

# Seeing the Wood for the Trees

## E News



April 2008

South East Forestry and Woodlands Partnership - Working together for England's most wooded region  
[www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk](http://www.seeingthewoodforthetrees.org.uk) email: [melanie.wallis@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.wallis@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

## CONTENTS

### News

- ASNW Planning decision
- Leader Local Action Groups
- Tree Risk Management
- FC wins EU funding for Woodfuel project
- Funding Opportunities
- Publications and Resources
- Events
- Focus - Training

## INTRODUCTION

The leaves are emerging and the evenings are getting longer for enjoying evening walks in the woods and the Rural Development Programme for England is gathering momentum.

This newsletter contains articles on topics including:

- Our Focus topic, Train to Gain, the government sponsored organisation that identifies skills gaps for businesses.
- ASNW Planning decision
- Update on RDPE, Leader and SEWTF
- Tree Risk Management



Four Acre Wood in West Sussex has set a precedent for planning applications involving development on ancient woodlands.

The forestry sector is benefitting from the funding available through RDPE and SEEDA single pot funding; further project funding opportunities will be available through the Leader Local Area Groups (LAGs). Applications are continuing to be received for RDPE funding and the South East Woodland and Timber Fund (SEWTF); more applications are welcomed, see the Funding section below for further details. This is a great opportunity for the sector to develop and implement projects that will expand markets or build and strengthen supply chains.

Training can benefit enterprises of any size although finding the time away from work and budgeting for the time and cost can be an issue to the smaller business. These costs should be balanced against the potential for great benefit from investing in the training, be it business management, IT, Health & Safety or woodland management related.

Training can give you the opportunity to network and obtain the latest information on legislation issues from that old fashioned commodity, a person. Discussing business issues with a group of people who are experiencing similar but different issues can save days of wondering about the pros and cons of alternative methods of working. If you have any training requirements that you are unable to find courses for, or other training issues, please let us know and we will do our best to help you.

I hope you find these articles informative. This and previous editions of the newsletter can be downloaded from the [Publications and Resource Centre](#) page of the South East England (SEE) FC website. If you have any comments on the topics or would like to submit any articles relating to woodland management policy or timber marketing initiatives, please send them to [melanie.wallis@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.wallis@forestry.gsi.gov.uk).

Melanie Wallis

## NEWS

### Ancient woodland site in West Sussex saved after Planning Application refused on Appeal

A proposed development by Crest Nicolson on land which included the site of Four Acre Wood in West Sussex, was refused on Appeal by the Secretary of State in January 2008. The decision comes after several years of legal exchanges led by local resident Stuart Meier and Sussex Wildlife Trust, arguing the case for the importance of ancient woodland, despite the site being cleared of trees more than 20 years ago. Importantly, the Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector's view that, in the light of PPS9 and other policies, the site should not be developed because of its ancient woodland status, despite having already been allocated for housing. The decision also provides strong support for the ancient woodland survey in West Sussex, which added this site to the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The survey is supported by Natural England, the Forestry Commission, the County Council, the Biological Records Centre, and local authorities in the county.

This is an important planning decision which will set a precedent for future planning decisions involving ancient woodland sites. For further information see an article on the topic written by [Sussex Wildlife Trust](#).

## LEADER

The Local Development Strategies submitted by the Leader Local Action Groups (LAGs) are now being considered by the assessment panel. For information on the areas covered by these LAGs and contact details, please see the [RDPE Guidance for Farmers, Horticulturalists & Foresters](#) page of the SEEDA website.

### EU Woodfuel project

FC have won funding to work collaboratively with other European nations in various stages of implementing Woodfuel boilers as a strategic part of their national energy supply. The aim is for the recent entrants into the arena to learn from those with established systems as a standard method of energy creation and to share experiences and information in order to improve the development and implementation of national and local projects.



### Tree Risk Management Conference

A Conference, facilitated by the forestry Commission, will be held on May 29th to take forward discussions relating to the possible launch of a National Tree Safety Forum; this co-incides with the drafting of New British Standards on Tree Risk. It is hoped that all stakeholders will be represented at the conference and that a single standard for assessing risk will, in the longer term, be identified and adopted across the various sectors affected by tree risk. To book a place - [Treeworks Environmental Practice - Seminar Booking](#)

## Funding Opportunities

### England Woodland Grant Scheme

All grants were closed to new applications from 28 February 08. FC National Office are in the process of producing the National Prospectus from which the Regional Prospectus will be developed and published. It is hoped that the regional grants will be re-opened some time in May. The grant situation at any time for the region is shown on the South East England's [Regional Grant Availability page](#). Information on new developments relating to the EWGS is explained on the [What's New page](#); this includes requirements relating to [Land Registry](#) such as: from April 2008, if you apply for an EWGS grant you and your land must be registered on the Customer Register (CR) and the Rural Land Register (RLR) operated by the Rural Payments Agency. In addition, from 1 June 2008, if you have an existing EWGS or WGS contract you will be required to give your Single Business Identifier (SBI) when submitting claims for any outstanding grant payments.

### Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Project Funding

The SEEDA managed elements of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) is open for business for projects exceeding £100,000, with grant aid available up to 50% of costs, and is receiving Expressions of Interest from a variety of areas and industry sectors. The RDPE workshops held around the region were well attended and the powerpoint presentations can be found on the [RDPE News](#) section of the SEEDA website. For the smaller forestry projects see the following SEWTF article. For an informal discussion on possible forestry projects please contact the fund manager, Chris Jankiewicz: email - [chris.jankiewicz@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.jankiewicz@forestry.gsi.gov.uk); office - 01296 696543 or his mobile on 07770 598020.



If you are looking to obtain match funding for a capital project, you can download and complete the Expression of Interest Form from the [RDPE Guidance for Farmers, Horticulturalists and Foresters](#) page of the SEEDA website. The completed form should then be returned to Helen Dallas at SEEDA who will arrange an initial assessment of the project and a response given to the applicant.

## Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme - Round 4

Defra launched their latest round of the Scheme [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/crops/industrial/energy/capital-grants.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/crops/industrial/energy/capital-grants.htm) at the beginning of April 2008. It aims to support the installation of biomass-fuelled heat and combined heat and power projects in the industrial, commercial and community sectors. This includes, but is not restricted to, public and private limited companies (Ltd and plc), sole traders, farmers, local authorities, hospitals, universities, schools, housing associations, charities etc. Deadline 20 May 2008.

## South East Woodland and Timber Fund

This fund is available to support the smaller timber processing or marketing projects particularly those involving collaborative working and supply chain development. The Quick Guide to the objectives of the fund can be downloaded from the [SEWTF](#) page of the South East England FC website.

This fund is also administered by Chris Jankiewicz who can therefore advise you whether your project is more suited to apply for funding under RDPE or SEWTF. The deadlines for the 2008/09 application rounds are 16th May and 17th October with award decisions being made in June and November respectively. For further information please contact Chris Jankiewicz on [chris.jankiewicz@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.jankiewicz@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) 01296 696543 / 07770 598020 or Melanie Wallis on [melanie.wallis@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.wallis@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) / 01420 23337.



## Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) Training Subsidies

The training bids have been submitted to SEEDA who hope to make the funding decision in early May. The next e-news will contain further information.

## Active Woods 08 Diversity activity grant

This grant was mentioned in the last e-news and is now closed.

## Publications and Resources

### Forestry Commission Practice Notes and Information Notes

Recent Information and Technical Notes can be downloaded from The Forestry Commission web page - [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/HCOU-4VXJ5B).

### Small Woods Association

The publication [Woodland Initiatives - Meeting Targets](#) highlights the work of Woodland Initiatives in England, explains the diversity of their work and illustrates how their partnership work and experience has delivered a wide variety of outputs over a number of years. It has been produced by the Woodland Initiatives Network, which is a partnership between the Forestry Commission, Natural England, Small Woods Association and representatives of the Woodland Initiatives.

### Interactive Website

Last year UPM Tilhill launched an interactive website on [Forest Life interactive website](#). It requires Flash Version 8 to display the content of the site.

### The cultural heritage of woodlands in the South East

A new book focusing on woodland heritage has recently been published by the Forestry Commission, Natural England, and AONB partners. Entitled 'The cultural heritage of woodlands in the South East', the book was produced by the SE AONBs Woodlands Programme, one of four programmes across the country funded by the Countryside Agency (now part of Natural England) and the Forestry Commission.

This book was commissioned by the Programme on behalf of the High Weald, Kent Downs, and Surrey Hills AONBs, three areas where the history of woodlands and woodland use, and the way these have shaped each landscape are a large extent intertwined. The book, however, places these AONBs in the wider context of the South East, by examining the cultural heritage of woodlands across the region. For more information on the production of the report, please contact the Forestry Commission's SE Native Woodlands Officer, Patrick McKernan: [patrick.mckernan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.mckernan@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

To reduce the file size of the downloadable book, it has been split into separate chapters, each of which can be downloaded: The cultural heritage of woodlands in the South East [www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-7dlcj](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-7dlcj)



## Events

### Now until 2010! Free Workshops from the Land Based Industries Advice Service (LBAS)

The rural arm of Business Link are running a series of workshops across the region over the next two years. The topics include: Business Diversification, Food Supply Chain, Energy Crops and Planning Issues. They may be particularly useful for members of Local Action Groups to attend.

To find when a course is running in your area and to book a place please go to [www.ruralbookings.co.uk](http://www.ruralbookings.co.uk)

**Wednesday 7th May 2008 10am, Great Milton.** The topics will include a talk by the environment agency on waste regulations and forestry, RDPE, woodfuel and forest schools. Lunch will be provided after the speakers. If you would be interested in attending please advise Richard Pearce on 01296 444408 or by e-mail to [richard.pearce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:richard.pearce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) limited spaces are available.

### 12-16 May - Royal Forestry Society (RFS) Whole society Meeting.

A week of visits to different woodlands in Hampshire, West Sussex and the Isle of Wight which will be attended by RFS members from across Britain. A full list of events is on the RFS website on their [Fixture List](#) page. If you would like to attend any of the meetings, please contact the local divisional secretary to let them know that you will be visiting and, in some cases, to check that places are still available. There are several RFS divisions within the FC South East region so be sure to scroll through the whole page.

**22nd May - Hampshire Woodland Forum, Lyndhurst Community Centre.** If you would be interested in attending please advise Jonathan Rau on 02380 383463 or by e-mail to [jonathan.rau@hants.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.rau@hants.gov.uk); limited spaces are available.

**12th June, 10.00am to 12.30pm - Surrey Woodland Forum, Mickleham, Dorking.** The Surrey Woodland Forum is being revived due to the success of the format in other counties. The topics will include RDPE, woodfuel, and an ancient woodland survey for Surrey. This is an opportunity to meet with the organisations directing these initiatives and to contribute to their development. Lunch will be provided after the speakers. If you would be interested in attending please advise Sarah Wellings on 01420 23337 or by e-mail to [sarah.wellings@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.wellings@forestry.gsi.gov.uk); limited spaces are available.

See the [Events page](#) of the FC website for up to date information on woodland related events in the region.

## Focus

### Train to Gain - helping businesses succeed in the South East.

Article submitted by Steve Reynolds - [steven.reynolds@traintogainse.co.uk](mailto:steven.reynolds@traintogainse.co.uk)



1.3 million people in England go to work without the appropriate skills to do their job; and skills gaps are estimated to cost businesses £10 billion a year in lost revenue. That's roughly equivalent to £165,000 for a business with 50 employees. Skills shortages threaten productivity, reduce competitiveness and demotivate employees.

[Train to Gain](#) is a free service set up to help businesses, both large and small, succeed. Funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Train to Gain is designed to help UK businesses improve competitiveness and profitability through training, and will advise on any Government funding available.

#### Skills Brokerage - for independent, qualified and impartial advice

The Train to Gain Skills Brokerage provides independent, qualified and impartial Skills Brokers to deliver holistic advice and support on skills training.

A qualified Train to Gain Skills Broker will, **at no cost** and with no obligation from the employer:

1. Provide an impartial needs analysis of training required to help achieve business objectives.
2. Assess what skills the business has now - and what will be needed in the future. This can be from the most basic to the most advanced skills, and from practical and language skills to business skills.
3. Recommend skills training solutions that are most suited to the business, and help with selection of the most suitable training providers. Again, this is completely free and impartial, so ensuring the highest quality advice.
4. Identify the best way to pay for training; and advise on any available funding - including the possibility of a contribution to wage costs for companies with less than 50 employees, to cover the cost of time spent in training. Some training may require additional funding from the employer.
5. Once the recommended training programme is underway, Skills Brokers continue to provide ongoing support, including monitoring the quality of all training provided and evaluating its success at the end of the process.

To request a Train to Gain information pack, or for an impartial and free training needs assessment: Call the Train to Gain team on 0845 751 2288; or email [info@traintogainse.co.uk](mailto:info@traintogainse.co.uk) with your contact details.