



GLOUCESTERSHIRE

# Rural Renaissance REVIEW

CREATIVE IDEAS TO BOOST OUR RURAL ECONOMY

May 2006

## WANTED!

### More ways to promote inclusion and improve access to services

IN just two and a half years, £22 million has either been spent on or committed to rural projects in Gloucestershire – and that doesn't count the £28 million for the Cotswold Canal Project. All that money is working to support Gloucestershire's rural economy.

A major part of that investment is the £7 million Rural Renaissance initiative. The other funding streams include:

- the Market & Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTi), covering seven of the county's market towns selected by the South West RDA – Cam and Dursley, Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney, Newent, Stroud and Tewkesbury
- the England Rural Development Programme 2000-2006 – which will shortly

be replaced by the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013

- a two-year Defra Rural Social & Community Programme
- the new Modernising Rural Delivery programme from the South West RDA which aims to improve access to services and increase workspace

Robin Grist, chair of the county's Rural Economy Advisory Panel, comments: "The challenge with all these funding streams is to ensure they complement one another and to react when gaps are identified.

**"There are uncommitted funds – we need more projects which promote economic inclusion, helping people with low skills improve those skills so they can get better jobs. We**

■ In August 2004 the South West Regional Development Agency agreed to contribute £3m towards the £7m Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance initiative over 3½ years, the balance coming from the public (£3m) and private sectors (£1m).

■ So far £1.6 million has been invested in 26 major projects and a further £348,000 in 28 small (£5-15K) projects – most in the voluntary and community sectors.

■ The projects which have had investments are in all four rural districts of the County – the Cotswolds, Forest of Dean, Stroud and Tewkesbury – and cover a wide range of creative, traditional and innovative ideas.

also want to make more use of the skills and experience of older people living in our rural areas.

"Projects that do this will be particularly welcome as will ideas for improving access to services, especially those that bring services to rural communities."

## Go for it! Challenge to town and parish councils...

OVER the past two years, the county's Rural Renaissance initiative has committed almost £2 million to a wide range of projects. But, so far, not one application has come from a Town or Parish Council.

Stephen Wright, Director of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, is now challenging those councils to 'go for it!'

"Take the challenge and get improved access to resources for YOUR community!" he said. "All it takes is a phone call for an application form, and some words of encouragement and assistance in filling it out. Become a Renaissance Town or Parish!"

"It struck me forcibly in reading through the list of successful applicants – and, incidentally, most applications are successful eventually – that none are from Parish and Town Councils. This dismays me, particularly when I consider the wonderful selection of great ambitions and projects coming out of Parish and Town Plans.

"Now, with additional funding becoming available through the Modernising Rural Delivery (MRD) Fund using the same Rural Renaissance application process, the time is right for applications which will improve access to vital services

● continued on page 2

## Light blooms in ancient woodland

NEW artworks created from light and sound attracted more than 2,000 people from all over the country, as well as local residents, to the heart of the Forest of Dean over three evenings in April. Visitors to the *reveal* art exhibition were delighted by the unusual experience on offer. Smoke machines, kinetic sculptures, film projections and haunting audio works evoked a new interpretation of the Forest. Artists Tabatha Andrews, Laura Daly, Katayoun Dowlatshahi and Nathaniel Rackowe showed new works created especially for the event. The exhibition was supported by Rural Renaissance investment.

● W: [www.forestofdean-sculpture.org.uk](http://www.forestofdean-sculpture.org.uk)



LEFT: Artist Katayoun Dowlatshahi, photo by Jamie Woodley

BELOW: Artist Tabatha Andrews, photo by Jamie Woodley



# Go for it!

● continued from page 1

in our rural communities.

“This new money is really exciting,” said Stephen. “As the money originates from DEFRA rather than the Department of Trade and Industry, it has a greater social and community bias, supporting ways of improving access to services in rural areas, whereas Rural Renaissance investment is more for economic activity.

“Gloucestershire Rural Community Council has recently been awarded money directly by the South West RDA to provide even more assistance to community organisations and Parish and Town councils wanting to access funding, so we can offer practical help to make a real difference.

“Here is the chance to bid for that extension to a Village Hall or Community building to extend the services it can provide – maybe an ICT suite wired for Broadband to enable training, or a visiting Doctor’s surgery. Perhaps to house a community shop where there is no village store, or to improve the kitchens to allow catering for an Older Peoples’ Luncheon Club.”

### Investment

The Small Project Investment Fund (SPIF) is a great way to test out an idea, with a fairly easy process and reasonably quick turn-around on decision making.

Added Stephen: “The main spend fund may be more of a challenge, with a very detailed application form and an exacting appraisal process, but even so, don’t be put off. There are people at GRCC and the District Councils who will help, and of course the small team in Shire Hall who manage the programme are only too eager to assist.”

● W: [www.grcc.org.uk](http://www.grcc.org.uk)

■ To find your local contacts who can advise on applying for MRD and Rural Renaissance investment, turn to the back page, or visit [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ruralrenaissance](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ruralrenaissance)

# Projects share £2m investment

TO date, Rural Renaissance in Gloucestershire has invested around £2 million in 27 major projects with around 28 smaller voluntary and community organisations winning match-funding through the initiative’s Small Project Investment Fund.

Rural Renaissance was launched in June 2004 with funding made up of £3 million from the South West Regional Development Agency – the largest amount the South West RDA has invested in any county across the region to date – together with £3 million from the public sector and a further £1 million from the private sector.

Alan Titcombe, South West RDA Community Regeneration Manager for Gloucestershire said:



Alan Titcombe: ‘We are proud to hold up the project as an example of best practice’

“As the Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance scheme goes from strength to strength, the South West RDA is proud to hold the project up as an example of best practice to be adopted by other schemes. As one of the main funding partners, the RDA looks to Rural Renaissance as our main

delivery arm for services to the rural community in Gloucestershire, and we have every confidence in the team’s ability to deliver a first class scheme.”

Rural Renaissance is designed to help rural communities influence and respond to the changing pressures on the rural economy by supporting new initiatives which meet Gloucestershire’s Rural Economic Strategy. Future projects include ways to develop more rural workspace, increase access to rural services, support tourism and revitalise the county’s small and market towns.

● W: [www.swrda.org.uk](http://www.swrda.org.uk)

### FACTFILE

- Rural areas in Gloucestershire are home to 72 per cent of all businesses
- 60 per cent of all jobs are outside the conurbations of Cheltenham and Gloucester.

# Reaching the parts... ...not reached before

RURAL Renaissance investment is helping Business Link reach parts of the county it hasn’t been able to reach before.

The organisation, which offers advice and brokers expert support for Gloucestershire businesses employing less than 250 people, has successfully bid for almost £500,000 investment from the initiative for a range of projects.

“The impact those projects have had on rural start-up businesses, market town retailers and struggling traders has been very positive,” says Philip Timson, Business Link Operations Director in Gloucestershire.



The investment has been an enormous boost to what we can offer

“While we receive Government funding to provide information, diagnose issues and put businesses in touch with specialist help, the cost of that specialist help is not covered.

“We have been able to use Rural Renaissance money to pay for this necessary complementary service to target new and existing businesses in the county’s most rural areas. The investment has been an enormous boost to what we can offer.”

For many businesses in the countryside, accessing the range of Business Link support services which urban organisations take for granted is a challenge. By taking that service into the North Cotswolds or the Forest of Dean, rurally-based entrepreneurs can get the help they need to launch their ideas, or consolidate and grow existing business.

“A key aim is to help businesses become more successful, generate more income in their communities, make them more secure and perhaps employ more people. It is fundamental to the healthy economic future of our rural areas that people can buy goods and services locally, ploughing back money into their villages and market towns.”

● The impact of some of the projects which have received Rural Renaissance investment is illustrated by case studies on the following pages

● W: [www.blgl.co.uk](http://www.blgl.co.uk)

### KEY OUTCOMES:

- Over 60 micro businesses have received subsidised training in support of their growth plans
  - 12 potential social entrepreneurs attended a bespoke start-up training course in the Forest of Dean
  - A new business breakfast club has been launched in the North Cotswolds that meets quarterly and attracts around 40 members to each meeting
  - Four women-only business start-up courses in the North Cotswolds attracted 31 delegates that have already led to 13 new business starts, with more to come
  - 33 small manufacturing businesses have received funding support to improve their productivity
- In addition, on behalf of Stroud, Cotswold and Tewkesbury District and Borough councils, Business Link has supported about 30 retail businesses with advice and guidance.



# Mobile crèche service wins a £100k boost

PATA, Gloucestershire's leading childcare charity, has appointed playleader Sarah Mann to manage its latest project – to launch a mobile crèche service in the North Cotswolds.

The new service received almost £100,000 investment from Rural Renaissance and will mean professional childcare can be offered alongside learning and training courses organised by colleges and

other providers in rural communities.

Sarah, a former playleader at Blockley Playschool and a qualified childcare professional said: "We have already provided crèches for childcare courses and are planning many more. We will work alongside existing PATA playgroups and toddler groups, enhancing the services they offer and we're also approaching local communities and event organis-

▲  
**PICTURED ABOVE:**  
**Sarah Mann (left)**  
**and Sue Barker,**  
**acting chief**  
**executive of PATA**

ers about using our services as an added attraction to visitors."

Lack of childcare is a major barrier for people wanting to return to learning and training, particularly those living in the most rural communities. The new service will also train people in childcare skills and enable existing part-time childminders to increase their working hours and make their businesses more viable.

The funding covers a two-year set up and launch period. Sarah is already identifying potential settings, initially in the Cotswolds, and recruiting staff. The crèche service will eventually expand to cover other parts of the county, including Stroud and the Forest of Dean.

PATA, the winner of the 2005 Gloucestershire Business Awards Social Enterprise of the Year, is the largest voluntary sector provider of support to early years childcare and education in the county. It supports more than 20,000 children and their families in over 500 settings through eight branches around the county. They include baby and toddler groups, pre-schools and playgroups, out-of-school clubs, holiday playschemes, day nurseries, crèches, early years centres and Children's Centres.

● **For more information, see**  
**W: [www.pataglos.org.uk](http://www.pataglos.org.uk)**

## A dream comes true

PLANS for a new community hall for Innsworth which have been a dream for 25 years are finally to become reality.

The last £90,000 needed to pay for fitting out the hall has been met thanks to investment through the new Modernising Rural Delivery fund managed by Gloucestershire's Rural Renaissance initiative.

Funding for the main build for the hall, next to Innsworth school, was secured in 2003/4 with grants from Tewkesbury Borough Council, Innsworth Parish Council, the Community Fund (Lottery), Gloucestershire Environmental Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation.

In August last year, Innsworth Community Association asked Tewkesbury Borough Council to help with funding for fitting out. "There

was a gap of approximately £90,000," said Charlotte Dooley, the council's External Funding Assistant. "We helped the group apply for funding under the new Modernising Rural Delivery Fund (MRD). They were delighted, as Innsworth has waited 25 years for the community building and the area is classed as one of the top 25 per cent deprived wards in the county due to its lack of basic community facilities."

The South West RDA receives £6 million a year from DEFRA (the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) for Modernising Rural Delivery to help people in rural areas access more services. In Gloucestershire, the MRD Fund is managed through the Rural Renaissance initiative.

AROUND THE COUNTY

STROUD

*Stella Yates, Stroud District Council  
Regeneration Manager, reports:*

The Rural Renaissance initiative is really helping us develop relationships with local organisations – particularly in the voluntary and community sector.

A lot of these organisations have incredible project ideas, but need a statutory body like the District Council to put its neck on the line to help them get the ideas off the ground. We help them develop their applications for Rural Renaissance investment as well as help fund the idea. A successful RR application has a domino effect, attracting other funding.

The application process can seem very daunting, especially for smaller groups – they need a lot of hand-holding and support. But the results are very worthwhile – innovative projects are being launched in our local communities and are already having a positive impact on the local economy.

Local organisations can see that we, as an authority, can offer really practical support as well as a route to funding, to really make a difference. Everyone’s a winner!

Projects which have received Rural Renaissance investment, brokered through Stroud District Council’s regeneration team, include:

- Agricultural Forum support for farmers
- Cotswold Playhouse redevelopment
- Creating Wealth syndicate
- Gloucestershire Printmaking Co-operative launch
- Retailer and business support programme
- Stroudwater Textiles Festival Trust

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T: 01453 754306



*Newent  
Town Crier  
William  
Chapman  
launches In  
Bloom*



COTSWOLD

*Ginette James, Cotswold District Council  
Community Planning Officer, reports:*

We’re currently in the early stages of discussing project applications with a range of potential applicants. We are aware that many people in the District do not yet know that this funding is available and the potential benefits it could have for their town, village, community or business.

Cotswold District Council’s aim is to signpost more organisations towards Rural Renaissance funding. To encourage this, we are organising training in the Autumn on Funding for Market Towns, with the emphasis on Rural Renaissance. We’re also intending to include a few presentations from other successful projects across the County.

Our ultimate aim is to increase the number of project applications from the Cotswold area.

● E: [ginette.james@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:ginette.james@cotswold.gov.uk)  
T: 01285 623565

FOREST OF DEAN

Projects which have received Rural Renaissance investment in the Forest of Dean range from the major Retail Support Programme, detailed below, to a stunning new illuminated art installation watched by 2,000 people at night.

*Here, Forest of Dean District Council’s Market Towns Regeneration Officer Gareth Whitaker reports on the first year of the First Stop Local Shop project which aims to slow down the estimated £100 million a year being spent outside of the Forest by its own residents:*

The ‘First Stop Local Shop’ project to revitalise the retail sector in the Forest of Dean’s four market towns has completed its first year with a host of successes under its belt.

The campaign, which covers Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney and Newent, focuses on raising the profile and the competitiveness of the Forest’s shops. Put simply, highlighting what’s special about the shops in the district, and shouting

# Enterprising training

## Training course gives boost to budding social schemes

A TRAINING course for anyone interested in developing community or social enterprises in the Forest of Dean attracted representatives from 12 organisations.

One was Peter Wood from ForestMobility, a new social enterprise in the Forest of Dean which will help people with disabilities explore the natural wonders of the local environment. He said afterwards: “I attended the training as, although I have set up and run a number of businesses in the past, social enterprise was new to me. It was a very worthwhile five-day course.”

ForestMobility is the brainchild of Clifford Hudson who has piloted the service using a prototype rugged ‘off-road’ version of the Shop Mobility electric scooter, supported by Peter Wood. They both live in the Forest and have run their own businesses in the past.

“The ForestMobility service is suitable for people with walking difficulties and those in wheelchairs,” said Peter.

Community or social enterprises use business methods and an entrepreneurial outlook to achieve social and environmental aims. The enterprise training, run by Business Link with



about it to as many shoppers as possible.

Successful schemes to date include

- the first ever Forest Retail Awards
- the production of a quarterly newsletter, the Forest Retail News
- quarterly meetings of the Retail Support Group, made up of local retailers and partner organisations
- free Christmas gift wrapping in each town throughout December
- development of [www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk](http://www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk) website
- weekly features on local shops in local media
- signing up over 70 retailers to take part in a local shoppers loyalty scheme called the Forest Rewards Card
- production and distribution of a 24 page local shopping magazine

The campaign is also helping to improve the appearance of town centres, both public and privately owned premises, by:

- the development of a 'Four Towns In Bloom' group to spread best practice and promote partnership working
- promotion of a 'Shop Front Grant Scheme' to pay fifty percent of costs towards shop front improvement works
- the development of long term public realm improvement programmes

With the campaign moving into year two, First Stop Local Shop has gained excellent momentum and has the support of the four towns' retailers. The Retail Support project received a £250,000 investment from Rural Renaissance.

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Rural Renaissance investment, focused on how a healthy and viable business can help the community.

Melanie Jones, Enterprise Manager at Business Link Gloucestershire said: "The course was created to meet the ever-growing training needs of the county's social enterprise sector. Another will run in the North Cotswolds in June; we hope it is as successful as the Forest of Dean course."

- For more information about ForestMobility see:  
W: [www.forestmobility.org.uk](http://www.forestmobility.org.uk)

## TEWKESBURY

*Julie Wood, Tewkesbury Borough Tourism & Economic Development Manager reports:*

RURAL Renaissance investment has enabled us to do so many things which we could not otherwise have contemplated. We have just celebrated the town's second Food Festival, which brought thousands of people from all over the country together with more than 70 local food producers.

Organisation of such a huge event wouldn't have been possible without support from our partner organisations, Tewkesbury Abbey and Grenchurch Markets Operators. The Federation of Small Businesses, Trading Standards, Friends of the Earth and the Town Council all supported the event, and a record number of local schools were involved. It was fantastic.

At the same time we are putting the finishing touches to our first ever *Awaken Your Senses* music and arts festival involving everyone from local bands to professional dancers.

We have also launched the *Taste of the Cotswolds* pilot project to raise the profile of local food and drink while developing the area to appeal to more visitors, encouraging restaurants, pubs and cafés to buy locally and to take pride in what we can do so well. This builds on our *retailer support programme* as well as links with local farmers through the *agricultural forum*, both of which have had Rural Renaissance funding.

Rural Renaissance investment gives us the chance to make things happen for our local communities, rather than just dream about it!

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[www.awakenyoursenses.org](http://www.awakenyoursenses.org)

# Chambers look to the future

FIVE of Gloucestershire's Chambers of Commerce and Industry are benefiting from a package of support and training to help them update their services and play a stronger role in regenerating their local communities.

Chambers at Bishop's Cleeve, Dursley, Lechlade, Nailsworth and Tetbury are being given the chance to take part in the pilot programme thanks to £50,000 Rural Renaissance investment.

Shirley Hill from the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce and Industry said: "The Chambers were selected to benefit from this pilot programme. All are being offered funding to organise a key meeting in their communities, inviting all local retailers and businesses, not just existing members, to look strategically at local barriers to economic development.

"The support package includes free information from experts in rural retail and business issues. They will help Chambers develop successful 'shop local' campaigns and to become more involved in the wider regeneration of their communities by developing a stronger, more representative, voice.

"The pilot Chambers will also be offered free training, support and software to modernise and improve their communications – for example, they are being offered their own website linked to the SWRDA-funded South West Chambers regional website, which would normally cost £300. Two members of each Chamber will also have training in the latest ICT skills to ensure Chambers offer the best up-to-date services to members."

Claire Edwards, Rural Renaissance manager, said: "We are keen to help Chambers modernise their approach and offer a wider range of support for local businesses and traders. We hope as a result they will develop a stronger, more collective voice and play a more active role in the economic regeneration of their communities."

- For more information on Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce and Industry see:  
W: [www.gloscci.org](http://www.gloscci.org)

## Welcome to James

**THE small Rural Renaissance support team, part of Gloucestershire First's Economic Development Unit at Gloucestershire County Council, has a new rural programme officer. James Lloyd will support the delivery of RRI with a particular focus on productivity and workspace. He joins Kate Forrest, who will continue to focus on accessibility and rural services meaning that the MRD agenda is fully covered. Rural Programme manager Claire Edwards is currently on maternity leave.**



**Gloucestershire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# The imprint of success

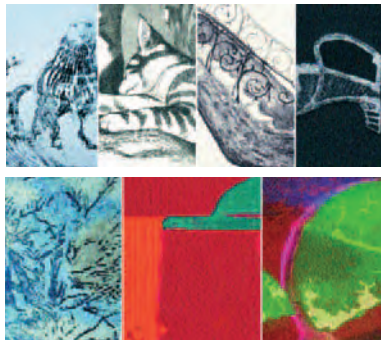
GLOUCESTERSHIRE now has a centre for printmaking excellence with the launch of a new co-operative enterprise for artists, complete with workshop studios and gallery.

The Gloucestershire Printmaking Co-operative – the dream of local graduate artist and printmaker Sue Drennen – received £55,000 investment from the county’s Rural Renaissance scheme.

“The money meant we could finally turn a dream into reality,” said Sue. “We now have more than 50 artists in the co-operative from throughout the county. We are kitting out our new studios at Griffin Mill in Stroud to give them a chance to develop their professional skills and we are already running our first touring exhibition.”

Claire Edwards, Rural Renaissance scheme manager, said: “Sue and her team carried out a detailed feasibility study which showed there was a desperate need among printmakers in the county for quality studio space and the chance to share very expensive equipment.

“They wanted opportunities to improve their skills and sell their work to



a wider audience. We were also impressed with their plans to share skills by holding classes and working with schools.”

Sue said: “One of our main aims is to educate – people really don’t know what an original print is. A lot of people think it’s a copy but it’s just as much an original piece of artwork as a drawing or a painting. It’s just a different medium.

“Most printmakers can’t afford to set up their own studio. Equipment is very expensive, so the ideal solution was to share, and the co-operative was born. We have had great support from Stroud District Council and we’ve been delighted by the amount of



**Sue Drennen with Stroud Mayor Kevin Cranston**

equipment donated to us by artists.

“We were successful in our bid for Rural Renaissance investment because we had a good feasibility plan, funded by the Alliance of Communities and Enterprise (ACE) initiative, through the ESF Equal programme, and our aim is to become self-financing. Given Stroud’s reputation for artists, our studios will also be a tourist attraction – people can have a look at the printmaking in the Five Valleys.”

**“ ”**  
**Equipment is very expensive, so the ideal solution was to share, and the co-operative was born**

● **More information from Sue Drennen**  
**E: suedrennen@aol.com**  
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## Stage is set for a boost to theatre

### Funding will open Playhouse to wider community



**The Cotswold Playhouse in Stroud is set to get a complete makeover**



THE next step in a local theatre’s 95-year history is about to take place thanks to a £55,000 boost from Gloucestershire Rural Renaissance.

Sarah Goodwin, treasurer of the Cotswold Players in Stroud said: “This investment brings us to within £50,000 of our £250,000 target for a complete facelift of our theatre, and we know it will attract other funding. We had a lot of help from Stella Yates at Stroud District Council in pulling the application together and filling in the complicated forms – and it was definitely worth it!”

The Cotswold Players were formed in 1911, becoming the area’s best-known non-professional theatre group. A redun-

dant chapel overlooking Stroud was bought in 1951 and converted into the Cotswold Playhouse.

“There is much more we want to do, especially by offering local people more chances to learn performance skills,” said Sarah. “Our new facilities will be available for hire to community groups, businesses and the public sector for meetings, training and conferencing. We plan a new dance studio and rehearsal room, and we’ll be able to create more space for construction backstage.”

Work is due to start this summer with a complete facelift for the theatre’s street façade.

# Market event serves up sales tips

## Training session shares farmers' 'tips of the trade'

FARMERS' market stallholders and producers from across Gloucestershire learned some 'tricks of the trade' to boost sales at a free training event.

Organised by the Skills Management And Rural Training (SMART) Programme with Rural Renaissance funding, the day of tips and presentations was organised by the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and run by the county's farmers' markets expert, Clare Gerbrands.

The training highlighted practices adopted in American farmers' markets and let delegates share 'hot tips' with one another. They learned more about why people buy and how important it is to ensure presentation does justice to the product's quality.

Clare said: "The day was a great networking



*L to R: Julia Dalziel of Cocoa and Moore, Stroud, Louise Keedwell, Snowdrop Cottage Preserves, Charfield, Emma Stewart, delegate, Clare Gerbrands, farmers market organiser, and Janet Pook, Dorset farmers markets organiser*

opportunity and an ideal chance for farmers to look at ideas for improving the service they offer to their customers.

"We hope farmers will get more chances to visit markets and farm shops through the year with the help of small grants towards transport. Farmers are keen to improve their service at a

time when local food sales are increasing and more people shop locally."

The event was part of a range of training for micro businesses and individuals in rural areas developed by Skills Management and Rural Training with over £66,000 investment from the Rural Renaissance programme.

## Business course gets thumbs up

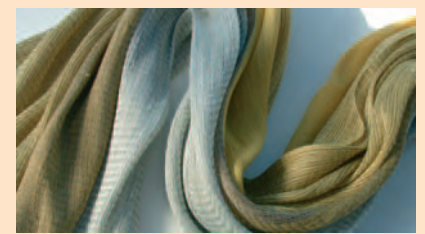
BUSINESSWOMAN Jane Broomfield attended a management development course in the North Cotswolds hoping to brush up on some of the basics of running a business – but came away with a lot more.

"An overview of accounts and an understanding of HR were particularly important to me as we are growing quickly and about to take on our first employee. But what I got out of the course was that – and much more," said Jane, Business Development Director for Chipping Campden-based Intellegentia Ltd.

Jane was one of a group of local business people in the North Cotswolds who attended the course, organised and run by Business Link with Rural Renaissance funding.

"I expected to be given information and return to the office armed with facts and figures, but what I came away with was real knowledge and a practical list of things that I have put into practice to help the business grow," she said. "The course leader encouraged the exchange of ideas; this was invaluable when you are a one or two person company. The course provided factual information, made me think deeply about the direction of the business, gave me a practical list of things I should be working on – and was great fun too!"

Intellegentia's business generates sales leads for all types of businesses primarily through Digital Marketing.



*Scarf by Tim Parry-Williams, hand weaver*

## Weaving heritage celebrated

The weaving heritage of the Stroud Valleys is being celebrated with the launch of a range of textile skills events. The Stroudwater Textile Trust has launched its first courses – including hand-weaving and dyeing – as well as workshops and talks on contemporary textile skills, thanks to investment from Rural Renaissance.

Organiser Lizzi Walton reports great interest. "The workshops are already selling out, and attracting people from all over Gloucestershire and as far afield as Lancashire!" she said. "People travelling to Stroud stay locally, and we have been able to employ local textile artists to run the courses and workshops."

With the Stroudwater Textile Festival at the centre of the Trust's programme, the range of events promises to attract even more visitors to the area to enjoy the history and the contemporary textile culture which is so vital to the economy of the Stroud Valleys.

● For more information see:  
W: [www.stroudwatertextilefestival.org.uk](http://www.stroudwatertextilefestival.org.uk)

### FIND OUT MORE ONLINE

To find out more about the Rural Renaissance initiative in Gloucestershire, log on to [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ruralrenaissance](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ruralrenaissance). You can read more case studies of projects which have received investment, as well as print off guidance on how to apply for funding.

## Find out what's on...

LOCAL people and visitors to Cam and Dursley will now have a much better idea of what's on in their communities thanks to a new leaflet produced by the towns' regeneration partnership, Vale Vision.

Seven hundred copies of the first edition of the booklet, also available online at [www.valevision.org.uk](http://www.valevision.org.uk), have already been distributed, reports Geoff Wheeler from Vale Vision.

"The more people see it, the more local businesses and organisations are keen to be in it. This quarterly publication details local events, things to do, places to eat and drink, sport and leisure facilities, together with specialist shops and places of interest to visit."

In addition to supporting the guide with more than £7,600, Rural Renaissance is also investing in The Learning Community in Cam and Dursley. This innovative project is working with local people, employers and learning providers to encourage more learning and training opportunities in the area.

# Getting the money!

## LARGE PROJECT FUND

APPLICATIONS are invited from individual organisations, or groups working in partnership.

The key criteria, which have to meet the county's Rural Economic Strategy, are laid out on the Rural Renaissance webpages at

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ruralrenaissance](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/ruralrenaissance).

If investment of more than £100,000 is needed, the REAP panel can recommend additional funding to come from the South West RDA.

## SMALL PROJECT INVESTMENT FUND

Voluntary and community organisations including town and parish councils (see *Stephen Wright's challenge on p1*) are being encouraged to bid for match funding for projects which will have a direct economic impact on their local communities.

Organisations can bid for up to £15,000 investment through the Small Project Investment Fund (SPIF) – and there is help available to test out the idea, as well as support in the application process. Here are four simple steps to applying for SPIF:

- 1** Talk to your local contact (see list below) to discuss your proposal. A Small Project Investment Fund (SPIF) application form will then be forwarded to you if your proposal meets the criteria
- 2** Complete the application form and forward to your local contact
- 3** Completed forms will be initially appraised by the Scheme Manager and sent to the Rural Economy Management Group (REMG) – which meets approximately every six weeks – for discussion and a decision
- 4** The REMG seeks to respond to SPIF applications within eight weeks, and will keep applicants informed throughout the process

## WHO DECIDES?

The Gloucestershire Rural Economy Advisory Panel (REAP) is responsible for overseeing the delivery of Rural Renaissance in Gloucestershire and approving project funding. The panel also reviews applications submitted for MRD (Modernising Rural Delivery) funding for projects which will improve access to services in rural areas.

The panel includes experts from a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations and has recently been extended to include two additional representatives from the voluntary sector – **Jane Winstanley** from the Cotswold Centre for Voluntary Services and **Tim Fretter** from Forest Voluntary Action Forum. The REAP panel is chaired by **Robin Grist** from Gloucestershire First.

Contact the Rural Renaissance team:  
 E: [thriving.economy@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:thriving.economy@gloucestershire.gov.uk)  
 T: 01452 425573 or 01452 427768

## Local contacts

### Cotswold District Council

**Ginette James**  
 T: 01285 623565  
 E: [ginette.james@cotswold.gov.uk](mailto:ginette.james@cotswold.gov.uk)

### Stroud District Council

**Stella Yates**  
 T: 01453 754306  
 E: [stella.yates@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:stella.yates@stroud.gov.uk)

### Forest of Dean District Council

**Lena Maller**  
 T: 01594 812333  
 E: [lena.maller@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:lena.maller@fdean.gov.uk)

### Tewkesbury Borough Council

**Julie Wood**  
 T: 01684 272095  
 E: [julie.wood@tewkesbury.gov.uk](mailto:julie.wood@tewkesbury.gov.uk)

### Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

**Lesley Archer**  
 T: 01452 528491  
 E: [lesleya@grcc.org.uk](mailto:lesleya@grcc.org.uk)

### Business Link (Gloucestershire) Ltd.

**Roger Smith**  
 T: 01242 863863  
 E: [roger.smith@glos.businesslink.co.uk](mailto:roger.smith@glos.businesslink.co.uk)

## MEET THE REAP PANEL:

ORGANISATION	SECTOR	CONTACT
■ Business Link Gloucestershire	Public	<b>Philip Timson</b> - Operations Director
■ Cotswold Centre for Voluntary Services	Voluntary	<b>Jane Winstanley</b>
■ Cotswold District Council	Public	<b>Anne Brinkhoff</b> - Corporate Planner
■ Council for the Protection of Rural England	Voluntary	<b>Peter Burton</b>
■ Country Land and Business Association	Private	<b>Henry Robinson</b>
■ Federation of Small Businesses	Private	<b>Terry Morgan / Steve McMillan</b>
■ Forest of Dean District Council	Public	<b>Owen James</b> - Head of Regeneration & Housing
■ Forest Voluntary Action Forum	Voluntary	<b>Tim Fretter</b>
■ Forestry and Timber Association	Private	<b>John Davis</b>
■ Glos Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Private	<b>Shirley Hill</b> - President
■ Gloucestershire County Council	Public	<b>John McLaughlin</b> - Economic Regeneration Manager
■ Gloucestershire First	Public	<b>Stan Jones</b> - Managing Director
■ Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum	Voluntary	<b>Geoff Wheeler</b> - Director
■ Gloucestershire Rural Community Council	Voluntary	<b>John Hazelwood</b> - Chair
■ Learning & Skills Council	Public	<b>Pauline Bailey</b> - Director of Programmes
■ National Farmers Union	Private	<b>Lord Apsley</b>
■ Stroud District Council	Public	<b>Karen Toole</b> - Strategic Head of Regeneration & Culture
■ South West RDA Glos Area Team	Public	<b>Alan Titcombe</b> - Community Facilitator
■ Tewkesbury Borough Council	Public	<b>Pat Richards</b> - Head of Local Planning & Regeneration
■ University of Gloucestershire	Public	<b>Bill Slee</b> - Professor of Rural Economy
■ University of West of England	Public	<b>Nigel Curry</b> - Associate Dean

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## WITH THANKS TO:

