

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" - Percy Bysshe Shelley

Let us know what you think, email us at edu@swale.gov.uk



Tidal Surge hits Faversham...

Tidal surge floodwaters affected over 200 homes in and around Faversham in early December resulting in many homes being evacuated and damage to properties in Oare, Iron Wharf, Ordnance Wharf, Stonebridge Pond, Twymans Mill and the Brents. Some home and business owners battled with up to four feet of water coming into their properties during the worst flooding for 60 years.

Swale Borough Council attended a Kent wide Strategic Coordinating Group meeting and setting up an emergency rest centre followed at the West Faversham Community Centre.

Throughout the emergency we worked in liaison with the other agencies including the police. The Environment Wardens played a key part in door knocking with the police at the properties at risk to ensure all residents were warned and aware of the risk of potential flooding. They also worked with the Environment Agency officers and KCC Highway and Transportation officers on the ground as well as the many volunteers who gave their time to help ensure the safety of other Swale residents.

...But support continues to mount for flood victims.

Now, with many communities within the borough still reeling from the impact of the recent severe weather, it is encouraging to hear that the Government is making £6.7m available to help in the recovery process.

Detail of this recovery support package will be announced imminently and are bolstered by additional measures, most of which are aimed at helping affected businesses from a cash-flow perspective. These include:

- HMRC will consider any request for a Time to Pay extension for customers affected by the recent flooding.
- Advice on managing cash-flow is available on www.gov.uk and the Business Support Helpline continues to offer support for businesses on a number of issues.
- The Department for Business Innovation and Skills continue to work with banks to support lending to small businesses, including the Enterprise Finance Guarantee Scheme with guarantees bank loans to those businesses which lack collateral or track record for a standard bank loan.
- RBS and Natwest have announced a £250million interest-free loan fund to support businesses affected by the severe weather.

To find out more contact us on 01795 417194 or email edu@swale.gov.uk

Postgraduate Degree Bursaries offered by NFU Mutual

Students looking to study a postgraduate degree in agriculture can apply for a bursary from NFU Mutual which pays up to 75% of course fees.

The NFU Mutual Charitable Trust, which runs the scheme, says they are particularly interested to hear from people looking to study sustainable agriculture and climate change, international agricultural development and the application of science and innovative technology to the agricultural industry.

The bursary award scheme is open to students who have gained, or are expected to gain, a 2:1 or above in agriculture or a closely related degree, and have been accepted or provisionally accepted on a Masters or PhD course in agriculture in the UK starting in autumn 2014.

The beneficiaries will be chosen by a judging panel that will be looking for applicants who are not only excellent academic performers, but are also committed to the future of agriculture.

Prospective postgraduate students who think they may be eligible to apply for the award in 2014 should contact centenary_award@nfumutual.co.uk to request further details and an application form.

The closing date for applications relating to courses starting autumn 2014 is 30 April 2014.

First published at www.fwi.co.uk. For full article click [here](#)

FREE Learning and Development Courses for Farmers

The Farmers Weekly Academy is a dedicated e-learning site available to everyone involved in the farming industry: From students to farmworkers, farmers to farm managers, advisors to consultants, as well as members of the trade.

It is currently offering free learning modules that cover a range of topics across Arable, Livestock, Machinery & Business. Successful completion of the modules, which are based on a multiple choice answer structure, earn you CPD (Continual Professional Development) points. Cumulation of these points then allows you access to certificated training which will support your training records that a current or future employer may require.

Registering is easy and all training is free.

To register or find out more, click [here](#) or you can email william.frazer@rbi.co.uk

Does your community have the Power to Change?

The Power to Change is the Big Lottery Funds £150million investment to support the development of community-led enterprises.

From next autumn there will be the opportunity for local communities to come together and use creative approaches along with local resources to shape and improve their neighbourhoods. This could be used for things such as pop-up shops, utilising commercial spaces for cultural activities or incubate social enterprises.

For more information visit www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/powertochange

Rural Housing

If we want to keep the countryside alive, new housing is essential, so says the Country, Land and Business Association (CLA) who have called for a rural housing overhaul.

In a report launched on 21st January 'Tackling the Housing Crisis in England', 230,000 new homes are needed by 2020 and rural housing would be vital in keeping young people needed to maintain a stable rural economy.

Proposals set out include encouraging private landowners to build affordable homes, planning guidance that considers future infrastructure needs and a new approach to energy performance certificates so that older premises are not taken out of use.

Original article from www.farmersguardian.com

Climate Change = Farming Change?

Is there a need to re-design farming methods? That was the question asked at the NFU Cymru Conference.

Given the ever increasing unpredictability of our climate and the extremes that it displays, it seems there may be a need to look at how we farm in the UK, thus ensuring greater profitability in an industry that has more recently suffered from poor returns.

How can we do this? Re-designing crops is the solution, say IBERS (Institute of Biological, Environmental & Rural Sciences).

It will be interesting to see the outcomes of further analysis in this field and how it may fit in with current thinking that farming could be part of the climate change solution...

Original article from www.farminguk.com

Don't Forget!

- Our Business Support programme is FREE for you to use and is designed to help your business, whether you are already trading or still in the early stages of development. Why not speak to us just to make sure you are not missing out on a great growth opportunity. Call us on 01795 417194 or to find out more about our delivery partner, Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, take a look at their website www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk.
- We are committed to Swale being 'Open for Business'. To find out other ways in which we might be able to help you visit www.swale.gov.uk/support-for-business
- TIGER (Thames Gateway Innovation, Growth and Enterprise) is a 0% interest free loan fund that offers financial assistance to businesses looking to invest in new products, processes or markets, or potentially looking to expand existing activities where they will lead to increased sustainable employment. They will need to be used for specific investment projects (not working capital), which will create jobs and/or support innovation within specific industry sectors, which now includes Leisure & Tourism. For further info, visit

www.kent.gov.uk/business/growing_your_business/grants_and_funding/tiger.aspx

We can also email you a monthly Economic Development Business Bulletin packed full of useful, interesting and relevant information. To subscribe, simply email edu@swale.gov.uk and type 'OPT IN' under subject/title.

Do you receive our Business E-Bulletin yet?

We are building an engagement and support network to local businesses through a number of channels, one of which is our E-Bulletin list. The Business E-Bulletin provides up to date information on investment, opportunities and relevant business information in Swale that could help you with your growth, planning and strategy. To sign up email edu@swale.gov.uk today!