

LEADER BULLETIN AUTUMN 2010

A quarterly update for partners of the LEADER Programme in the Chilterns, Aylesbury Vale & Rural Milton Keynes



Over 60% of LEADER budget allocated

LEADER applications have been coming in thick and fast in 2010 and the team in Aylesbury Vale & rural Milton Keynes, and the Chilterns have allocated over 60% of the grants available this year.

The funding is available for projects from various sectors to support and strengthen the local rural economy and communities. A wide range of projects will be considered in the areas of Aylesbury Vale, rural Milton Keynes and the Chilterns. Projects must demonstrate that they are environmentally and economically sustainable in order to be awarded a grant.

	Total budget	Allocated	Remaining
AVMK	£436,000	£239,000	45%
Chilterns	£406,000	£258,000	36%
	£842,000	£497,000	41%

Village & Community

Village and community funds were spent out pretty quickly this year as predicted so this quarter has emptied the pot! Following the success of community sports facilities in both LAGS, other such buildings have been allocated funds as well as community transport schemes.

Diversification

Happy Herefords is a fantastic example of the sort of project that LEADER is keen to support to encourage farm diversification. A grant of £36,000 was made to assist this business which can be seen at many local events and shows selling high quality, locally produced beef and pork. The business was ventured into by a local farmer who wanted to improve the profitability of her farming enterprise whilst continuing in the industry about which she is so passionate.



Happy Herefords. The farmer looks after the animal from calf to plate.

"I care for my cattle really well. Rain or shine ... even snow, I make sure that they are well looked after. The best way to honour such wonderful beasts is by making the best of the meat. Every joint, burger or sausage must be of the best quality. My customers expect it, I expect it and the cows would expect it!" Monica Brown, Farmer



Training



Rural skills

There have been many new Expressions of Interest received throughout this quarter for projects wishing to make training available. Some of these have been training for skills such as butchery and there has also been an encouraging surge in applications for training in business skills. It is obviously envisaged that the skills generated through training schemes will be passed on to the communities and will benefit as many people as possible.

Forestry

Within the Chilterns in particular, there have been applications for forestry related micro-businesses, enabling foresters to purchase new, improved machinery and provide training to use it. This has enabled the businesses to work more efficiently, add new services and create extra employment. LEADER have supported over 9 forestry applications since its start. The impact on the improved management of Chiltern Woodlands is being seen. David Layton on Layton Timber said. "What took me a day to do I can now do in an hour and a half. I can just about keep up with demand for wood-fuel."

www.leader-programme.org.uk

Heritage



Lacey Green 'Smock Mill'

Preserving the heritage of the Chilterns and AVMK is obviously of utmost importance, particularly in light of the AONB designation. To this end, LEADER is keen to promote the protection of heritage sites. Although applications for this measure are low, it is still very much supported where eligible. There is of course also a link with Tourism in the area created through the preservation of heritage sites.





Local Food



Milk production at Lacey's Farm

There is a keen interest to promote local foods amongst the populations of the two LAGs which LEADER are really keen to support, both financially and by assisting with contacts and networking.

New interest and projects being developed include:

On farm food processing

- Equipment to help add value to livestock.

Forestry

- A contractor and wood fuel business looking to expand storage facilities to cope with expanding market.

Farm Diversification

- Farms looking to offer caravan connection and camp site.
- Farmer looking to educate children about livestock and "farm to plate".

Tourism



The opening of Chilterns Cycleway Nick Phillips, Mike Furness and Kevin Mayne (CTC Chief Exec.) open the Chiltern Cycle Route. The start of the show seen below. Mark Webber, champion racing driver and local cyclist. (Mark on the right!)



Applications for tourism are also lower than desired for the two areas, although Chilterns are seeing an increase in interest in the sector of late. AVMK have received several EOIs, all of which are being pursued with intent! A particularly successful application has been the Chilterns Cycle Route which is now in full operation covering 170 mile trip around the perimeter of the Chilterns largely due to the £48,000 grant from LEADER. As a knock on effect of the Chiltern Cycle Route, other businesses will benefit; pubs, restaurants and accommodation providers to name but a few.



Recent Projects

Farm Diversification – Camping and Caravan site



“The demand for camping has taken us by surprise! We were almost full by the second month of opening!” Angie Leach, Farmer, Ivinghoe.

New facilities have made a significant difference to the campers and caravanners. “They come here for the views and walks and we are less than an hour from London.” LEADER has funded new facilities from electric ‘hook-ups’ to a solar heated water system.

Pig Farmer

LEADER brings home the bacon for local pig farmer. Bruce Garside of “Berkshire Pigs” (so called because of the rare breed rather than its location!) has been able to upgrade the business following a LEADER grant. Bruce has also been able to acquire spit roasting machines to rent in order to add value to pig business. The pigs spend much of their lives free range in woodlands and have acquired a taste for the invasive Himalayan Balsam plant. Much to the delight of woodland owners!



Farm Diversification – Forestry Contracting and Equipment Hire Business

New forwarder and marketing for a farmer to acquire equipment to lease to local contractors and manage his own woodland. A Chilterns farmer, George Glenn, has purchased forestry equipment with a LEADER grant to use both on his own farm and to rent to a local forestry contractor. “I get an income from my own wood sales and rent the machinery when I am not using it.” George is planning to rent the equipment to local contractor Derek Fletcher.

LEADER BULLETIN AUTUMN 2010

A quarterly update for partners of the LEADER Programme in the Chilterns, Aylesbury Vale & Rural Milton Keynes



Sports Pavilion

Gallowstree Common Cricket Club is in the process of building a new pavilion thanks to a recent LEADER Grant. The pavilion will not only offer a great addition to the sports facilities in the village but will also offer a base for community meetings and events.

Cider Producer

Hertfordshire is not yet known for it's cider production. But it will be!



Having been involved in "on farm" cider production for three generations on a semi-professional basis Millwhites Cider is stepping up production in Hertfordshire. LEADER funding is enabling the company to invest in apple presses, fermentation vessels and bottling plant – and should see a trebling of employment as well as a much improved market for locally grown apples.

The company produces a quality product that won a prestigious CAMRA award in 2009.

What's on the horizon?

With so many great rural projects in the pipeline, the LEADER team is now highly focussed on spending the budget for 2010/11 projects. After a short break for Christmas we will be back in the New Year gearing up to promote the 2011/12 budget.

Meet our newest LEADER team member



Lucy Sawbridge has recently joined the LEADER team as project officer for AVMK. Lucy has a degree in Agricultural Business Management and an MSc in Land Management from Reading University where she was involved with the Reading Agrics during term time and Young Farmers at home. She has worked in the planning office of a local authority and had previously been involved with the LEADER programme in Northampton.

"Coming from a farming family the role of supporting rural businesses was such a natural fit for Lucy. We are delighted to have her on the team." Nick Phillips, Programme Manager.

"I have really enjoyed the first few months working with the LEADER team. We have seen some fantastic projects coming forward and I am constantly impressed by the great entrepreneurial drive from so many small businesses. Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes is my main focus and I am getting to know the area and the farmers now. Hopefully having £2m to spend helps!" Lucy.