmland habitats and features (capital only)
Water quality and flood risk (capital work only)	Managing steading drainage and rural sustainable drainage systems (capital only)
	Slurry storage (capital only) - this option will not be available until 2016.
	Pesticide handling facilities (capital only)
	Alternative watering (capital only)
	Diffuse pollution control (capital only)
	Embankment engineering (capital only)
Access	Improving access

Appendix 3 – Some hints and tips on system usability

Cancelling when editing an option – the error message is inaccurate

If you choose to edit annual recurrent management or capital items that you have allocated to land and then choose to "cancel" the edit, the error message displayed gives you inaccurate information.

The message states *"Please confirm that you wish to cancel allocation of this Option to the land parcel"*

In fact, if you choose to proceed with the cancel, the system will only cancel anything that you have edited and will not remove the option from the land parcel.

Removing the row of standard capital cost items if there is only one row

If you want to remove a row of standard cost capital you can use the "delete" function to remove the whole row. However, if there is only one row of standard cost capital this function is not enabled – you can:

- remove the entries from the "quantity" and "map letter" boxes
- set the entry in the Standard Cost Items box set to "Select Item" and also
- set the entry in the "Year Claimed" to select year.

Alternatively there is an easier way to do this is:

- click the "Add a new Row" button – a new blank row will appear,
- the delete function will be available on both rows and you can remove the row which you want to delete.

Adding actual costs to an application.
Detail on the use of actual costs can be found here:

https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/all-schemes/agri-environment-climate-scheme/agri-environment-climate-scheme-full-guidance-menu/agri-environment-funding-under-the-scheme/

When adding actual cost items to an application there are two different methods to use depending on the category of actual costs that you are applying for.

The first method is for actual costs that are permitted for Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Natura sites (Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation).

These items have the same unit of measure as the equivalent standard cost item. So, if the standard cost is paid per metre, the actual cost will be too.

When you enter actual costs for an item that the unit of measure is “length in metres”, you should enter the quantity of metres you wish to erect in the “Quantity” box and the price per Metre in the “Cost per unit” box. The same principals apply for other units of measure such as “area in hectares” where you should enter the quantity of hectares in the “Quantity” box and the price per hectare in the “Cost per unit” box.

The second method is for actual costs for capital items where no standard costs are available.

These items have the unit “unit of measure”.

For these items, enter a quantity of “1” in the “Quantity” box and enter the total value of the item that you are applying for in the “Cost per unit” box.

The quotations provided in support of any actual cost capital items should include the detail of the works that are to be carried out.

Rotational options

When allocating a rotational option to land it is important to remember that if the total area you are applying for on all the land parcels is not the same for all five years then the following rules apply:

1. The first year of rotation must have the highest total area
2. The total area for all other individual years must be no less than 90% of the total area entered for the first year

If any year other than the first year has the highest total value, you will be given an error message that does not make sense. By using the rules above you will successfully clear the error

Validation Error Messages

Where errors exist, messages are displayed in a pink banner at the top of the screen Sometimes when you correct the information which caused the error, the error message will not disappear until you select ‘save and continue’ or access the summary screen.

Uploading Supporting Documents

After completing all the detail on the Supporting documents upload pop-up box, the ‘Upload new document’ button should be selected. It may look like the button is disabled, but if so just click on it twice and the document will upload.

Supporting documents link on submission success screen

Once you have submitted your application you will be presented with the submission success screen which will tell you that any outstanding documents can be uploaded via the Supporting Documents screen.

This function is not currently available and any supporting documents you have not uploaded as part of your application must be sent to your local office by e-mail or alternatively be posted or hand delivered.

Web based navigation

As this is a web based application which includes validations within its internal navigation, it is important to remember that you should not use browser navigation.

Browser navigation (the back and forward keys), will not save or validate your application and the use of these keys means that there is a risk that you will lose information.

Communications Log

Every time you press the Schedule of Works button on the summary screen, a new Schedule of Works button will be created and stored in your communications log showing the date and time it was created. You will also receive an email each time a Schedule of Works has been created. If you want to view a previously created Schedule you should access it through your communications log.

If you need to add a land parcel that is not displayed in the list

If the Select Land drop-down does not contain the Land Parcel that the proposed work is to be carried out in, the 'Add New Land' link should be selected. Please enter an OS grid reference in the box indicated for this. The OS grid ref should be in the format XX/123/456. You must ignore the Land Parcel ID box as validation will not let you submit if you add a LPID.

Options with non-standard behaviour.

When allocating most options to land it is a relatively simple matter of entering the area which is to be managed, giving it a map letter and saying in which year the management will commence.

There are one or two options where the standard process does not follow.

Conservation Management for Small Units.

This "option" is in fact a supplementary payment made on top of the normal payment rates for the relevant options (given below):

- Wild Bird Seed for Farmland Birds
- Forage Brassica Crops for Farmland Birds
- Unharvested Conservation Headlands for Wildlife
- Retention of Winter Stubbles for Wildlife

• Cropped Machair
• Wader and Wildlife Mown Grassland
• Corn Buntings Mown Grassland
• Corncrake Mown Grassland
• Chough Mown Grassland
• Species-rich Grassland Management

Where your IACS business permanent land holding comprises more than five hectares (not including rough grazing), you must manage at least one hectare of your land split between two or more of the above options.

Where your IACS business permanent land holding comprises five hectares or less (not including rough grazing), you must manage at least 0.5 hectares of your land under one of the above options.

The supplementary payment will be added to the application costs if you answer "Yes" to the question *"Do you wish to apply for the conservation management of small units supplementary payment?"* in the "Application Information Screen"

Cattle Management on Small Units (introduction or retention)

For this option, it is necessary to tell us the number of cows which you will either introduce or retain, as well as give us the land parcels on which the cows will graze.

When you select the option in the "Select Options" section you will be asked to enter the number of cows which you will either introduce or retain (minimum 2, maximum 10).

Thereafter you will need to allocate the option to every land parcel which the cattle may graze during the year (giving area, map letter and the year management will commence as with other options).

Note, that if you enter less than two hectares for every cow that is being introduced or retained then errors will be generated.

Summer Hill Grazing of Cattle

When you allocate this option to land, you will need to tell us the number of cattle which you will graze on each individual hill parcel.

The system will then automatically calculate the number of hectares (20 ha per animal) which will be benefited and used for payment. The overall area must not exceed the eligible area of the land parcel.

Note that you do not need to have enough cattle to graze an entire parcel, for example if you propose to graze 10 cattle on a 400 ha parcel this is acceptable. The system will calculate that 200 ha are being managed.

Stock Disposal

When selecting this option the “Select Options” section you will need to tell us the number of ewes and gimmers which will remain if your application was successful and you sell the relevant number of sheep. This is to allow us to carry out annual monitoring of your commitment and must be recorded accurately.

When you allocate the option to land you will need to enter the number of sheep which will be removed from each land parcel. The system will then automatically calculate the number of ha which will benefit (0.8 ha for every sheep) – the total for each parcel must not exceed the eligible area of the land parcel.

Stock Disposal (Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme Supplement)

If the business will lose out on aid from the Scottish Upland Sheep Support Scheme, you can apply for a supplementary payment of £8.08 per ha.

Due to the late nature of the decision to have this supplement, it has been necessary to make it work in much the same way as the overall stock disposal option.

When you allocate the option to land you will need to enter the number of sheep which will be removed from each land parcel which should receive the supplement.

The number of sheep (and thus number of ha) which will be eligible for the supplement depends on the land you hold and the number of sheep you remove.

We are currently updating the additional guidance section of the Stock Disposal option so that it contains information on how to work out how many sheep removed would be eligible for the supplement – a calculator will also be provided to help you work out what is eligible overall or at individual parcel level. This guidance update should be completed by 3 April.

Using the Creation of wild bird seed and Creation of Green manure capital items

For the options:

- wild birdseed for farmland birds, and
- stubbles followed by green manure in an arable rotation

If you wish to receive payment for the establishment of these crops, it is essential that you apply for the capital item for every time that the crop is to be established

For example, if you intend to create a wild bird seed crop for management in all five years of a contract then you must apply for the creation of wild birdseed for farmland birds capital item in each individual year.

How to apply for open range deer management

The open range deer management capital item is paid depending on the size of reduction cull as follows:

Payment rate per hectare	Size of reduction cull
£0.80	At least two deer per 100 hectares
£1.20	At least three deer per 100 hectares
£1.60	At least four deer per 100 hectares
£2.00	At least five deer per 100 hectares

You must apply for the payment rate which reflects the intended size of reduction cull within your deer management plan. If you are successful in achieving a contract you will need to provide larder receipts to verify your claim and should claim for the actual size of reduction cull.

We cannot pay for any more than the size of cull entered in the application

Wader Grazed Grassland

If you are proposing to manage land under the Wader Grazed Grassland option for the benefit of Lapwing or Curlew then you are expected to manage blocks of no less than three hectares. The system contains validation which will check that blocks are at least three hectares.

We appreciate that in some circumstances smaller land parcels will be managed together under the option to make up the three-hectare block. As such, the system is designed to accept land parcels smaller than three hectares being managed as long as the same map letter is used for each land parcel.

If you use different map letters you will get multiple errors which tell you that the area per map letter is less than the three hectare minimum – there will be an error message for each potential year of management.

Note that this validation is created by you answering the option question: “Will the proposed management benefit one or both of lapwing or curlew” as “Yes”.

The validation will be run on all areas of land to which the Wader Grazed Grassland is allocated. If you are proposing to do work for other wader species on the same application (for which there is no three hectare minimum) then to allow the application to proceed with blocks of less than three hectares you will need to answer the option question “No”.

System issues

Below we have noted one or two system issues which may arise. We are working to correct these but in the meantime this guidance will help you complete and submit an application.

Management of Cover for Corncrakes

There is a system defect when trying to select the Management of Cover for Corncrakes option.

If you answer the option question “Do all existing areas intended for management, consist of Basic Payment Scheme eligible Grassland containing clumps of tall plants distributed across the field, and not confined to field margins or small parts of the field?” as “No”, an error message is generated which tells you that some of the land is not eligible.

Clearly in some circumstances some of the land proposed for management will have existing cover and some will not. The expectation was that if you answered the question as “No” then validation would produce an error if you forgot to select the supporting capital item Creation of Cover for Corncrakes.

If you are in the situation where some of the land which you propose to manage under this option already has suitable cover but some cover will also need to be created, then you will need to ask the first “option question” as “Yes”.

This will allow you to proceed with your application and add the Creation of Cover for Corncrakes where required. Please remember that the Creation of Cover capital item is only available on either arable land or improved grassland.

Validation error regarding funding status

There is a system error which occurs if you have a sterling bank account and a euro bank account.

The system is supposed to check whether you have the appropriate bank account to receive payments under the scheme. However if you have more than one account registered with us then the system generates a validation error which says: “Your business is not currently registered for funding. This must be updated through your business registration”.

This validation error does not stop you submitting your application but you will have to supply a “justification”. You should select “I will update my details or submit a paper form with the information” from the drop-down list of justifications for the error.

Note that if you have not supplied us with bank account details when you registered with us then this validation error will be generated correctly and you will not receive any payments until you supply the required details.

Endorsement document requirement

When you select all options which have a targeting requirement, the system displays a question which says: “Does the land intended for management fall partially or wholly within the target area for this option?”

If you answer this question as “No” (because the land to be managed is out with the target area) then the system is supposed to remind you that you need to supply endorsement from the appropriate organisation.

However, for some options, even if you are within the target area and answer “Yes” then a supporting document regarding endorsement is still requested.

If this happens to you, please simply go to the relevant entry in the supporting documents section and select one of the radio buttons relating to providing the document. You can enter a comment which says “Not required”.

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