



The Leader Programme 2014-2020 “UPDATE”

What is the Leader Programme?

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) LEADER Programme is a European Union rural funding approach, with a total of £5million in grant funds available from January 2015 to December 2020.

The RDPE LEADER is a way of spending money on local issues, identified by people living in that area.

The money is locally controlled, with decisions about which projects are funded being made by the Local Action Group (LAG) for the LEADER area.

Funding under Leader is available to rural businesses, farmers, foresters, growers, landowners, environmental organisations, cultural, heritage and community providers, as well as voluntary and charitable organisations to develop projects that will assist, strengthen and develop themselves and their local area.

The six priorities for Leader under the new Programme are;

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry production

The Leader bids for West Kent, Kent Downs and Marshes Leader and East Kent were submitted on 5th September. A national panel of senior Defra officers will be judging each Leader bid in an ‘open and transparent’ manner and making their decision on whether to award funds or not. There have been 87 bids from all over England and Defra hope to whittle this down to about 70 groups that will be funded. The decision is due in early November (no specific date given) and if successful we will be able to start awarding grants from 1st January 2015. If we are successful we will be looking to prepare potential projects for funding from November onwards so we have some that are ‘oven ready’ come January.

Swale’s bids have been covered by two of the three Leader groups – Kent Downs and Marshes Leader and East Kent Leader. If both bids are successful all of Swale will be covered for potential project funding.

The emphasis of each strategy will be on providing **Jobs and Growth**. This is a requirement set by Defra and each LAG will deliver 70% of project funding directly in support of jobs and growth in the rural economy – using the above six priorities for the new Programme.

This is an important opportunity for business and communities in rural Kent to access over £5 million of grant funding over the next seven years.

Leader are eager to hear from businesses and organisations that have potential projects in the pipeline and are in need of funding. Please contact for further information:

Kent Downs and Marshes Leader: huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk (01622) 696940

East Kent Leader: keith.harrison@ruralkent.org.uk (01303) 813790

My Kent Big Weekend 2015

VISITOR BUSINESSES URGED TO SIGN UP FOR MY KENT BIG WEEKEND 2015

Visit Kent has announced the dates for the 2015 My Kent Big Weekend and is calling on the county's tourist attractions, venues and destinations to get involved.

For the ninth year, tourism champion Visit Kent is teaming up with Kent's attractions to help local people experience new attractions and discover hidden gems, and to share their experiences with friends and family.

Next year's event will be held on 21st & 22nd March, and Visit Kent hopes to build on the record-breaking success of the 2014 event, which saw 123 of Kent's visitor attractions and destinations signing up and 116,414 applications from the public for more than 21,000 free tickets to participating attractions.

The event heralds the start of the 2015 visitor season for the county, and its success has seen it incorporated into the English Tourism Week celebrations across the country.

As well as involving castles, wildlife animal parks and steam train attractions, Visit Kent also urges museums, adult education centres, sports facilities and country parks to get involved.

As well as being marketed through the event's media partners, Visit Kent also showcases the attractions involved via its award-winning website, social media channels and selected marketing campaigns.

Tourism businesses, attractions and destinations of all sizes can sign up now for My Kent Big Weekend 2015. To find out more, go to **www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk** and visit the latest news section. (**www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/news/kent-big-weekend-sign-up**)

Best Local Farmer winning awards and smiles

The Observer Food Monthly 2014 award winners were announced last week and it was fantastic to see one of the sixteen winners was from our very own borough!

Monkshill Farm in Waterham beat off stiff competition from elsewhere in the U.K to win the judges award for 'Best Local Farmer'. The Royal School for Deaf Children Margate purchased Monkshill Farm in 1995 and it is now part of The John Townsend Trust who have developed it into a strong educational offering whilst maintaining high levels of success and ethics as a working farm.

Winner of the award, Richard Stephens, has managed the farm for the past 11 years and maintains that if you look after your stock, the benefit will be clear on the plate.

True to his word, the welfare of the animals is very apparent. The first thing that will strike anyone arriving at the farm are the chickens, lots and lots of chickens running everywhere! The happy marsh-fed sheep may take an interest in your arrival, albeit briefly, and the spotted pigs will undoubtedly put a smile on anyone's face.

With glorious 360° views of the surrounding landscape and a farm-shop offer that includes fresh meat, scones and a cracking caramelised onion chutney, it's clear to see why they won.

To visit the farm or to find out more about the work of the John Townsend Trust go to www.johntownsendtrust.org.uk/events/monkshill-farm/ or call 01227 752778

Sport & Physical Activity Grants

Swale Borough Council has made £20k available for clubs and organisations that provide activities in the Borough. The fund is to support community projects centred on sporting, recreational and health activities that will make communities in Swale more active.

You can apply for funding if you are:

- An unincorporated association such as a community group or sports club
- An incorporated organisation such as a registered charity
- A company limited by guarantee
- A social enterprise

If your club or organisation could use financial support of up to £1000 to help increase membership or participants, contact russellfairman@swale.gov.uk. Further information is available on the Swale Borough Council website - www.swale.gov.uk/localism-grants/

Swale means Business

New website launched to help local businesses and to encourage investment in Swale

Swale Borough Council has recently launched a new website for the business community called Swale Means Business. Aside from regular local news, the website will also include relevant and current information on funding opportunities, government initiatives and where to find business support. The website will also become the main focal point for business related enquiries to the Council, with the Economic Development Team ensuring they are dealt with by the appropriate officer.

A key section of the website will also focus on attracting investment into the Borough. The website is part of the Council's campaign to Put Swale on the Map, which began at the Swale Regeneration Conference in

June 2014 and continued at our successful attendance at the international MIPIM UK in October 2014. This section will feature information on key opportunities, travel times, workforce demographics, transport infrastructure and case studies to demonstrate the locally desirable business environment. These pages will be crucial in encouraging businesses to invest and relocate in Swale and lead to the creation of further jobs for local people.

To find out more and access the website, please visit www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk or call us on (01795) 417398

Small Business Saturday

Small Business Saturday is coming to Swale, 6 December 2014

Swale Borough Council is, once again, supporting Small Business Saturday. Launched by DCLG, the Small Business Saturday initiative is a campaign encouraging people to 'shop local' and support small businesses in their communities. The initiative started in 2010 in the USA and has generated a lot of custom for small businesses.

Retailers and small businesses across Swale's three town centres are being invited to mark the event in some way, for example by offering free cookies or mince pies, a small discount, or free gift-wrapping service to their customers on the day.

Swale's shoppers are being asked to pledge support to spend some money with a local business – whether it's buying a Christmas gift from a local retailer or spending some money in one of our towns' cafes – something to demonstrate support for our local retailers and businesses.

As well as town centre activities, Swale Borough Council's economic development team will be hosting three business support seminars during the week running up to Small Business Saturday. These business-related seminars will cover subjects such as exporting, websites/e-commerce and marketing/promotion.

To find out more, call us on (01795) 417592

Sharing is Caring

Making the most of the land

Land-sharing schemes are a great way to ensure we are utilising the land around us to facilitate the production of food (on a small scale) to supporting the environment. There are a few social media sites set up to connect the grow-your-own movement, allowing landowners and growers to connect, grow and share. It may be a small plot of garden that sits unused that could make a perfect vegetable patch for the growing number of people on allotment waiting lists or perhaps space on the edge of a field for a bee-enthusiast to set up hives.

Whatever the option, there is always reward for both parties, often with the growers or land users sharing their bounty with the landowner.

If you think you have space to share, a little or a lot, take a look online. We're sure there are plenty of sites out there, but to get you started, check out www.landshare.net or www.farmgarden.org.uk

Hard Work of Volunteers recognised

Volunteer Swale Awards 2015

Do you know someone that makes Swale special? Someone who gives up their time to help others and their community? Swale Borough Council are recognising the hard work of those special individuals within the Borough of Swale who give their time to put something back in to their community.

Categories are:

- Young Volunteer of the Year (18 years or under)
- Adult Volunteer of the Year (19 years+)
- Volunteering Contribution to the Environment (A volunteer or team in the environmental sector)
- Fund raising Award (Team or individual, focusing on the method used rather than the amount raised)
- Volunteering Contribution to sport (A volunteer or team in the sport and leisure sector)
- Volunteer Team of the Year (recognising the achievements and hard work of a team – this could be the management team of a voluntary or community organisation, a board of school governors, board of trustees or a coaching team for a local sports club)
- Volunteering Contribution to Creativity, Culture or Heritage (An individual or team impacting on local culture, heritage or creativity)

One person from all the nominations will be selected as the winner for our outstanding achievement award.

Nominations open Monday 3 November 2014 and are open until Midnight Friday 16 January 2015.

- You can nominate online by completing our online nomination form at **www.swale.gov.uk/volunteer-swale**. You can also submit any supporting photos or videos by emailing these with the name of the nominee to volunteer@swale.gov.uk
 - You can download a nomination form as above and this can be scanned and emailed to volunteer@swale.gov.uk or Freepost - Freepost RTJT-RZTJ-KYZK Volunteer Swale, CSU, Swale Borough Council, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3BR
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