

My father always told me to strive to be the best at what you do. I feel I can always have that goal while working as an ALO at FGP

- Stewart Robinson



“There is something exciting about being part of the renewable energy revolution especially when I can combine it with my farming roots at FGP,” says Stewart Robinson.

Farmer through and through, Stewart Robertson made the transfer from Farm Management to Agricultural Liaison Officer (ALO) and has not looked back.

Finding a farming lad working alongside chartered surveyors is not necessarily what you would expect, but Stewart Robertson found his niche as an ALO with FGP. The ALO job title sounds a bit clumsy, but it is a role that has allowed Stewart to put his knowledge of farming to another use, adding another dimension to his career.

Married with five children, including a late addition, Stewart started life on a farm in the peace and beauty of the Ettrick Valley, where his father was farm manager. With his mother part of an extensive farming family, his path was set while still a boy. Feeding livestock before school was the routine and the overalls were back on soon after the school bus returned.

After seven years as a stockman on another Borders farm, Stewart’s experience gave him the opportunity to cross the border with his young family and become farm manager of a livestock farm at picturesque Stainton Dale on the North York Moors. Under his stewardship, the farm saw expansion to 222 hectares (550 acres), but sadly the job came to an end with the retirement of his employer and it was time to move on.

Rewarding

Intrigued by an advertisement in the farming press, Stewart liked what he heard about the ALO role and joined FGP in 2017. Stepping into another industry, infrastructure construction, has been rewarding, especially when the role is intrinsically linked with agriculture.

Stewart says: *“There is something exciting about being part of the renewable energy revolution, especially when I can combine it with my farming roots.”*



To date, Stewart has worked on the onshore sections of windfarm cables, seismic surveys, brine field work and various access requirements.

“Every day is different,” Stewart says. “I enjoy being outdoors, meeting people and the link to farming. It is immensely satisfying to advise contractors to put in place something that later works well for the farmer and saves everyone time and trouble.”



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Agricultural Liaison Officers and Chartered Surveyors

FGP ALO’s and Chartered Surveyors work on cross country construction projects throughout the UK providing vital support for developers in liaising and negotiating with landowners, engineers and land agents.

A fast moving varied job needing enthusiasm with knowledge of farming and the countryside.

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The job brings with it interaction with other departments in the company. Aside from land agents, project managers and lawyers, Stewart has found working with the GIS department of great interest, developing a close understanding of mapping and its role in data recording.

It could be seen as brave to step out of a farming world that can be a bit insular. Stewart says: *“The new job potentially took me out of my farming comfort zone, but I find helping farmers and other landowners through the construction process immensely rewarding – the returns are rewarding as well.”*

The variety includes encountering farms of all types, as well as other property types; parkland, golf courses and private gardens could all crop up in a day’s work.

A particular and growing interest of Stewart’s is soil protection.

“I have to remind contractors that soil is not just mud, but a living body that has taken more than 500 years to develop that needs care and protection if the ground is going to recover properly and return to crop production.”

Farmers are being pressed to engage more closely in soil management and this has to be respected by the promoters of cross-country construction.