



Kent Downs and Marshes LEADER

As part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), Swale was part of the Kent Downs and Marshes LEADER programme, which made money available to local groups and businesses to support local projects which met the programme criteria. The next LEADER programme will not start until 2015 and we are currently in a 'transition year', termed so as the current programme is closed off and the new programme is developed

All current Leader Local Action Groups (LAG's) including the Kent Downs and Marshes (of which Swale is a part) have access to transitional funding to develop the case for the retaining LEADER funding as we move to the new programme period. Existing LEADER areas will be given priority as the new programme is drawn up and whilst it is not yet clear how Kent Downs and Marshes will proceed, it will be important to monitor the position and for local stakeholders to participate in any consultation. Swale Borough Council is committed to securing LEADER funding from the next programme and we will keep the rural form up to date with developments.

Could an apprentice be the answer for you?

With the introduction of the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) Agenda, all young people must stay in some form of education or training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. This need not mean them staying on at school, it could be fulltime education, a combination of employment and training or it could be an apprenticeship.

APPRENTICESHIPS HAVE CHANGED. There are now over 250 different apprenticeships available, serving over 1200 job roles. Of those available, 13 apprenticeships, which include *Agriculture, Farriery, Fish-husbandry, Game & Wildlife Management, Horticulture and Land-based Engineering* serve to provide training to fulfil rural-based employment roles.

With this new focus comes a stronger support base too. This means that for those businesses who need to grow their staff base not only get the opportunity to train and employ someone at a cost much more in tune with their budget, they can also call upon experts such as Apprentice Training Agents to outsource the administrative requirements to. Leaving them free time to grow their business effectively.

To find out more, call our Economic Development team on 01795 417194 or email us at edu@swale.gov.uk



Get paid to get Britain working

Employers across the country are benefiting from signing up to the Jobcentre Plus initiative by providing a work placement for 26 weeks or more, helping young people aged 18-24 to get the practical experience they need to improve their career prospects.

Available until April 2015, the funding enables employers to take advantage of 160,000 wage incentives available. Up to £2,275 could be claimed by employers, dependent upon the number of hours work available to the employee.

This is a great opportunity for Swale businesses to grow for a reduced cost whilst doing their bit for the community. Sort of 'feel-good commerce'.

To find out more information, click on the [link](#)



Thinking of starting up in childcare - **New funding available!**

A new scheme has been introduced to boost childcare provision. Encouraging and supporting new start-up childcare businesses, the scheme caters for three different types of provision.

Go to www.childcarebusinessgrants.dcms.gov.uk to find out more.



Swale BC launch Business Support Programme

Organised and funded by the Swale Borough Council Economic Development Team and working in partnership with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, we are providing a Business Start-Up support programme to new and existing businesses in the borough.

The Start-Up programme comprises three parts:

- **Mini-workshop** – this is a two hour group session that is aimed at those individuals who are considering self-employment but haven't settled on an idea yet
- **Starting In Business (SIB) workshop** – a full day group session that works with those individuals that have a business idea and want to develop their business plan further
 - **Voluntary and Community Services (VCS) workshop** – as above but aimed at those in "Not for profit" organisations
- **1:1 Advice session** – Once you've developed your business plan, a couple of face to face sessions with a Business Adviser will help you tweak your proposition and tackle any remaining issues

We have committed to providing the Start-Up programme for two years as part of our 'Open for Business' Priority and in particular, our 'Local First' Policy, working to encourage, support and enable local enterprises to participate in the provision of services in the community as well as stimulate local employment.

If you are interested in taking part in this FREE programme, contact the Chamber on 01795 379012 or visit www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk.

Wild food for thought

As foraging for edible wild foods becomes ever more popular, the question of the effect this rise in popularity will have on the landscape of the countryside must surely be considered.

With the number of commercial 'foodies' looking to invent new and exciting dishes using foraged ingredients on the increase, is it time to look at the sustainability surrounding this issue, at the same time as looking at the commercial aspects? Not only is it illegal to wild forage for personal financial gain, there are more people on the planet to feed than there were when foraging was an essential way to making food go further. Perhaps landowners should look to see if there are opportunities to protect the natural hedgerows, provide the foods to those who seek them, at the same time as utilising rural space to cultivate these new crops for commercial gain.

There are plenty of resources available to give you an idea of what may work. As an example - dandelions, traditionally the scourge of the gardener, is not only great for salads, it's full of vitamins and minerals and allegedly has tons of uses as a natural remedy. Similarly nettles are packed with vitamins A and C, iron and protein and can be used in soups, pestos and purees, and it has been said can ease the pain of arthritis.

If you have the space, why not get researching and see what 'wild' goods you could produce? For further information, visit www.smallholder.co.uk.

The Youth Social Action Fund...What is it?

In short, it's a funding opportunity, open to charities, social enterprises and profit businesses (provided they demonstrate delivering social value) that can provide an opportunity to young people that will encourage them to indulge in a little selflessness.

The fund works by organisations setting up opportunities for young people to create a positive change that makes their neighbourhood a better place to live, benefiting the wider community and in turn, themselves.

Bidding for the funding has now closed but we look forward to hearing good things as the projects commence in the borough. We'll keep you posted...



Kent Police **Victory for Operation Nonagon**

Kent Police have recently carried out a cross border operation to crack down on rural crime. Operation Nonagon included more than 50 officers, including the force's rural partnership team, across four rural areas, including Swale.

This is the fifth time Operation Nonagon has been run and is now held regularly to identify people suspected of crimes in rural areas, such as oil theft and poaching.

A man from Sittingbourne was arrested after scrap metal and radiators believed to be from a recent burglary were seized. Further arrests were made, stop checks were carried out, warrants were executed and intelligence gathered in this rural crime initiative.



It's official, faster broadband is coming to Kent

One of the biggest infrastructure projects in Kentish history has started this year with the roll out of broadband coverage that will aim to reach 90% of Kent. Funded by £20million of central and county government as well as a £20million investment from BT, the project aims to ensure access to high speed fibre optic broadband to those within the project areas by 2015.

But what about communities who don't fall within the 'Project' areas? There is still uncertainty on when or if broadband will be delivered in some parts of the county as installation in these areas would require significant additional public sector investment.

Which is why it's so important for every voice to be heard.

Register your vote today on the [Make Kent Quicker](#) website. The greater the demand for broadband, the more willing potential broadband investors will be to provide it.

Don't forget these great funding opportunities too...



Swale Local Loan Fund is a £250,000 per year loan fund to support voluntary, community or not-for-profit organisations and town and parish councils in Swale to enable management and delivery of local services and facilities. The Council wants to work with town and parish councils, social enterprises, voluntary and community groups who have exciting business ideas for improving local services and that benefit the community. To find out more, [click here](#)



TIGER offers INTEREST FREE loans of between £10,000 and £2million to business projects which are investing in new products, processes or markets or potentially seeking to expand existing activities. The underlying emphasis of this funding is the creation of sustainable employment.

Visit www.tiger20million.co.uk



Fredericks Foundation is a charity that helps people wishing to set up or expand their own business who are unable to access the finance required from conventional sources. They provide a range of business support and microloan funding for start-ups and small businesses.

Visit www.fredericksfoundation.org

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