

WARR PARTNERSHIP NEWS

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The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



The WARR Partnership is responsible for delivering the Leader programme across rural Rother and Wealden, including the market towns of Hailsham, Heathfield, Battle and Rye.

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Chairman's Update

Another year has passed by and again congratulations to the Team at Red Barn Mews, who have managed to successfully spend this year's allocation of funds. This is a great achievement and has included some interesting projects. As always the hoops that have to be jumped through (not of our making) cause some difficulties, but the result is rewarding in the end!

I urge all of you that may be thinking of applying, to do so sooner rather than later, to 'avoid disappointment'. With the disaster that is unfolding in Europe, this could be the last time that a comparatively simple grant scheme is available in East Sussex.

Happy New Year!
Hamish Monro

Closing Date for Applications

Following a Defra spending review in 2010, budget reductions to the RDPE Programme have meant that the WARR Partnership's programme will have to close on 31 July 2013; ahead of the Programme's official closing date of December that year. To achieve this, the closing date for applications to WARR has now been set as **31 December 2012**.

Project spend will need to have been completed by 31 May 2013, to allow for claims to be processed by 30 June. If your project is likely to take more than three months to deliver, completed applications will need to be with us even earlier than the date above, as it can take at least two months to process the documentation and issue a contract.

Anne Crone
Programme Manager

If you have any queries, please contact me on 01424 787401 or send me an email on anne.crone@warrpartnership.org.uk

*With best wishes for the New Year from the WARR Team:
Anne (Manager), Melanie (Project Officer), Linda (Finance)
and Joanna (Administrator)*

CONGRATULATIONS TO A WINNING PROJECT!

Bardown Farm, Wadhurst used funding to convert a redundant, stone walled calf shed into a two bedroom 5 star Self Catering Cottage, sleeping 4+2 people with M3 A/I special needs. Specialist adaptations such as a rise and fall worktop containing the sink and hob, make the cottage suitable for both able bodied and wheelchair users who are either assisted or independent. The level of demand for this new facility (of which there were previously only two in the country) became clear when two bookings were made before work had even commenced on the building conversion!

If proof were needed as to the quality of this cottage, it has now been awarded **Gold** in the "Access for All" category of **Tourism South East's Beautiful South Awards for Excellence 2011!** Many congratulations to Alison Gant for a job very well done!

New projects approved since our last Newsletter



Chris Masters Forestry

This forestry contracting business, which already offered tree surgery, felling, biomass chipping

and fencing services, required additional equipment to support its expansion into arboricultural management and consultancy. Forestry machinery purchased with the funding enables access to difficult and sensitive woodland locations, allowing timber extraction at optimum times and making the extraction of lower value timber more viable. Utilising waste timber for firewood processing increases the woodland's economic value, benefiting both contractor and forestry owner.

Blackdown Woodfuel

This farm managed its woodlands, but lacked storage/processing facilities to further develop its forestry activities. Funding has been used to build a timber, open-fronted three-bay barn, with an area of hard-standing to provide yard space for outdoor processing and roundwood storage. Timber can now be processed undercover in wet weather, and is correctly stored and seasoned for the growing woodfuel market. Three generations of the family live on two neighbouring farms, and share the new facilities, which have greatly improved the volume of timber processed.



Etchingham Coal Yard

An earlier project saw the successful conversion of the unused station master's house at Etchingham Station into a thriving Bistro. However, as the use of the all day station car park added £3.50 to every bill, the lack of short term parking was limiting its customer base to commuters and passing foot traffic. This has been solved by using additional funding to decontaminate and resurface an overgrown coal yard opposite the Bistro building. This had lain disused since the 1950's and was a local eyesore, but the land now provides 15 car parking spaces, together with glass recycling facilities for the local community.

Hurst Green Community Shop

Hurst Green Parish Council acquired an 80 year lease with peppercorn rent, on a small redundant church in the heart of the village. Funding was used to support the first phase of its conversion into a community hub, by enabling the building to be re-roofed and made structurally sound. The lease will shortly be taken over by an IPS, which will complete the building's transformation into a centre which combines a community shop & post point, youth centre, and café facility, with space for support services such as the community nurse. A successful community share scheme raised additional funds and residents' views have been sought at every stage, to ensure the end result will meet the community's needs.

Ashdown Manna Cookery School

This successful small cookery school had been operating from the Home Economics kitchen of a local school, but this limited expansion, as it could only function outside school hours. Funding has enabled it to set up a permanent, independent base on a farm close to the Ashdown Forest, where a fully equipped demonstration kitchen and dining area have been installed. It also supported an upgrade to the school's website, to provide online booking facilities.



Home Farm Woodland

This family-run farm, which included 50 acres of ancient woodland, needed help to restore it to a viable business. A Management Plan, drawn up with the support of the Forestry Commission, provided guidance on the sustainable management of the woodland, and grant funding was used to purchase forestry machinery. The farm is now able to process timber harvested from its own woodlands into logs and kindling, to meet the strong local demand they had evidenced in support of their bid. In addition to extending the life of its own ancient woodlands, the business expects to be able to offer a service to other local woodland owners within a year. It also expects to create a winter part time job making the deliveries.

Chitcombe Farm Woodland

This working farm, which again has its own woodland, had been producing logs manually, using a chainsaw and log splitter. This was both exhausting and limited the amount of wood the farm could process. As a result, it was finding it increasingly difficult to keep pace with demand; to the extent that it had had to turn customers away the previous winter. Funding has been used to purchase a log processor, which has speeded up the production of wood fuel. Not only has this ensured local demand can be met, but it has also increased the time available to carry out the coppicing work that will ensure the timber growth required to meet demand in the future.

Swallowtail Hill Eco Tourism

This former farm is managed as a unique area of conservation, and its owners needed a means of earning an income to continue their work. A successful small scale eco camping trial encouraged them to seek funding for the purchase of two individually designed and constructed wheeled shepherd's huts; one modelled on a woodman's hut and the other resembling a crooked country cottage. Each site also has a specially designed log fired eco shower cubicle and compost loo and all facilities are removable for winter storage, to keep the facility 'light touch' on the environment.



Land of Learning

With the help of its children, this small primary school had created an outdoor 'Land of Learning' within its grounds. This included a vegetable and a wild garden, and incorporated camps and shelters, but these were not enough to protect the children during cold or wet weather. Funding will be used to purchase an 18 ft yurt with a wood burning stove which, furnished with rugs, cushions and sofas, will provide a warm, dry base in all weathers from which the children can engage in subjects such as literacy, music, art, stories, poetry, and listening skills. It will also be available to the pre school children, as well as Brownies, Guides, Cubs and other youth groups in the village.

Great Dixter Great Barn

Additional buildings at this popular visitor attraction could only be made accessible to the public with repair and restoration. The Grade II listed Great Barn, believed to be the largest surviving medieval barn in this part of East Sussex, has a wealth of early construction details, including threshing floors, feeding troughs and a grain store. There are also three oast houses with original kilns, drying floors and cowl. Funding will enable these buildings to be opened to the public, increasing visitor interest by providing additional all weather facilities, where displays of farming history and demonstrations of rural skills can be housed.

Old Social Club

The financial collapse of the Social Club, which had formerly leased this part of the Wadhurst Village Hall, had left the building in a poor state of repair, needing substantial refurbishment before it could again generate an income for the Trust. Part of the building had been converted into a new library for the village, and Phase 2 has used funding to meet two further needs. Self contained accommodation has been leased to the Wadhurst History Society, providing them with a large working area for research, plus a second room which will in time become a public display area. A further room provides much needed changing facilities for the stage productions held in the main hall, along with additional storage facilities for all users.