



ERNEST COOK TRUST

learning from the land since 1952

• A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...
• JONATHAN STEBBING, FRICS, FAAV, DEPUTY LAND AGENT

Jonathan Stebbing has been with the Ernest Cook Trust for over 30 years. During that time he has seen the Trust grow into one of the UK's leading educational charities and has played a major role in helping to develop the income-generating estates. In those three decades the Trust's land has increased by a quarter from 17,500 acres to 22,000 acres.



As the Trust's Deputy Land Agent, he is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Little Dalby Estate in Leicestershire, and Hatherop, Fairford and Barnsley Estates in Gloucestershire. He spends most of his week in the Trust's estate office in Fairford, and up to two days a week in Little Dalby.

Jonathan's job follows an annual and seasonal cycle; in the summer he oversees repairs to the Trust's 245 houses and cottages which are spread across all the estates. This involves liaising not only with the estate's retained building, electrical and plumbing contractors, but also with local agents who handle the letting of the cottages.



The Trust has a policy of restoring and conserving its cottages to the highest standards and always tries to let them to people connected to, or employed on, the estates or in the locality. Prospective tenants are always interviewed before re-letting a property.

In the late summer and early autumn, Jonathan will start to negotiate any farm rents that are due for review with the Trust's farm tenants. This is usually done on a three-year cycle and involves visiting all the tenants.



In addition, he oversees the woodland on the estates which involves regular meetings with the estates' woodmen. During the last 30 years he has seen the planting of many new areas of woodland.

Other responsibilities include any professional work for the Trust, as well as maintaining the Trust's insurance policies, health and safety on the estates and keeping up to date with the endless reams of new legislation from Westminster and European Parliaments.

At the end of the day, he tries to escape to the River Coln to plan arrangements for the fishing season, or to meet the keepers to discuss the coming shooting season.



It is a hugely varied role and he is a familiar face among the farmers, tenants and business people as he travels the estates accompanied by his cocker spaniel Maisie. "It's very enjoyable work," he says. "As any land agent will tell you, no two days are ever the same."

To find out more about how the Ernest Cook Trust looks after its estates, visit www.ernestcooktrust.org.uk/estates

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