



Seeing the Wood for the Trees

E News February 2010

South East Forestry and Woodlands Partnership - Working together for England's most wooded region

INTRODUCTION

The unremarkable summer of 2009, which failed to supply the anticipated large numbers of barbecues and increased local meat and charcoal sales, evolved into a remarkable autumn and then into an equally remarkable winter. The lack of charcoal sales last summer has been compensated for by the quantity of firewood sales through the winter. There are a number of new entrants into the firewood sales market this season and this weather will have given them all an opportunity to find customers. This edition of Enews has information on a firewood accreditation scheme and funding opportunities to support the purchase of equipment throughout the woodfuel supply chain as well as opportunities to join a Woodfuel fact finding trip to Austria.



NEWS



The End of a Regional Pathfinder

The South East Woodland & Timber Fund (SEWTF) has now closed. This fund has distributed £250,000 over 3 years to woodland related businesses across the region. The finance was provided by the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and administered by the Forestry Commission on behalf of the regional Forestry and Woodlands Partnership (the steering group of the regional forestry framework). This has been a great opportunity for the forestry sector to access grant funding for capital equipment to help them develop their businesses. It has recognised the importance that SEEDA places on the management of woodlands and their contribution to the local economy in the region.

One of the most important lessons learnt from the SEWTF was the difficulty in communicating the existence of the fund to the industry. Funding is **still** available to the sector through RDPE. Please help to spread the word that funding is available to all contractors, woodland owners, and other forestry related businesses so that the forestry/woodland sector can get maximum benefit from RDPE funding. See Funding Opportunities below.

Firewood Accreditation

A woodfuel accreditation scheme, the Solid Biomass Assurance Scheme, is being piloted by [HETAS*](#)

The purpose of the scheme is to provide the customer with an assurance that they are buying high quality fuel appropriate to their appliance. Fuel quality and supplier reliability aspects are assured, including compliance with relevant European Standards for wood fuel, a defined 'seasoned' status and a measured delivery quantity. Applicants to the scheme will receive information packs that help them set up procedures to maintain their product standards. They will have periodic audits from HETAS to ensure that these procedures are being carried out. The scheme will be available to suppliers of various types of woodfuel including: **firewood logs**, pellets, briquettes or chips made from either wood or other biomass.

This scheme will enable the public to easily identify quality woodfuel suppliers and will increase customer confidence that there is a reliable supply chain for a safe fuel that will burn efficiently with their appliance.

For further information, please email mark.russell@hetas.co.uk

*Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme is the official body recognised by Government (Defra) to approve solid fuel domestic heating appliances, fuels and services including the registration of competent installers and servicing businesses.



MORE NEWS



Woodfuel Fact Finding Trip to Austria

The EU funded [Woodheat Solutions Project](#) is running a study tour to Austria in March. The use of wood as a renewable fuel is very well established in Austria and the study tour provides an opportunity to learn from the masters. Woodfuel Suppliers tour is 21-24 March 2010 and Woodfuel Buyers tour (i.e. boiler installations etc.) is 24-27 March 2010. Delegates will be asked for a £150 contribution to overall costs (which include flights, accommodation and meals). Further details and application forms are available on our [Industry Events page](#). If you are interested please complete and send your application to peter.thaxter@forestry.gov.uk as soon as possible. All applications will be assessed by a panel on Monday 15th Feb and those allocated places will be notified by email. If you have any queries ring Peter on 01420 23337

National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC)

Changes to Chainsaw Qualifications

[The revised suite of NPTC chainsaw qualifications](#), was launched on 1st November after consultation with the industry. A new unit has been introduced, CS50 Techniques for Dealing with Damaged Trees, which is aimed at the skills required to deal with emergency damage such as trees fallen across the highway.

SEEDA Restructure

SEEDA have reviewed their corporate structure resulting in savings of around £3.4 million per year. It is aimed to have the new structure fully operational by April 2010. The Corporate Plan 2008-2011 was refreshed as part of the process, which explains the Corporate Plan focus and revised priority sectors for support. The [summary](#) document and [full report](#) can be downloaded from the [SEEDA website](#).



Phytophthora ramorum Continues

Phytophthora ramorum has recently been found in Japanese larch, Western hemlock, beech, birch and oaks in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. Closer to home, parts of the [Rhinefield Drive in the New Forest](#) had been cordoned off. [Forest Research](#) would like to be advised of any cases of suspected P. ramorum or P. kernoviae. 01420 22255

NHS Forest project

The [NHS Forest](#) is seeking funding to promote the many and varied health benefits of trees and woodlands. It has run a pilot project which ended in December 2009. None of the project areas were within the South East. See their website for further information.

POLICY

Combating Climate Change A Role for UK Forests in November 2009

A research document has been produced that will help inform forestry policy with regard to climate change. See Publications section below

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme - Round 6

[Round 6 of the Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme](#) aims to promote the efficient use of biomass for energy by stimulating the early deployment of biomass fuelled heat and biomass combined heat and power projects. The scheme is aimed at businesses, organisations and charities in the commercial, industrial and community sectors in England, that are considering investing in biomass-fuelled heat and/or combined heat and power projects, including anaerobic digesters. Capital grants are awarded towards the cost of equipment in complete installations. Grant Value - maximum: £ 500,000. No minimum. Grants are offered at a variable rate of up to 40% of the difference in cost of installing the biomass boiler or CHP plant compared to installing a fossil fuel alternative. The final deadline for applications is 31 March 2010. Guidance notes and application forms are downloadable from their website.

Woodfuel

For funding available for boiler installations and woodfuel related projects please contact the region's Woodfuel Development Officer Gillian.Alker@forestry.gsi.gov.uk or visit the [Biomass Energy Centre Website](#).

For further information on woodfuel related grants, see the grants section of the EU funded project [WoodHeat Solutions website](#).



Woodfuel boiler. 150kW. Torry Hill estate, Kent



English Woodland Grant Scheme

If you wish to enhance the biodiversity of your woodland then contact the Forestry Commission to find out whether the England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) can help fund the cost of its management.

Paying a consultant to produce a woodland management plan is a good place to start (Woodland Planning Grant minimum of £1000) as this will provide you with a strategy to achieve the objectives that you have for your woodland. The plan will also show you when you need to consider thinning and felling trees for the health, wealth and bio-diversity of the woodland and provide you with a felling licence. The plan could also support applications for a Woodland Improvement Grant to help you get the woodland management back on track or an annual Woodland Management Grant for managing rides etc. to maintain habitat for biodiversity.

The Forestry Commission ["Own or manage a woodland"](#) page gives information about your local woodland officer. [The Regional Grant Availability](#) page gives regularly updated information on the funds available, by grant type, in the region.



RDPE (Rural Development Program for England)

The FC Rural Development Officer, Jane Hull, is currently on maternity leave. Mike Habergham has now taken up the reins and is the Forestry Commission representative managing the forestry aspect of RDPE. Mike works out of both the FC Wendover and Alice Holt office. He can be contacted on: office 01420 23337, mobile 07831 557643 or email: mike.habergham@forestry.gov.uk.

RDPE Project Funding (applications direct to SEEDA) for forestry projects:

- With a total project cost of greater than or equal to £100,000 within the entire South East region
- Or With a total project cost of less than £100,000 outside a LEADER area

For an informal discussion on possible forestry projects please contact Mike Habergham (contact details above) who will give you an indication of the eligibility of your project and advise you what to do next. The FC is keen to ensure the forestry sector benefits from the funding opportunities available and will help find ways to guide and support potential forestry projects through the application process. **Please get in touch to obtain advice** or look at the [RDPE Funding](#) page of the FC website.

RDPE LEADER Project Funding (grant aid up to £50,000)

You may be wondering why people are talking about LEADER groups. In recognition that this is a European project, it uses the acronym for Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale meaning 'Links between actions of rural development'. The LEADER programme teams are working closely with applicants to support them through the application process.

If you are considering developing your business, whether it be by capital investment or other development costs, please use the [LEADER page of the SEEDA website](#) to identify your local LEADER group. Contact them for advice on your eligibility for funding and how to proceed with your project.

LandSkills South East Training Subsidies

[LandSkills South East](#) is delivering the training element of RDPE through a network of training providers. [South East Woodfuels](#) and the [British Trust for Conservation Volunteers](#) (BTCV) are the latest training providers to join the network.

This is your opportunity to attend [subsidised training](#) for the industry.

NB Land Skills Training Ltd is a separate independent training company and is not part of the RDPE subsidised Lantra LandSkills SE Training Providers.



Publications and Resources

The Stationery Office (TSO) published "Combating Climate Change - A Role for UK Forests" in November 2009. The report, produced by a Steering Group, presents the key findings of the first national assessment of UK forestry and climate change. The Steering Group includes representatives from universities, government departments and research establishments. The report is available from [TSO](#), and may be downloaded from the [TSO website](#).

[Forest Research](#) have published a guide 'Practical techniques for surveying and monitoring squirrels' which can be downloaded from the Forestry Commission's [New Publications](#) page.

The [Timber Trade Federation](#) has produced a report on the amount of certified timber available to the timber industry in the UK .

[A new publication from Natural England](#) explains the definition of disturbance and the need for licencing, relating to activities that might affect badger setts.

The TTF have also produced a [Statistical Review of the Timber Industry for 2008](#)



Focus

Protecting Machinery from theft

Despite the warmth in early November, the demand for firewood has continued to increase. So too has the purchase of firewood processors, splitters and kindling machines. Further along the supply chain, timber trailers have been a popular purchase. This raises the question of security as these are all very desirable items to passing thieves.

The Surrey Woodland Forum was recently given a talk on security by a Crime Reduction Officer from the Surrey police force. They have piloted a Country Watch project in the Mole Valley which will be rolled out across the county. This is a form of Neighbourhood Watch where members of the public register their involvement with the police. Communication is mostly via mobile phone texts and email. Suspicious activity is reported to a central contact who then sends a text message to all members local to the sighting, informing them of the suspicious activity or vehicle.



The use of UV dyes is encouraged by the police. These dyes hold a unique DNA code linked to each customer so that the rightful owner can be identified on recovery of the goods. These dyes can also be transferred to the thief's clothing. Many police stations are fitted with

UV lights, under which these normally invisible dyes will glow. These products can provide strong evidence in court and so far have a 100% conviction rate for those who are caught. More information on this and other methods of prevention are on the Crime Prevention section of the Surrey Police website. Similar advice is available from the Preventing Crime pages of the Home Office website.

If you are looking to source forensic marking products, or other security measures, a good place to start is Secured By Design. The official UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of 'designing out crime.' The Secured by Design membership scheme currently includes more than 350 companies whose products have been awarded the 'Police Preferred Specification' status

A good quality tow hitch lock is a tried and proven deterrent. The insurance companies are varied in their terms and conditions so shop around to check under what circumstances your towed machinery is covered by your insurance and then compare prices.

Thatcham is a not-for-profit organisation whose main aim is to carry out research targeted at containing or reducing the cost of motor insurance claims. They are best known by motorists for testing vehicle security systems. At present the only self powered devices that have successfully been through Thatcham's approval process are the Mtrack products supplied by Automatrix.



Links

For a list of links to organisations relevant to the forestry sector, please go to the RFF Useful Links page.

Set up the FC South East England Home Page, www.forestry.gov.uk/southeastengland, as a Favorite on your Internet browser for up to date information on news, funding and activities in the South East.

Events

See the RFF Industry Events page for information on conferences, workshops, trade fairs and other woodland related events in 2010.

