

## HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM



RURAL NETWORK  
E A S T M I D L A N D S

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](mailto: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.



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### NEWS

#### **Rural Network East Midlands Exciting New Website**

A new website to promote Rural Network East Midlands is currently in the development stage and should be live after Christmas. This website will replace the old EMRAF website [www.ruralaffairs.org.uk](http://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. If you have news items you would like to put on the new website after Christmas then please send to [lhage@rcan.org.uk](mailto:lhage@rcan.org.uk)

#### **Rural Network East Midlands Conference 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012**

Come along to the Rural Network East Midlands Conference at Welbeck Estates, Worksop, Nottinghamshire and explore how new policies and initiatives provide opportunities and challenges for rural communities and how Rural Network East Midlands intends to support future rural growth. Booking forms and further details will be sent out in the new year. If you would like to be included on our invitation database please email [lhage@rcan.org.uk](mailto:lhage@rcan.org.uk)

#### **Rural Network East Midlands Strategic Panel Meeting**

The next meeting of the Rural Network East Midlands Strategic Panel will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2012 at the NFU Offices in Uppingham. This meeting will focus on the Rural Network East Midlands Conference on 22<sup>nd</sup> March. If you would like further details about the meeting please contact [jbowers@rcan.org.uk](mailto:jbowers@rcan.org.uk)

## Other News

### **Defra Launches the Rural Community Broadband Fund**

Defra launched the Rural Community Broadband Fund (RCBF) on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 with confirmed funding of £20m. The RCBF is jointly funded by Defra and Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and complements BDUKs mainstream broadband rollout programme. The Fund enables the funding of superfast broadband projects in the most hard to reach areas in England, bringing superfast broadband to a greater number of communities than would otherwise be reached. This will ensure that a greater proportion of businesses and consumers in those communities can take advantage of the benefits of superfast broadband. The Fund is being delivered as part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

More information about the fund and details on how to apply can be found on Defra's RDPE Network webpage <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/rural-community-broadband-fund>

### **Publication of Independent Panel on Forestry's Progress Report**

The interim report from the Independent Panel on Forestry was welcomed by Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman. The Independent Panel on Forestry was established in March 2011 to advise on the future direction of forestry and woodland policy in England and on the role of the Forestry Commission in implementing policy.

To view the report please visit the Defra website [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

### **RCAN Heating Oil**

RCAN Heating Oil is a community buying project designed to help vulnerable people with the cost of their heating oil. The project supports members by coordinating the oil orders from members in Nottinghamshire and purchasing as a bulk order once a month. By purchasing together, RCAN can negotiate a bigger discount than members can do individually, as well as helping to reduce the amount of oil tankers on Nottinghamshire's roads. The project has been set up in an effort to help communities after last years harsh winter, there was concern from people who use heating oil after the prices increased considerably. People were concerned that the price of heating oil would rise to £1 per litre as a result of the extreme weather conditions.

The next buying day is Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January and orders need to be placed with RCAN no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> January. If you wish to take advantage of this scheme and save money on your next heating oil order please contact Annalisa Goodwin at RCANs offices in Newstead Village Nottinghamshire on 01623 727600 or email [egoodwin@rcan.org.uk](mailto:egoodwin@rcan.org.uk)

### **GEA Farm Technologies Welcomes Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme**

Grants of up to 40% are now available on GEA Farm Technologies machinery through the Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS). The FFIS is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and aims to help make farming businesses more profitable and resilient, whilst reducing the impact of farming on the environment.

The deadline for the first round of applications is 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and farmers are encouraged to submit their applications as soon as possible as the process is competitive.

For more information visit [www.gea-farmtechnologies.co.uk](http://www.gea-farmtechnologies.co.uk) or email [info.geafarmtechnologies.uk@geagroup.com](mailto:info.geafarmtechnologies.uk@geagroup.com)

## **Defra Consultation on Rural Advocacy**

A public consultation has been issued concerning the abolition of the Commission for Rural Communities and the future rural policy functions of Defra. This has been enforced by the Public Bodies Bill which requires that Ministers consult on their proposals before laying a draft order for the abolition of the CRC.

For more information please visit the Defra website [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

## **RDPE Network**

The role of the RDPE Network is to support the delivery of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) programme through:

- Providing tools and opportunities for those involved in RDPE to share their ideas, practice and experience.
- Operating across the four axes and link information at EU, UK, national and local levels.
- Working with existing information exchange mechanisms and networks, to avoid duplication and maximise joint opportunities.

The Unit also facilitates networking activities and co-ordinates services to stimulate the exchange of ideas and experience.

For further details visit <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/rdpe-delivery/the-RDPE-network>

## **Commission for Rural Communities November Newsletter**

The Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) November newsletter contains features on their response to the Government's consultation about rural policy functions within Whitehall and the future of the CRC, CRCs views about the draft National Planning Policy Framework and how CRC is developing a rural evidence base.

To view the newsletter please visit <http://www.defra.gov.uk/crc/news-and-events/short-reports-and-updates/crc-newsletter-august-2011/>

## **Events**

### **Midlands Rural Housing Week 12<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Midlands Rural Housing week run from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> March next year and aims to highlight the important role that affordable housing plays in keeping rural communities vibrant. The National Housing Federation would like to encourage organisations to hold a variety of interesting activities for stakeholders and residents with the purpose of showing parish councillors and MPs, as well as local people, the value of a thriving countryside and the essential role of affordable housing. Activities can be anything from the opening up of new rural developments to afternoon tea with local Councillors and residents.

A full information pack is currently being prepared with access to a wide range of tools including key statistics, how to set up and organise an event and template press releases. If you are able to participate or would like to find out more please contact [amy.beddis@housing.org.uk](mailto:amy.beddis@housing.org.uk) or visit [www.housing.org.uk/ruralweek](http://www.housing.org.uk/ruralweek)

**Local People, Local Food – A One Day Conference**  
**Aston University, Birmingham 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012 10.00am – 3.30pm**  
**Delegate Rate £35.00**

As part of Making Local Food Work, the Plunkett Foundation is delighted to announce a unique one day conference exploring the best, most up to date and inspiring examples of Local Food Retailing. This event offers a cost effective way to find inspirational new ideas, network and create new links and would be ideal for Farmer's Market organisers, community shop managers, volunteers and committee members.

For more information contact Eileen Keenan on 01993 814376 or Olivia Gardner on 01993 814386.

**NEWSLETTER CONTACT DETAILS**

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**Website [www.ruralaffairs.org.uk](http://www.ruralaffairs.org.uk)**

**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](mailto:lhage@rcan.org.uk)**

**The publication date for the next edition will be Monday 16<sup>th</sup> January and the deadline for articles will be Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January.**