

Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites on Arable Land

Objective

To enhance and maintain visible cultural heritage sites as landscape features and protect their historical value in a tillage parcel.

Background

All archaeological monuments recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland are marked on maps on the National Monuments Service website and can be found at the following link: [Historic Environment Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.nms.ie/historic-environment-viewer).

The aim of this option is to protect cultural heritage sites, including archaeological sites, from damage associated with scrub growth and erosion.

Any proposed works to a Recorded Monument that involves digging and/or ground disturbance must be notified in advance to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. Under no circumstances should burning take place on or near the monument, as this can cause damage to underlying archaeological deposits.

Site Suitability

- This action can be selected on parcels with an Eligible hectare $> \text{ or } = 0$.
- This action is available on CP and Non-CP parcels that will be claimed by the participant for the remainder of the ACRES contract.
- All monuments entered for this action must be **located** within LPIS parcels declared as an arable crop **claimed by the participant**.
- Only sites identified as NMS-Sites and Monuments on the GLAM mapping system are eligible for this action.
- Monuments must be visible on the selected LPIS parcel(s).
- Monuments on commonage parcels are not eligible for this action.
- Other sites of cultural heritage significance, when identified as such in the relevant Local Area Plan, can be applied for as an NPI by the CP teams.
- **Where there is more than one monument identified as NMS-Sites and Monuments on the GLAM mapping system at a single location but only one 10m grass margin is in place, payment is for one NPI at that location only.**

Requirements

1. Establish a 10m-wide grass margin by sowing a grass seed mix using certified seed around the external perimeter of the selected monument by August 31st of the year following year of approval or by December 31st in the final year of the ACRES contract.
2. The location of the monument(s) selected for this action must be indicated on the LPIS parcel(s) and marked on the map submitted. Each individual monument is only eligible for one NPI payment and once claimed must be maintained for the duration of the ACRES contract.

3. Monuments selected must be visible in the landscape – monuments which have been completely levelled or otherwise removed in the past but are still listed by the NMS as archaeological sites, are not eligible for payment.
4. The margin must extend from the external outer boundary of the monument. The margin must be established by light cultivation (min-till) techniques – i.e., no ploughing is permitted.
5. Soil cultivation cannot be carried out within the margin once established.
6. The margin must be maintained as grass by mowing or strimming to prevent woody growth for the remainder of the ACRES contract. Mowing is permitted once it does not cause damage to the monument. Extreme care is required here.
7. Pesticides and herbicides are not permitted on the monument and grass margin except for the spot treatment of noxious and invasive species.
8. Where there is encroaching vegetation (excluding established healthy trees) on/near the monument, this must be controlled but not between March 1st and August 31st annually. Note roots of plants cannot be removed.
9. Grazing by livestock throughout the year is permissible around the monument(s) but care should be taken in the autumn and winter months to ensure no damage is caused to the monument(s). Where there is a risk of damage or poaching, the site can be fenced off with temporary, non-intrusive posts and allowed to recover, before grazing resumes.

Additional Guidance

- In the case of encroaching Bracken, the ideal method is the manual cutting of growing fronds which causes the gradual starvation of the rhizome system. Cutting or thrashing is best done around the middle of June and again six weeks later for at least three successive years.