

# PROJECT UPDATE

European Structural &  
Investment Funding News  
Issue Six / Summer 2017



Amy Farley of the Marches Growth Hub, Shropshire, talks to visitors to the Business Support Zone

## Business Support Zone success at event



Guests at the event at Hereford Racecourse

BUSINESSES HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to find out more about EU-funded support on offer at The Business Event 2017, held in Telford and Hereford.

A dedicated Business Support Zone was set up at each event organised by The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and Marches Growth Hub, working with business networks across the region.

LEP Chairman Graham Wynn said: "Our businesses are being supported through The Marches Growth Hub, which offers a central point of help, advice and information. It also promotes European funded business support projects to our SMEs – with 12 programmes launched since last year and more due to go live in the next few months."

Business advisors for key support programmes including the Marches Business Investment Grant, Business Growth Programme and Building Business Confidence held 1-2-1 appointments with delegates as well as clinics and workshops for both start-up and established businesses wanting to know more about what was on offer.

The first leg of The Business Event 2017 was held on May 11 at the Telford International Centre, and the second at Hereford Racecourse on June 13, both also featuring guest speakers sharing their secrets of business success.

LEP Director Gill Hamer said the events were also a chance for businesses to meet with specialist advisors to discuss support available, including new grant funding schemes.

"We were delighted to see so many businesses taking advantage not only of the chance to expand their network with the breakfast event, but also the numbers seeking advice from our business advisors in the Business Support Zone."

The Marches LEP also launched its Annual Report at The Business Event 2017, which features case studies of businesses which have been supported by EU-funded projects. The report is available to download at [www.marcheslep.org.uk](http://www.marcheslep.org.uk)



Marches LEP Board members Graham Wynn and Paul Hinkins with the 2017 Annual Report







**BASED IN HIGHLEY** in rural Shropshire, Genvolt, designs and manufactures high voltage power supplies. It currently employs 19 members of staff and in addition to selling to the UK market, Genvolt exports its products all over the world, including India, China, the States and Europe.

Following a successful application, Genvolt was awarded grant funding recently via the Business Growth Programme. Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and managed by Birmingham City Council, the programme is designed to strengthen supply chains, stimulate innovation and grow existing small to medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) across the Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and The Marches Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

Genvolt became aware of the opportunity for funding through the Marches Growth Hub Shropshire. Business Development Manager, Delia Yapp, within the Economic Growth Team at Shropshire Council, assisted Genvolt throughout the process.

For the first part of their project, the company were looking to install mezzanine flooring to provide more space for their operations.

Managing Director, Stuart Morgan explains, "Our business is growing rapidly and we were outgrowing our current premises. We wanted to stay in Highley and needed to retain the fantastic staff and skills base that we have locally. This grant has enabled us to expand our

# CASE STUDY

## Genvolt growth made possible

current workspace, take on more staff and meet the growing demand for our products."

The second part of their project involved the update of Genvolt's IT systems and an investment in capital equipment, again helping the company to bid for contracts and fulfil demand. Stuart adds "Overall the investment has enabled us to sustain our intended growth and allowed us further business development and sales generation."

Wendy Cox, Office Manager for Genvolt commented that the application process for the Business Growth Fund programme was very straightforward and well supported by the grant scheme team: "It was refreshing to have such a simple process and we were able to complete the application paperwork in just a short space of time."

*Below: The new mezzanine floor and Stuart Morgan, of Genvolt*



## Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Tourism Cooperation Project

**BUSINESSES IN SOUTH** Shropshire are being supported to develop new visitor experiences through an EU-funded project to boost the rural economy.

The Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Tourism Cooperation Project is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The project is being delivered in its first year by Gravity Consulting Ltd and opened in January under the oversight of Shropshire Council, on behalf of Shropshire Hills and Ludlow Destination Management Partnership.

The project aims to work directly with 60 tourism businesses in the Shropshire Hills and Ludlow area and to promote them and the area to new visitors.

Tourism marketing specialist Gravity, based in Durham, was engaged to work with businesses to develop and promote five new visitor experiences, themed as – for example – food and drink trails, outdoor experiences or arts and craft activities.

The project aims to bring together all the elements of the "themed" visitor experiences and promote them online as "packages", or products, to visitors, each such product having sustainability at its heart, and promoting local businesses, products and services in innovative ways.

There is no direct cost to the businesses selected to take part and, by the end of May, the Gravity team of Stan Abbott and Linda Tuttiert had engaged with more than 100 businesses in the area, either in telephone interviews or face-to-face visits.

Following this process, the Gravity team is currently finalising the 60 businesses that will go forward to the next stage of the project and has been collecting and compiling baseline data against which the project's performance in subsequent project years can be measured. Consumer research to help inform the product development was carried out in Manchester, alongside an audit of the host website for the products, [www.visitshropshirehills.com](http://www.visitshropshirehills.com).

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**ERDF BEST PRACTICE WORKSHOP – PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION**  
28th June 2017,  
Ludlow Town Football Club

This half-day workshop developed by the Marches LEP Technical Assistance team and support officers provides an overview and best practice of planning and developing an application for the European Regional Development Fund.

This session will be delivered by experienced applicants and will provide an opportunity to share best practice and experiences with others. Refreshments and lunch provided to participants

- The workshop will cover:
- Project development best practice
  - Key characteristics of a successful application
  - The key appraisal points of an ERDF application form
  - Getting ready to run an ERDF project

By the end of the workshop you will be able to:

- Prepare a project proposal
- Understand what is required for a successful outline application
- Be prepared for what is expected at the full application stage
- Understand the basics of what is required to deliver an ERDF project if successful

Register your place on the workshop through the Eventbrite link [here](#).

**MEET THE FUNDER EVENT**  
26th June 2017,  
Marches Growth Hub, Telford

Are you a Telford based business wanting to expand and create jobs? Is financing your business growth a barrier?

If so, there are a range of grant opportunities available to help you!

Join us at our 'Meet the Funder' event on Monday June 26th at the Marches Growth Hub, Telford and find out what you need to know.

Book 1 to 1 slots with the funders of your choice to discuss your specific expansion project.

Grants available from £4,500 - £167,000

The grant programmes are part funded by the European Union. To be eligible to apply you must be a small to medium sized enterprise and your customers must primarily be other businesses.

Funders on the day include:

- Business Growth Programme
- Marches Building Investment Grant
- Business Energy Efficiency Programme
- Marches Broadband Grant Scheme

Please register your interest via the link [here](#).

A Business Advisor will then be in touch to arrange a time for your appointment.

