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Department of  
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'The European Agricultural Fund  
for Rural Development: Europe  
investing in rural areas'.

## Best Practice Checklist No.3

# Wall repair, Gate & Fence installation

### Why the Burren Programme (BP) co-funds this work:

Properly functioning walls, gates and fences make it easier to keep livestock where you want them to be, and then to move them when you need to. This will help ensure your fields are properly grazed as required; reducing your feed costs, improving the environment, as well as potentially increasing your Intervention 1 (I-1) field 'scores', and thus your payment. Well repaired stone walls and properly fitted gates also greatly improve the 'look' of this farmed landscape, and can make the farmer's life a little easier.

### Burren Programme funding:

The actual cost of each walling and/or fencing job is calculated using rates which were developed as part of the BurrenLIFE project. The rates used for fencing materials, gates and labour are updated regularly to keep track with inflation. The amount of money you will receive for each wall/fence/gate task will be listed on your Intervention 2 (I-2) work plan.

All suitable work is co-funded, with higher rates for work that is considered to deliver a greater environmental benefit. The co-funding rates offered by the BP for walling/fencing/gate tasks are as follows:

- Internal stone wall repair: 75%
- Installation of traditional 'Burren-style' gate (incl. posts & labour): 75%
- Repair of boundary wall adjoining public road/right of way: 75%
- Repair of boundary wall shared with neighbouring land: 50%
- Installation of wire fence (incl. materials & labour): 50%
- Purchase of electric fencer unit (receipt required): 50%
- Installation of regular field gates (all sizes; incl. posts & labour): 50%

To be assured of receiving your allocated payment for such planned tasks, the work must be carried out and completed to at least the baseline standard outlined in this checklist. Failure to do so may result in a **delay, reduction or loss of payment.** Persistent poor performance or failure to correct poor work may result in no further funding for certain work for the remainder of your contract (see BP Terms & Conditions). In contrast however, by doing a job well, you will receive the full allocated payment, reap the benefits of the job itself

and make it easier to get permission and funding for future work. You will also be helping to ensure the long-term positive impact and success of the Burren Programme. Therefore, it's very worthwhile doing the job properly on day-one, even if this involves hiring in professional support for the more difficult tasks.

If you do not have time yourself to complete planned works, please consider hiring-in outside help to do the work on your behalf. A list of willing and experienced local contractors is available from the BP office: most of those listed on this are farmers like yourself. Any 'I-2 work money' that is not drawn down by you is theoretically lost to the locality, whereas it could be used to provide employment to relatives or local people in the area, while importantly also helping to improving the management and condition of your farm and potentially increasing your I-1 field scores and payments.

The following checklist contains some of the common issues and shortcomings encountered when assessing wall, fence and gate work. Being aware of these will help ensure you do the job properly and get paid for it promptly.

**Remember, always read your individual I-2 work plan carefully before starting any job, and speak to your advisor and/or the BP team if in any doubt.**





## Stone wall repair:

1. All sections of wall marked for repair must be repaired to a solid, secure and stockproof standard; unstable sections should be knocked and rebuilt, where necessary.
2. Repair work should be done in the style that is consistent with the existing wall, and be evenly topped-off. Retain any old structures within walls - stiles, puickets, marker stones etc.
3. Fallen stone should be used to repair the wall before any new stone is imported. This may require the manual unearthing of fallen stones where vegetation has covered them, but embedded, 'earth-fast' stones must not be extracted from underlying 'archaeological' walls if present.
4. Stone must never be removed from other walls or built structures without prior permission – what looks like a handy source of stone to you may in fact be an archaeological feature!
5. Any excess imported stone should be removed off-site once the repair work is completed.
6. Cut back any wall-bound scrub which is hindering repair. However, where there are mature trees along the wall, these should be retained, though hanging side branches that risk knocking the wall can be cut back.

*Tip: If goats, or people, are regularly crossing the wall and damaging it, consider inserting a stile, puicket or a narrow passageway to accommodate them. The additional cost of this can be part-funded at the 75% rate.*

## Consultation check:

You, or your advisor, will need to consult with the BP team to get approval for certain wall repair jobs. The BP in turn may need to consult with the relevant bodies, namely the NPWS, NMS and in some cases the County Council. Situations where additional consultation is required may include:

- Where you are repairing a wall within an archaeological complex or in the vicinity of a monument;
- Where you need to import stone from elsewhere to repair a wall - even if coming from your farm;
- Where you plan to build a new wall or a new section of wall.

### Acceptable Standard



*Nicely finished traditional stone wall.*

### Unacceptable Standard



*Unfinished work, and looks unstable.*



## Acceptable Standard

## Unacceptable Standard



*'Puicket' rebuilt, retaining the old style.*



*Minimal repair, ongoing damage from hazel.*



*Solid build all the way along, scrub removed.*



*Some work done but very poor standard.*



*High quality finish, loose rock cleared away.*



*Minimal effort, a few loosely balanced stones.*



## Gate installation:

1. Gates must be hung properly. Ensure to install them the 'right way up' and level, and that the top bar does not protrude excessively (>1 foot) above the height of the adjoining walls, while the lowest bar should not be >1 foot above the ground level unless required to clear the ground on either side.
2. The gate should open and close easily (without lifting or dragging!) but securely - closing 'slots' are usually better than holes, as they allow for some gate 'sagging' over time.
3. A matching set of hanging and closing metal posts must be present before the job is fully complete. If using timber posts or block piers, please notify your advisor as this may impact on your funding allocation.
4. Gate posts should be straight upright, securely anchored and should not protrude excessively (>1 foot) above the height of the adjoining walls or attached gate.
5. Where gates are to be installed into walls with no existing gap, consider off-setting the gate and using the stone from the demolished section of wall to build 'wings'. Some farmers have found this helps when herding stock and it will be a requirement if there is an underlying 'mound wall'.
6. If installing a new gate onto a public road, the gate must be recessed by 3m in the interest of safety for the farmer and for other road users. Permission to install a gate will not be granted otherwise.
7. Once a gate has been installed, the wall up to the posts on either side must be repaired and any excess loose rock must be removed off-site.
8. Old gates, piers and any other unused materials must be removed off-site.

**Tip:** Using Burren-style gates will earn more funding (75% rate), can be customised to whatever height and width you want, and their purchase will support local employment. These gates look great and should ideally be used on sites with high public visibility (road-frontage, walkways). Also, use smaller gates where possible - these are cheaper and can look better.

**Tip:** To prevent water from gathering inside gate posts and causing them to rust from the inside, either cap them using a plastic cap or drill a drainage hole in the base.

**Tip:** Consider installing a 'support block' at the closing side of the gate to support the weight of the gate, especially if it's a Burren-style gate.

**Tip:** Square gate posts often work better as it's easier to build a stone wall up and against these square posts.

## Consultation check:

You or your advisor will need to consult with the BP team to get approval for certain gate installation jobs. Situations where additional consultation is required include:

- Where you plan to install a new gate close to a monument or within an archaeological complex;
- Where you plan to install a new gate onto a public road.



## Acceptable Standard



*Posts well installed, level with adjoining wall.*



*Small gate, same height as wall, posts straight.*



*Posts, gate and wall all at an even height.*



*Suitably sized gate, and walls fully stock-proof.*

## Unacceptable Standard



*Gate posts weak and crooked, wall not removed.*



*No closing post, gate does not clear ground.*



*Posts and gate crooked, weak, gate not closing.*



*Gate installed, but adjacent walls not stock-proof.*



## Wire fence installation:

The Burren is renowned for its stone walls which have acted as farm boundaries for over 4,000 years. As such, under the Burren Programme the repair of existing stone walls is the strongly preferred option in terms of stock-proofing fields or farms and is funded at a higher level (75%) as a result. However, in some cases, the installation of wire fencing may be the only realistic option, for which 50% funding is available. Such situations might arise where there is no possibility of importing stone to build or repair a stone wall, or where there is an area of improved summer-land with deep soil which needs to be managed separately from the winterage part of the farm, and building up new sub-dividing walls isn't a viable option.

When installing a fence, remember that:

1. Fence posts must be vertical, well-anchored with the wire properly tightened.
2. Trees must not be used as fence posts; this is poor practice and will damage the trees.
3. All old and any unused posts and wire must be removed off-site and properly disposed of.
4. Electric fencer units are properly earthed, but that any vegetation connecting with the wire is cut back.

*Tip: Solar fencers are ideal for remote locations such as winterages but you should add a permanent mark that can be used as identification (i.e. in case of theft). It's also advisable to avoid placing them where openly visible from a public road, and to remove the fencer unit for safekeeping when not in use.*

## Consultation check:

You or your advisor will need to consult with the BP team to get approval for certain wire fencing jobs. Situations where additional consultation is required include:

- Where you plan to install a new fixed post and wire fence within a SAC, or in an archaeological complex, or close to/on a monument;
- Where any drilling or rock disturbance is likely to be necessary.

### Acceptable Standard



*Sturdy, well supported post, and tensed wire.*

### Unacceptable Standard



*Not completed, job not eligible for payment.*