

AGENDA

SWALE RURAL FORUM MEETING

Date: Tuesday, 17 November 2015

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Rodmersham Village Hall, Rodmersham Green, Rodmersham, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 0PS

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock, Bobbin, Monique Bonney, Tina Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Bowles, Duncan Dewar-Whalley, June Garrad, Nicholas Hampshire, Lesley Ingham, Ken Ingleton, Gerry Lewin, Padmini Nissanga, Prescott (Chairman), David Simmons (Vice-Chairman), Ben Stokes, Mike Whiting and John Wright.

Other Organisations:

Kevin Attwood, Swale National Farmers Union
Peter Blandon, Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
Alastair Brooks, Swale National Farmers Union
Mr Tom Gates, Kent County Council
Keith Harrison, Action with Communities in Rural Kent
Richard Palmer, Kent Association of Local Councils
Rollo Parsons, Swale National Farmers Union
Canon Caroline Pinchbeck, Diocese of Canterbury
Mrs Pamela Prescott, SEESwale
Amanda Saunders, Kent Association of Local Councils
Sara Tucker, Kent Association of Local Councils
Inspector Gavin Wade, Kent Rural Police Force

Quorum = 9

	Pages
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Minutes	
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 August 2015 (Minute Nos. 157 - 165) as a correct record.	
3. Declarations of Interest	
Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.	
The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:	

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Corporate Services as Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

PART A REPORTS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

4. Public Session

During public session, members of the public living in the Borough of Swale may make a statement, submit a petition, or ask the Chairman any question on any matter on which the Council has powers or duties, in respect of rural matters.

Questions or statements shall be read at the meeting and shall not last more than three minutes. An answer from the Chairman may take the form of a direct oral answer or be in writing. Questions submitted to the Democratic Services section in writing (including email) at least three days before the meeting will be taken first.

5. Update from Kent Police

To receive a verbal update on crime in rural areas from Kent Police.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

6. Coastal Access

To receive a presentation from Mr Kevin Haugh (Lead Advisor Coastal Access), Kent and Sussex, Natural England about coastal access.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

7. Industrial/human waste onto farm land its handling/its incorporation and smell and what businesses can do to protect their customers

1 - 2

Councillor John Wright submitted the following item:

“Application of industrial/human waste onto farm land its handling/its incorporation and smell. What pubs or other businesses should do when

their customers cannot use the beer gardens and the loss of trade in food sales and beer sales.”

The Environmental Response Manager (Swale Borough Council) and the Environment Agency have provided a response which is attached.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

8. Rural Business Opportunities

To consider the Rural Roundup.

Questions from members of the public are welcome.

9. Next meeting - Tuesday 23 February 2016 at Leysdown Village Hall

Issued on Monday, 9 November 2015

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Swale Rural Forum, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

Corporate Services Director, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

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Response from Alister Andrews (Environmental Response Manager, Swale Borough Council) and the Environment Agency

Local industries produce various materials that can be used for agricultural benefit. These include compost, sewage and paper products as well as livestock manures. The use of such materials as fertilisers is a recognised agricultural practice. As such, these materials are being recycled which reduces the need for alternative local waste disposal options such as landfill/ incineration, or the use of inorganic fertilisers. There are Regulations and Codes of Practice in place to ensure that these processes are conducted effectively, with a minimal impact upon the environment and residents.

Swale Borough Council and the Environment Agency work closely to ensure that industries, local farmers and contractors comply with the legislation and any best practice. We engage with the industries regularly to monitor control mechanisms, and discuss operational activities. Contractors and farmers will consider factors such as wind direction, potentially sensitive areas, and incorporation of the product prior to stockpiling or spreading. The nature of such materials, and the spreading methods means that there are likely to be some localised odours whilst the spreading is in place. However, swift incorporation after spreading should assist in controlling those odours (usually within 24 hours, although most farmers do this sooner).

The Environment Agency and Swale BC are available to receive any complaints from residents where they feel that the odours are unreasonable. Between us we will monitor the situation and take any appropriate action to control the situation. The contact numbers to report odour complaints are as follows: Swale BC 01795 417850. The Environment Agency 0800 807060

We have worked hard to ensure that farmers and contractors are aware of sensitive areas or businesses such as caravan parks that are reliant upon the same summer weeks as the farmers. Although the late summer months are incredibly busy for farmers, many farmers have become sensitive to the needs of neighbours and where possible they have taken measures to reduce impacts, such as spreading during the week rather than over the weekend, or vice versa for sensitive locations next to schools. As a minimum many farmers/ contractors have advised sensitive neighbouring industries when they will be spreading, what they are spreading and what they will be doing to reduce any impacts and ensure the odours dissipate as quickly as possible. This is usually appreciated by neighbours, and engaging with local farmers in a constructive manner is certainly an option for any concerned industries.

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RURAL Round-up



*'While barred clouds bloom the soft dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;'*

To Autumn by John Keats

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



Welcome to the **November 2015** edition of Rural Round-up which features the latest news, events and business opportunities for companies based in the rural communities of Swale.

LEADER to contribute to Government's Rural Productivity Plan

The Government has formally announced the details of the new LEADER scheme, which sets aside £138 million for new projects in rural communities which deliver local jobs and growth. The approach provides local communities with the power to support projects, building on the government's devolution commitments under its [Rural Productivity Plan](#).

Previous projects have included villages who received heritage funding to boost tourism, farmers who have diversified with farm shops, ice cream parlours and camping sites, and local food producers of cheese and meats were helped to expand their product lines. The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) manages the LEADER scheme nationally and will make payments to successful applicants.

The LEADER programmes in Kent are expected to go live shortly and the team are now looking for specific projects. For information about applying for a grant, contact the programme manager Huw Jarvis on huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk or **03000 417 104**.

Get into export with free support and advice from the UKTI

The UK Government has recently announced that it has helped a record number of businesses to export British produce overseas. From October 2013 to October 2015, UKTI assisted over 4,000 UK Food and Drink companies resulting in £985m of business around the world – from selling cheddar cheese in China to exporting popcorn to the USA.

Food and Drink remain the biggest manufacturing sector in the UK, greater than cars and aerospace combined. The UK food chain contributes £103bn to the economy and employs one in eight people.

Indeed, export appears to be the current business watchword. Local business AbBaltis Ltd recently won the Queen's Award for Enterprise for their activities in the international market and UK Trade and Investment recently held the Kent event of their Export Week at the Swale Business Conference 2015.

UK Trade & Investment provide a free advice service for companies interested in export. The organisation can be contacted on **020 7215 5000** or applied for online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-trade-investment>.

Workplace Pensions – what do I need to know?

If you employ at least one person in your business you will shortly need to offer a workplace pension. All UK businesses will need to offer and contribute towards a workplace pension by 2018, in a process known as Auto-Enrolment.

Those eligible for the pension include all workers aged between 22 and State Pension Age (SPA) and earn more than £10,000 per annum, if they are not already enrolled on a qualifying pension scheme, and workers aged at least 16 and under 22, or between SPA and 75, who earn more than the minimum earnings threshold of £5,824 per annum. Although employees can 'opt out' of the scheme, employers must offer a scheme or they could be liable to a fine and potentially criminal prosecution.

When will I need to enrol my staff?

The reforms will be introduced over a number of years. These are known as staging dates and are based on the size of your business, as illustrated below:

Employer Size	Staging Date	
	From	To
New Employers	1 May 2017	1 February 2018
Less than 30 employees	1 January 2016	1 April 2017
30 to 49 employees	1 August 2015	1 October 2015
50 to 249 employees	1 April 2014	1 April 2015
250 or more employees	1 October 2012	February 2014

To find out more, get advice and find out what to consider, visit the Pension Regulator website: <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers/>.

Survey to help increase volunteer numbers

Many employers in Swale allow their staff time to volunteer or they volunteer themselves in the local community. Swale Borough Council is committed to increasing volunteering in the Borough, and we have recently launched a survey to capture the numbers volunteering and their motivation for getting involved. The survey will also help us to shape our future volunteering promotion.

Whether you volunteer or not we would really like to hear from you and/or your staff. To complete the survey visit: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CBJH6WL>.

The survey will close on **Monday 30th November 2015**. For more information or if you have any queries do not hesitate to contact Sophia Ramm on sophiaramm@swale.gov.uk or call **01795 417193**.

‘Water Efficient Sheppey’ to help local companies cut costs

Swale Borough Council and Southern Water are working in partnership to help small and medium sized businesses based on the Isle of Sheppey to cut costs and reduce wastage through becoming more water efficient.

A visit will take place by an experienced water expert who will assess your business through a detailed survey of water use and then prescribe a number of product retrofits that will be carried out there and then. The only qualifications to take part are a commitment to allow access for up to four hours and an interest in reducing your utility bills. All products that are fitted will work with existing taps, showers and toilets and alongside behaviour change advice will lead to ongoing savings where applicable.

To register an interest in being part of this programme please contact Ben Earl, Water Efficiency Manager at Southern Water on **01903 272829** or email Ben.Earl@southernwater.co.uk.

Contact Us

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