

Winter Newsletter

Growing Rural Enterprise Ltd



If we could give small rural businesses one piece of advicewhat would it be?...
Take a day off!reflect, recharge and refocus.

At Growing Rural Enterprise this Autumn, we are working on lots of different projects, all of them with rural business at their heart. We are doing some one to one business support to help people to develop their business idea, or to overcome a particular challenge. We are helping people to put together business plans, proposals and running training courses and workshops.

Our network of people, organisations and contacts is growing all of the time and taking time to network, meet people for lunch, catch up over

a drink, send an email, link up on Facebook all help things to develop.

One of the most common things we are seeing at the moment is people who really need some time out, some time away from the business to reflect, recharge and refocus. If you work in a family business this is particularly pertinent as you often live and work with the same people... sometimes people who think its a sin to have a day off!

It can be difficult to take a holiday when you are farming,

What we do:

- Courses & workshops for rural businesses
- One to one coaching, mentoring and advice
- Manage and deliver externally funded projects which help rural businesses to start, develop and grow
- Working with partners to improve the rural economy, business sustainability and viability
- Managing trans-national projects that inspire those running rural businesses and share good practice with our European partners

Vision

- To deliver innovative and meaningful learning opportunities for rural business.
- To inspire and make a difference to rural business, building confidence, knowledge and skills.

but just to take yourself away from the farm for a day, or even an afternoon is the best thing you could do, for your well-being, health and your business. That's why you have your best ideas when you are on holiday. It clears your mind and helps you to see things more clearly.

Taking time away from your business is good. It is positive and proactive. Making time to reflect, recharge and refocus is like making an investment. Come back to your business refreshed and enthusiastic.

Make it a habit.....



WELLIES 4 WORK

A new project is due to commence early in the new year for people recovering from mental ill health who would like to get closer to the workplace or volunteering.

This will be a 10 week project following the well tried and tested WELLIES model where participants confidence and self esteem is boosted by taking part in activities in a variety of activities which connect them to animals, plants and the countryside. Increased social interaction, being out doors in the fresh air and eating fresh local produce all add to the WELLIES experience.

The project will take place at Woodhouse Community Farm, Whittington and be open to service users from Burton on Trent, Tamworth and Lichfield.



Comments from recent project participants included " *Being outdoors is very therapeutic- the open air made me feel alive and conscious of everything around me.*"

" *Empathy, not being judged, being accepted and not labelled- good to be with others with similar backgrounds "*

"*Fabulous staff and team- felt very welcome and enjoyed trying new things*" "*helps you to feel well*"



Farm Diversification with Rease Heath College

Growing Rural Enterprise will be running skills for farm diversification training for Rease Heath Enterprise delivery hub starting in November. The training programme consists of a four hour introductory workshop and then four hours one to one to focus on individual business needs. The first workshop is on Tuesday November 27th from 9.30-1.30 at Granary Conferencing in Cheshire.

The training will cover exploring ideas for diversification, the good and bad, routes to market, business planning, cashflow, budgeting and developing a marketing plan.

For further information or to book a place contact Anne Sharrott on 01270 616450 or annes@reaseheath.ac.uk





Princes Countryside Fund

We are delighted to have been awarded funding to work with local farms to help them with business development plans on a one to one basis. The project can also help farms engage with ICT to make their businesses more sustainable. Nick said 'some examples of the work undertaken so far include helping a small food producer design and manage a simple website, getting group of people together to introduce them to social media and how it can help their business'.

The project has been designed to work on a one to one basis or with small groups working together. It is hoped that the small groups will continue to work together and support each other in the future. It will work with 40-60 businesses between October 2012 and October 2013. If you would like to discuss an idea please contact Julie or Nick.



Artisan Food Production and Social Farming in Italy

In October we visited CIA TOSCANA CONFEDERAZIONE ITALIA AGRICOLTORI who play a similar role to Growing Rural Enterprise on a regional basis. We met with Marco Felloni, regional policy director for the organisation, we discussed issues surrounding small food production, marketing of agricultural produce, shortening the supply chain, women in agriculture and social farming.

We went onto meet several other key players in rural development and to see examples of good practice in the area, learning many good ideas to incorporate into our training workshops and future projects back in the UK.

Fedele Raho leads an inspirational cooperative which brings together a home with people with psychiatric illness live as a family on a farm that produces olives and small horticultural production. The organisation works as a social enterprise which also produces dried figs, preserves and olive oil and takes an active part in the slow food movement.

Transfer of Innovation Animal Assisted Therapy

As we start a new Leonardo Transfer of Innovation project we will welcome our project partners from Italy, Poland and Germany to a kick off meeting in the UK.

One of the Italian partners has pioneered a project to train long term unemployed recovering from mental ill health to handle therapy dogs. During the first year of the project we will learn how this works and in the second year will run a training programme to train 20 people. Those involved with animal assisted therapy will realise its potential to make a difference. It is great to see it becoming more widely used both in the UK and Europe. We will be recruiting learners for this programme through Quest day opportunities in Stafford, with an expected start to the training in summer 2013.

A "round table" discussion group comprising of those interested will meet in early 2013 with a view to following the progress of the project and using it's findings locally.



NEW OFFICES

In preparation for the next part of our business journey we have taken new office premises at **The Estate Yard, Main Road Sudbury**. As well as a spacious office we also have a meeting and training room in which we look forward to hosting events workshops and seminars.

Terra Madre Day- Come & join us!

Slow Food Networking Lunch

On Monday December 10th- it is Slow Food Terra Madre Day, and we invite you to join us at our new offices in Sudbury between 12 noon and 2pm for a networking lunch.

Since 2009, each year on December 10 - Slow Food's anniversary - food communities and Slow Food convivia around the world celebrate eating locally and sustainable local food production in more than a 1,000 events: collective meals, community festivals, protests, workshops for children, excursions to producers and much more are held to promote local food traditions and demonstrate the Slow Food philosophy of good, clean and fair food to communities, media and decision makers.

Terra Madre Day is Slow Foods campaign to promote the diversity of food traditions and production, and show how its network is using its creativity and knowledge to build a better food future.

www.slowfood.com/terramadreday

Growing Rural Enterprise are members of the Slow Food movement and actively support its work through working with small food producers, farmers and food based social enterprise, helping them to become more sustainable.

The Terra Madre Networking Lunch will bring together producers, farmers and anyone interested in Slow food locally, as well as being an opportunity to network over lunch. Bring a plate of something to share!

Let us know if you'd like to come along.

Country Christmas Floristry Workshops

Once again we are running our very successful Christmas floristry courses at three local venues. Participants will use fresh seasonal foliage, cones, ribbons, raffia, fruit etc to make a door swag, table centre and one other piece.

All workshops are step by step and suitable for absolute beginners, people come along alone or with friends but always take home work of a professional standard. Julie said 'It is lovely to see people coming back year after year, it is a really nice start to Christmas. The cost is £70 per person or £65 per person for booking more than one place. Bookings can be made through Growing Rural Enterprise website. Locations include Friday 30th November Growing Rural Enterprise office in Sudbury, Saturday 1st December Quinney Hall, Canwell (in between Tamworth and Sutton Coldfield), Saturday the 8th September Bishops Wood Village Hall, near Penkridge.

Enterprise Support for Food based Social Enterprises

If you are a food based social enterprise, we may be able to offer you up to 3 days of enterprise support free of charge through the Plunkett Foundation. We have helped various organisations to date including Oak Tree Rural Project with marketing for their tea room, The Walled Garden to run a focus group to get customer feedback, marketing, visual merchandising and promotion. Care farms, Produce Markets and CSAs are ideal candidates for this support.

If you are interested give Julie a call 07971 666474 or contact Enterprise Officer Richard Snow by emailing richard.snow@plunkett.co.uk or calling 01993 814388.

Contact us

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