



Welcome to Rural Affairs, the e-newsletter formerly published by the East Midlands Rural Affairs Forum. This newsletter will evolve over time when the Rural Network East Midlands is established and will take on a new format and branding.

If you have a rural news item, event, training opportunity or job vacancy you would like to publicise please e-mail Lynn Hage, Communications Officer lhage@rcan.org.uk We are particularly looking for items relating to farming and food for inclusion on the new website and in the new newsletter.



NEWS

Strategic Panel Meeting

The next meeting of the Rural Network East Midlands Strategic Panel will be held on 5th December 2011 at the Defra Offices on Chalfont Drive, Nottingham. Part of the meeting will be dedicated to discussing the national approach to the Rural Development Programme for England and there will also be a presentation on the Leicestershire Planning Toolkit. If you would like further details about the meeting please contact jbowers@rcan.org.uk

www.rnem.org.uk

A new website to promote Rural Network East Midlands is currently in the development stage and should be live before the end of the year. This website will replace the old EMRAF website www.ruralaffairs.org.uk and will include a discussion forum, a news alert system and a new newsletter. Further details and the date of the launch will be published in the next issue of this publication.

Diary Date 22nd March 2012 - Rural Network East Midlands Conference Style Event

On the 22nd March 2012 we will be holding a conference style event to promote the role of Rural Network East Midlands, showcase projects developing through the network, develop action focused groups and agree the way forward for the network. Please put this date in your diary, further details will be sent out when a venue has been decided.

Other News

Rural Estates Online

Rural Solutions Ltd, the rural regeneration and diversification business has launched the new Rural Estates website www.rural-estates.co.uk It has been created to raise the profile of the services and facilities offered by the UK's rural estates.

Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS)

FFIS is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is a scheme of support developed to help farming, forestry and horticultural businesses in England to become more efficient at using resources. The scheme aims to help make businesses more profitable and resilient whilst reducing the impact of farming on the environment. There is £20m available, the maximum grant allowance per business is £25,000 and the minimum is £2,500.

Farmers, foresters, contractors and horticulturalists across England are eligible to apply for funding if the project falls within one of the following key areas:

- Nutrient Management
- Energy Efficiency
- Water Resource Management
- Animal Health and Welfare
- Forestry

The full guidance and application forms are available on the RDPE Network website <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/farm-and-forestry-improvement-scheme>

Affordable Housing Keeps Villages Alive

Everyone should be able to afford a decent home, but many rural areas face a challenging future with reasonably priced homes becoming increasingly scarce. Providing affordable housing on suitable sites creates balanced communities, breathes fresh life into rural villages and can help ensure that local people can stay in their community whatever their age or circumstances.

“Affordable Housing Keeps Villages Alive” is a useful publication produced by the National Housing Federation with advice and support from the Commission for Rural Communities. To obtain a copy of the publication please email the National Housing Federation info@housing.org.uk Telephone 020 70671010 or visit www.housing.org.uk

Local Areas Are Keen to Form Local Nature Partnerships

Twenty two areas across England have been given funding by Defra to help them become a Local Nature Partnership (LNP). LNPs are a key commitment in the Natural Environment White Paper, aimed at bringing together local people and organisations to get the most from the natural environment. This is the first round of a £1 million fund and is aimed at helping people to kickstart their plans. For further information please visit the Defra website www.defra.gov.uk

Help with Funding

Fanoogle is a not for profit organisation for signposting community and voluntary groups to help with funding. To find a funding advisor for your East Midlands group go to www.fanoogle.org.uk

National Forest Chosen For Flagship Diamond Jubilee Wood

The Woodland Trust has chosen a 460 acre site in the The National Forest for its flagship Diamond Jubilee Wood. The Trust is leading a campaign to plant hundreds of woodlands as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the biggest one, designed to be something unique to mark the Jubilee,

will be in The National Forest, near the village of Normanton, between Ashby de la Zouch and Coalville. The National Forest Company, private landowners and UK Coal have all contributed to the site through sales of land to the Woodland Trust. It will be formally opened in mid 2012 and will be planted over the next three years. The project will bring national media coverage to The National Forest, to Leicestershire and to the communities of North West Leicestershire, at a time when the standing of The National Forest is already high nationally and locally.

For further information about The National Forest visit www.nationalforest.org

£2.9 Million Investment In Land Based Businesses

A £2.9 million investment in the skills and professionalism of land based and environmental businesses has been announced today (24th November) as part of the Employer and Investment Fund (EIF) Phase 2. This investment fund will enable Lantra, the Sector Skills Council supporting land based and environmental industries, create and deliver three projects tailored specifically to industry needs, aimed at increasing the skills and professionalism of the sector. The first project involves creating a land-based business centre, the second project will look at a professional standards framework and the final project is aimed at supporting land based career entry and progression routes. To find out more about how Lantra works with industry to support skills, business development and industry professionalism visit www.lantra.co.uk

Events

Making Local Food Work National Conference Announced

The Making Local Food Work national conference has been announced. As the Making Local Food Work programme draws to a close next year, this will be the last national conference and the last opportunity to attend one of these fantastic events. The event will take place on Tuesday 20th March 2012 at the Mermaid Conference Centre in London. Full details will be announced shortly, but you can register interest by emailing Eileen Keenan at info@makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk or by calling 01993 810730.

NEWSLETTER CONTACT DETAILS

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Publication Details

During the transition period we will continue to produce a newsletter, the branding and format will change over time to reflect the new network. Please continue to send any articles for publication to lhage@rcan.org.uk

The publication date for the next edition will be Thursday 15th December and the copy deadline will be Wednesday 14th December at 12 noon.