

West Midlands Wood-fuel Update – June 2009

Heartwoods (www.heartwoods.co.uk)

- A big 'thank you' to Will Rolls, Heartwoods Project Officer who has now moved on to work with the Biomass Energy Centre (www.biomassenergycentre.org.uk) giving advice on woodfuel nationally (will.rolls@forestry.gsi.gov.uk). He completed the AONB Wood for Heat project and tied up the Wyre Woodfuel Pathfinder producing an evaluation report. Further details from simon.west@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
- A big 'hello' to Stewart Scull, until recently Head of Gamekeeping and Wildlife Conservation at BASC (British Association of Shooting and Conservation), who has now joined Heartwoods as Development Officer to take forward the work of Heartwoods in the WM and can be contacted at:

Stewart Scull
Heartwoods Development Officer
Green Wood Centre
Station Road
Coalbrookdale
Telford
TF8 7DR

Tel: 01952 432769

Email:

stewartscull@smallwoods.org.uk

- Interest in woodfuel continues to grow apace, with enquiries to Heartwoods rising and an ever increasing interest in fuel supply
- The Heartwoods website has comprehensive info on woodfuel & suppliers
- A list of regional woodfuel suppliers is available from simon.west@forestry.gsi.gov.uk – currently 21 organisations registered

Wood fuel Challenge – Wyre Wood fuel pathfinder – Phase 1

- The pathfinder has now finished and has delivered 10 trained Woodfuel Champions, 19 advisory visits and 4 installation feasibility studies
- An evaluation has been done and the key lessons are
 - the project should be extended to a wider area – WM region
 - more emphasis on promoting the project
 - more handholding support to ensure interest is followed through
- we held a final celebration/networking event in April for woodfuel champions to feed back the findings and prepare for Grow With Wyre

WMids AONBs Wood for Heat project

- Project completed – 6 feasibility studies for owner supplied wood heat installations in Shropshire Hills and Malvern Hills AONB undertaken

RDPE – WM Woodfuel Supply Chain

- FC will act as accountable body
- Application has completed 3rd appraisal and decision expected 25 June
- Estimated project start summer 09

RDPE – Rural Enterprise Grant

- Up to 40% grant available for rural businesses includes installing woodfuel boilers and storage
(http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/business/business_support/36147.asp or tel Herefordshire Council on 01432 383616 or 01432 260662)
- £5m available, **maximum** grant £62 500
- working with AWM to develop 'forestry processing' element – details available soon

RDPE – Strategic Investment Grant

- working with AWM to develop new forestry grant - details available soon
- Up to 40% grant available for rural businesses includes wood processing and supply equipment
- **Minimum** grant £62 500

Re-Launch of the Strategic Investment Grant

On Tuesday 23 June, the Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) which is funded by the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) 2007 to 2013 was extended and re launched.

The Strategic Investment Grant (SIG) is a capital grants programme (for grants £62,500 and above) is available to land based businesses. SIG can fund large scale and collaborative projects to improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector, and improve the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy.

Applications are currently being invited to support investments in the following areas:

- Fruit and Vegetable Packing and Processing;
- Supply Chain Facilities in the Livestock Sector (dairy, beef, sheep, pigs, poultry meat and eggs);
- Centralised Storage and Processing Facilities for Combinable Crops;
- Farm Diversification;
- Support the Processing of Organic Farm Wastes;
- Resource Efficiency on Agricultural and Horticultural Units;
- Improve the Economic Value of Forests and the Processing and Marketing of Primary Forestry Products; and
- Basic Services for Rural Populations

Details on the Strategic Investment Grants are on the Advantage West Midlands <http://www.advantagemw.co.uk/working-with-us/rdpe/how-do-i-apply/sig-bidding-rounds-and-grants.aspx>

For more information contact an Advantage West Midlands RDPE Manager at RDPEEnquires@advantagemw.co.uk or call 0121 380 3500.

Wood Energy Task Group

- Next meeting 14 July, 4-5.30 at Forestry Commission, Worcester
- Contact Andy Grundy (andy@wood-fuel.co.uk) chair or Simon West (simon.west@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)

Warwickshire Producer Group

- Have recently advertised for a project officer – details from Zoe Bell (Zoe@godfrey-payton.co.uk)

RE:Think Energy (www.rethinkenergy.org.uk)

- Funding for businesses for advice, feasibility and renewables installations in the Rural Regeneration Zone
- Delivered by Shropshire Council and MEA – contact Kate Millbank (01743 277107 or kate@mea.org.uk)
- Re:Think Energy Staffordshire has set up a demonstration woodfuel depot in Staffordshire using wood supplied by FC

Bioenergy West Midlands (www.bioenergywm.co.uk)

- A range of successful training/networking events in biomass installation, anaerobic digestion, biofuels and a study tour to Sweden on woodfuel
- Details on website

EU Funding

- MEA are leading WM partners in an Italy led woodfuel supply chain project application – other partners are Shropshire Hills AONB, Greenfield Consulting with FC supporting

Upcoming events

- BioenergyWM woodfuel supply seminar – 22 June @ Harper Adams
- Biofuels/REA conference – 8-10 October @ Stoneleigh

Simon West
June 2009