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RURAL Round-up



*Blossom by blossom the spring begins -
Algernon Charles Swinburne*

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



Combat Crime in Rural Swale

Following the continued spate of theft from farms throughout Kent, a booklet has been created by Kent Police advising rural landowners how to combat a potential crime from happening on their land.

With subject matter including Estate Security, Equipment Security, Wildlife Crime, Animal Crime and Counter Terrorism, the guide provides some useful hints and tips to help keep your property secure.

The Kent Police Rural and Environment Officers are also on Twitter keeping you up-to-date with recent crimes as well as letting you know what to look out for and how you can protect yourself and your property against crime. You can follow them at www.twitter.com/kentpolicerural

You can also access the latest edition of the Kent Police quarterly rural crime newsletter by visiting www.kent.police.uk

Are you looking to grow your business? Perhaps you have a business idea but need help in getting it off the ground? Maybe we can support you.

Swale Borough Council is in its fourth year of offering support to local businesses and whilst figures are yet to be released at a local level, national statistics demonstrate that the SME sector has experienced circa 6% growth, more often within micro businesses (1-9 employees).

If you think that now is the time to push your business to the next level but are not sure where to start or if you have a great idea but are not sure what you need to focus on first, talk to us. We can help you to determine your strategy, define your resources and deliver your goals.

Our new business support website has lots of resources to help local business, from funding and business advice to commercial property available in Swale. Visit www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk or call our team on (01795) 417398.

The **Kent Business Portal** has been created as part of the government's initiative to implement e-procurement and is a great way for businesses throughout Kent to access public sector tender/quotation opportunities.

By registering on the portal you can:

- Make buyers aware of your presence
- Receive Pre-Qualification Questionnaires, Requests for Quotes and Invitations to Tender electronically
- Submit your quotations and tenders electronically almost instantly
- All you need is an internet connection and an email account
- Reduce your paper and associated printing costs
- Benefit from proven added security and knowledge that your submission has been delivered

If you want to register your company on the system, register free now!

Visit www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk

The **Kent County Show** will be held at Detling Showground on 10th, 11th & 12th July and promises to provide a great opportunity for local producers to showcase their wares.

The three day event brings together the very best of Kent with animals and food, fun and excitement and above all a sense of what 'The Garden of England' has to offer.

If you are a rural industry looking for an additional route to market, perhaps the County Show can help you boost your sales. With trade-stands, advertising opportunities and catering concessions, it could be a great chance to target some extra custom!

To find out more, take a look at www.kentshowground.co.uk

Postcode Lottery Green Challenge – 1 June 2015

This competition rewards inventions that successfully combine sustainability, entrepreneurship and creativity. The competition aims to foster the invention of new green products, to combat CO2 emissions, that could be placed on the market within two years. A first prize of £440,000 will be awarded for the best idea and business plan for its execution. A further £175,000 (€200,000) will be available to one or two runners up.

Would-be entrepreneurs aged 18 years or older are invited to apply. The deadline for entries is 1 June 2015.

Woodland Capital Grants 2015

Countryside Stewardship will help rural businesses improve the countryside environment, and the Woodland Capital Grants in 2015 will prioritise support for activity this year to cover:

- Creating and maintaining new woodland for biodiversity and water benefits including flooding;
- Woodland management plans;
- Tree health The Forestry Commission is now open for applications for these Woodland capital grants.

The Countryside Productivity Scheme is also now available, providing funding for small scale forestry processing and wood harvesting and extraction.

To apply for any of the available 2015 grants you must first register on the new Rural Payments system via GOV.UK

Leading rural Swale to productivity

LEADER is a well-established method of providing rural development funding at the local level and looks to support projects in their area that will help grow the rural economy.

The six national priorities for LEADER 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 productivity

Kent Downs and Marshes LEADER (KDML) have been awarded £1.886m with the East Kent LEADER awarded £1.586m (and West Kent LEADER £1.813m). There are three LEADER areas in Kent because the population limit for a LEADER area is 150,000 and this is the only way we can cover most of Kent's rural economy. The Swale hub towns of Faversham, Sheerness and Minster are eligible for Leader funding. The funds will be given to projects that will deliver jobs and growth (or contribute to delivering jobs and growth) and supporting the rural economy. Funding is available to farmers, foresters, other local businesses and rural communities. The funding is applied for through a rigorous application process which is assessed by the LAG Executive. A degree of match funding is required from the applicant in most cases.

Further details on the Programme are being finalised along with guidance, handbooks and application forms. The Leader areas should be in a position to accept formal applications for funding from the summer. For more information contact Huw.jarvis@kent.gov.uk .

Putting Swale on the Map

And don't forget, we are here to help promote Swale as a fantastic place to visit and as a place full of opportunity to do business!

We try to ensure we are aware of as many events as possible to promote on our websites www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk and www.visit-swale.co.uk (as well as our social media channels) but realise that some don't make it onto our radar.

If you have any news or events that you would like to share, please get in touch with our team.

And Finally....

Calling all budding photographers! We are looking for striking images of our beautiful, diverse borough that will help us to promote what we have to offer here in Swale on our website 'Swale Means Business'.

Of course, there's the stunning landscapes, scenery and wildlife but just as important are those shots that capture life in Swale – the architecture, the people, the commerce. Those elements of Swale that tell the story of who we are and what we are about.

If you would like to see your images used to 'Put Swale on the Map' then please get in touch. Full credits will be published alongside the images used.

Enjoy springtime in Swale, we'll be back in the summer!