# PROJECT UPDATE

European Structural & **Investment Funding News** Issue Two / Spring 2015



EUROPEAN UNION vesting in Your Future European Regional und 2007-13



# Sharing over £11m

**ORGANISATIONS** behind Marches projects to promote economic growth in the region are being invited to apply for a share of more than £11 million of European funding. Applications are being sought for projects which focus on four themes identified in the Marches LEP's European and Structural Investment Strategy. Although the region has been allocated around £105m of EU funding for projects being developed and delivered between 2014 and 2020, this is the first of a series of invitations to apply for funding.

Roger Phillips, Chairman of the Marches ESIF Committee, said: "For the launch calls, Government is only inviting projects that are seeking £500,000 or more in ERDF funding. However, there are opportunities for collaborative bids and projects that cover more than one LEP area and we anticipate the launch call will drum up a lot of interest."

The maximum budgets per theme allocated to the launch call are as follows: • Research and Innovation -£3million (application deadline: 27 May)

• SME Competitiveness -£3million (application deadline: 29 May) • ICT - £2.6million (application deadline: 6 Mayl) Low Carbon - £2.5million (application deadline: 20 May) Prospective applicants are advised to contact the Marches Technical Assistance Team (gary.spence@ shropshire.gov.uk and hannah.owen@ shropshire.gov.uk for advice and support.

# **European funding drives Coach Central forward**

A PROJECT to transform a key area of Telford town centre in a bid to boost visitor numbers and investment has been awarded a £750,000 grant from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The scheme to redevelop Coach Central will create a more pedestrian friendly environment between the shopping centre and new Southwater development to encourage people to move between the two and increase visitor numbers by 10 per cent. ERDF funding will be matched by the private sector.

Coach Central links Grange Central and the St Quentin Gate approach to

Woodhouse Central and is currently dominated by up to four lanes of traffic in places, adjoining the busy central bus station.

The Coach Central project will create a distinctive 'shared space' to encourage pedestrians between Telford Town Park, neighbouring residential areas such as Malinslee, the Telford International Centre, the shopping centre and the multi-million pound Southwater development.

Dom Proud, Group Manager for Transport, Strategy and Road Safety at Telford & Wrekin Council, said: "The £250 million leisure and retail destination at **ff** create a

Southwater opened up a whole new side of Telford.

"The aim of the Coach Central project is to create a cohesive link between the town centre and Southwater by removing the existing barriers that restrict sustainable access and movement. This will ensure that the investment at Southwater has a positive impact on the entire town centre.

"The physical environment will be greatly improved by

• See how Telford's Coach Central will be transformed on page 4



transforming the existing highway land into a vibrant community space, resulting in an increase of town centre footfall.

#### HEART

"This will start the process of reshaping the urban form of Telford to create a 'heart' to the town and support a sustainable night time economy, which will encourage the take up of employment land."

> Mr Proud added: "The success of the shared space will support the future development of Southwater. We hope it will attract other investors and businesses into the area and ultimately create more jobs.

"This is vital to support the local economy with recent data showing Telford's unemployment rate increased

by 9.8% during 2010/11, with around 7,700 people of working age being unemployed."

distinctive shared

space ... increasing

town centre

footfall

# **Energy firm taps into** specialist support

HEREFORDSHIRE BASED renewable energy firm Caplor Energy is one Marches company taking advantage of specialist schemes to grow its business.

Caplor Energy provides renewable systems for businesses, households and communities regionally and nationally, covering all aspects of design, installation, testing, commissioning and maintenance.

It joined the Marches Environmental Technologies Network (metnet) in 2010 and Caplor Energy's owner Gareth Williams said the firm hadn't looked back since.

"Active networking and a proactive approach is crucial in Caplor's vision. It enables us to meet people and build mutually beneficial business relationships.

"For a rural business like us, networking can provide a lifeline of support and benefits. Initially we considered

metnet to be a great way to get to know the competitors in our area but then we realised that we could proactively work with them to offer a better service to our customers."

Caplor Energy has recently used a Business Improvement Grant to access the expertise it needed to improve its sales process with specialist marketing advice.

Caplor Energy has also benefitted from the Marches Grads for Business scheme, appointing Ben Quinn, a Business Administration graduate from Bath University, to support its ambitious growth plans.

#### Mel Preedy, Business

Development Manager, said: "In a short amount of time, Ben has got to grips with aspects of the business which can be technically challenging, such as liaising with Government departments."

Ben added: "My experience so far has allowed me to put into practice the different elements of my degree as well as developing a range of new skills. For me, the diversity of my role is one of the best things about my job.

"I have already been on a number of different training courses, allowing me to increase my knowledge of the renewable industry and further my own personal development."

**ff** specialist schemes to grow its business ... the firm hadn't looked back since joining

\* Marches Grads for Businesses is open to organisations in the Marches area that are small and medium-sized enterprises; social enterprises; community interest companies; tourism businesses which qualify as SMEs; or that provide more than 50 per cent of their goods or services to other businesses. It covers up to 45 per cent of the cost of a graduate placement and provides free recruitment for a job, which must be a minimum of an NVQ Level 4.

### About Metnet

The Marches Environment Technology Network (metnet) provides free support to environmental businesses in the Marches and Worcestershire and those looking to diversify into the sector.

The environment industry is a fast-growing sector that generates employment and income in the Marches. The sector is of vital importance to the prosperity of the area and one that offers a wealth of opportunities.

Metnet organises events, including an annual conference, a website and email bulletins to support and grow the environmental sector across the Marches.

Through its events and website, metnet encourages businesses to network and collaborate, innovate and grow.

It also provides grants for small to medium sized



environmental businesses that need expertise to improve their business performance.

NUMBER OF





GRANTS

AWARDED:

met

net stats

**EVENTS ORGANISED INCLUDING** A YEARLY CONFERENCE, BUSINESS **BRIEFINGS, EXHIBITIONS AND** JOINT EVENTS WITH PARTNERS:





met

net

stats

If you're a business operating in environmental technologies or looking to diversify into the sector:

Visit www.metnet.co.uk

Follow on Twitter @metnet1

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/groups/Marches-Environmental-Technology-Network-metnet-3697841

Contact the team on 01584 879745 or info@met-net.co.uk





graduate Ben Quinn

Below: Caplor Energy staff

at a team building event

# **Marches Business Support Project** CASE STUDY...

THE MARCHES BUSINESS SUPPORT project is a flexible programme of free business support for people who want to start their own business or become self-employed.

Funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), it includes one-to-one professional advice and guidance by business advisors, business planning and financial advice, marketing and sales support, networking opportunities.

There are also specialised workshops for start up businesses or existing businesses looking at growth and advice and guidance to new and young SMEs to improve business performance and overcome the challenges of building a sustainable business.

Marches Business Support is delivered by Bridgnorth business coaching company GOOD2GREAT, using a diverse team of 'start up advisors' - all of whom have experience setting up their own businesses, from a pub company to a grower-producer to a web marketing consultancy.

Johnny Themans, of GOOD2GREAT, explained: "This real life experience enables the advisors to have genuine empathy with the delegates who attended the two-day workshops and subsequent follow up meetings."

Advisor Ian Jones has his own energy business and has run several of the Start Up Shape Up workshops. He said: "The workshops are practical and interactive. The ideas and systems that we introduce relate to a huge variety of businesses.



"Most people new to business think that it's just about the legal side of setting up a business and having some kind of business plan and bookkeeping package.

"On these workshops we go much deeper and get potential business owners to think why they want to set up a business, how they're going to stay motivated, their preferred working style and how they can be as effective as possible, how they plan to market their business and create a coherent message for their potential customers - as well as breaking down some of the mysteries of business.

"The emphasis is about helping people to avoid making the mistakes that so many fledgling businesses do so they can set up sound, sustainable companies that will support them and still be around in 10 years time."

## Herefordshire - Peter Cook's Bread

Experienced baker Peter Cook has a passion for real bread making. He knew this was what he wanted his business to be about but wasn't sure how to go about it or how to deal with cash flow.

The Start Up Shape Up workshop he attended in Hereford with advisor Eddie Allen gave him the confidence to go for it and kick started his business.

Peter said: "I received good advice on starting up and developing my business, particularly with regard to cash flow and



business plans – I also learnt how personality drives your business and how marketing drives your cash flow."

Now Peter, based at Bishop's Frome, Herefordshire, sells his artisan bread to shops, restaurants and hotels all over the region and scooped the top prize at the Tiptree World Bread Awards 2014 champion.

www.petercooksbread.co.uk

# CASE STUDY...

## **Shropshire - Onaroll Supplies**

Heather Smith started Onaroll Supplies in July last year, a month after attending a workshop in Telford.

Onaroll is a distributor and agent of tabletop and washroom paper products to businesses, including high end users such as cafes, restaurants and independent retailers.

Heather had worked at a senior level in the paper industry

previously but always harboured an ambition to 'go it alone'. Less than a year on and she is on target to employ three people and forecasts a turnover of £200,000 within three years. She is also in talks with prestigious retailers such as John Lewis about stocking her top of the range imported Italian napkins.

She said: "This challenging workshop stripped my business proposition down to basics. I have had years of experience in sales and marketing in the corporate sector but it was a great opportunity to start with a blank sheet and formulate exactly what I want my business to be. I found the workshop an excellent opportunity to take time out from developing my business plans to get a reality check and practical advice."

www.onaroll.uk.com

# CASE STUDY...

## **Telford and Wrekin -Highmead Training Services**

Paola Armstrong from Telford had already started Highmead Training Services when she attended a workshop to help her develop the business, which provides Driver CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) training to haulage companies.

She said: "The advisor very quickly grasped the concept of my business and what I was trying to achieve and guided me to get to the core issues to really push me to meet my potential."

*After a couple of initiatives to improve* business including targeted mail shots and product development, Paola went on to enrol on the masterclass developed for existing businesses and her business has made significant strides.

She added: "The assistance I've had through this process means that, looking to the future, my business is far more robust and sustainable."

www.highmeadtrainingservices.com



# Committee appointed to oversee funds



Above: Councillor Roger Phillips is Chairman of the ESIF Committee



"AN ENHANCED HIGH QUALITY Coach Central Shared Space scheme that will complement the larger Southwater development, helping to improve and encourage economic vibrancy across Telford Town Centre. Resulting in a 10% increase in visitor footfall by 2016 and increasing the uptake of employment land, leading to the development of 28,256m<sup>2</sup> of premises by the end of 2016."



# THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND

**INVESTMENT FUND** committee is an independent organisation set up to oversee the delivery of the three main EU funding programmes that are worth £105 million to the Marches area between 2014 and 2020.

The committee's job is to make sure that the local strategic aims are considered and met alongside the national goals to create the maximum benefit for the Marches area.

Made of up 18 members, the committee

includes representatives from the business, education and skills, rural and voluntary and community sectors, the three local authorities and a representative from the LEP. They speak on behalf of their sectors and constituencies to ensure every area of the community has a voice.

## Who is on the committee?

Councillor Roger Phillips, of Herefordshire Council, has been elected as Chairman of the ESIF Committee. Members are listed in the table below.

ESIF Committee Role	Name of applicant selected	Organisation
Business Partner	Angela Fitch	FSB
(3 in total)	Steve Hogan	Denios UK
	Shaun Carvell	Clicking mad up
Higher Education	Liz Fury	Harper Adams
Local Authority	Cllr Bill McClements	Telford & Wrekin council
(3 in total)	Cllr Tina Woodward	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
LEP Board	Mandy Thorn	LEP Board
Rural	Caroline Bedell	CLA
Education and skills	Clair Schafer	SBC
Environment	Cllr Cecilia Motley	Local Nature Partnership
VCSE Equalities	Sonia Roberts	Landau Itd
VCSE Social enterprise	Jean Jarvis	The Furniture Scheme
Trade Union	David Stephens	Unison Hereford Branch
Managing Authority	Name of applicant selected	Organisation
Defra	Jo Jury	EAFRD - Managing Authority
Bis	Kevin Postones	BIS Managing - Authority
SFA	Sarah Morris	ESF - Managing Authority
CLG	Stuart Brandrick	CLG - Managing Authority

# **'Glamping' business gets a boost**

## A HEREFORDSHIRE

BUSINESS has taken advantage of the new craze for 'glamorous camping' and nearly doubled bookings at its woodland activity centre with the aid of European funding.

Oakerwood Leisure began life in 1990, offering outdoor activities and camping experiences specialising in school activity days, residential trips, stag and hen activity weekends, birthday parties and corporate team building events.

After spotting the rise in upmarket camping, Oakerwood launched its first glamping village in 2009. Offering comfortable wooden pods, complete with lighting and heaters, they can be used



earlier and later in the year than the usual camping season, meaning increased business.

Recent grants from the Business Enterprise Fund allowed Oakerwood to improve facilities including a borehole to introduce running water, a catering kitchen to offer catered weekend packages and the introduction of a second glamping village, which doubles the amounts of bookings and helps to cater for much larger groups. David Davies, Managing Director of the family run business, said: "The Business Enterprise Fund grants enabled us to develop more quickly than we would otherwise have been able to, and tap into the growing glamping market.

"The addition of the second glamping village has seen our overnight bookings increase from 89 in 2014 to 138 so far for 2015."

> Below: One of the glamping pods at Oakerwood Leisure

