



## Winter/Spring Bulletin 2010

Please find below the latest news from the Forest of Dean District Council's Economic Development Team. Simply click on the headings to access the full story or use the menu on the left.

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first stop local shop

Buying into the Forest



Solutions  
for Business

Funded by  
Government



## Apprenticeship grant for employers recruiting 16 and 17 year olds

The National Apprenticeship Service is providing up to 5,000 Apprenticeship Grants for employers of 16 and 17 year olds with a value of £2,500 to encourage employers to take on unemployed 16 and 17 year olds as apprentices.

Last year, despite tough labour market conditions, over 70,000 16 and 17 year olds started an apprenticeship. Despite this there are still many more young people who want to learn while they are in work and we are determined to make sure that the opportunities are there for them to do so.

We are introducing a new Apprenticeship Grant called **AGE 16 and 17**, of £2,500 to enable employers to offer 5,000 new apprenticeship places and take on an unemployed 16 or 17 year old apprentice immediately. The grant is in addition to the costs of training which is met by the National Apprenticeship Service.

### Which employers can benefit?

Our aim is to support employers to offer new and additional places in support of young people. Therefore we are targeting employers who would not otherwise have been in a position to currently recruit an apprentice or who are able to offer more apprenticeship places than they would otherwise have done. We particularly want to support small and medium sized employers who are interested in employing an apprentice for this first time, or who want to employ an additional apprentice over their traditional level of recruitment. We can support larger employers where they can show that they are overtraining to support smaller employers in their supply chain/the wider sector or recruiting in excess of their traditional levels of apprentice recruitment.

### When will AGE 16 and 17 be available?

The grant will be available immediately. We recognise the particular issues faced by young people in the current economic climate and we want to support them and ensure that we are training a new generation for economic recovery. This initiative is a short-term (available until the end of March 2010) measure and is available now for employers who are able to offer a job opportunity to an unemployed young person aged 16 or 17.

Employers will receive a quick response, either through the National Apprenticeship Service or through their training provider, on whether the Apprenticeship Grant is available. All training providers who hold a contract to deliver apprenticeships with the LSC are able to offer this incentive to employers.



# Apprenticeships

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### How will employers receive the grant?

The payments will be administered by the National Apprenticeship Service through our approved training provider network who will manage the payments and paperwork. Employers will receive the £1,500 when the young person starts their apprenticeship and a further £1,000 after 12 weeks.

The National Apprenticeship Service will help employers to find a suitable training provider to deliver the training programme and to recruit an apprentice. Employers will be asked to sign an agreement which commits them to employing a new or additional apprentice in paid employment for the duration of the apprenticeship training programme. Employers will pay the apprentice at least the minimum apprenticeship wage of £95 per week, including off the job training. If the apprentice leaves early, the employer will be asked to repay a proportion of the grant.

### Which young people are eligible?

All 16 and 17 year olds who are not in employment and not already on an apprenticeship programme are eligible. This includes those who may have had a place in a college or school but have subsequently dropped out. **The young person will need to have been recruited and in work before the end of March 2010.**

16 and 17 year olds not in full-time education have seen the largest absolute fall in their employment rate since the start of the recession, but we know through Connexions that a significant proportion of their 16 and 17 year old customers are interested in looking for work. This scheme will give these enthusiastic young people the opportunity to work for successful companies like yours.

We can also advertise your vacancy on apprenticeship vacancies – our online service that matches candidates interested in an Apprenticeship with employers offering them.

To apply for AGE 16 and 17 is simple and straightforward.

If you would like to express your interest in receiving support through AGE 16 and 17 please contact the National Apprenticeship Service, either by emailing us or by calling **08000 150 600** and please mention AGE 16 and 17.

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## Free public procurement course for businesses

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An on-line public procurement course, 'Winning the Contract', has just been launched by Government.

This is a free resource to help businesses learn about public procurement and how to bid for public sector contracts.

The course introduces businesses to the key procurement processes, including:

- Identifying the advantages and disadvantages of dealing with public bodies
- Understanding how different types of contracts are defined, advertised and dealt with
- Understanding approved supplier lists and framework agreements
- Searching for and finding public sector opportunities
- Identifying the key stages in the tendering process

It also has a useful Resource section, case studies, and a Hints and Tips download.

The course is available via the Business Link web page at:  
[www.businesslink.gov.uk/procurement](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/procurement)



The screenshot shows the 'LearnDirect BUSINESS' website. The main heading is 'eCourses Catalogue'. The course 'Winning the Contract' is highlighted with the following details:

- Course Title: Winning the Contract
- Duration: 4 hours
- Course level: Introductory
- Delivery method: Online
- Quantity: 1
- Course Cost (excl. VAT): £ 0.00

Technical Requirements: Return to the Catalogue

**Outline for this course**

The on-line public procurement course "Winning the Contract" is now a FREE, nationally available online training resource which all businesses can access.

To access this free course, you will need to [register](#).

If you have already registered but would like to receive the Winning the Contract course free of charge, please call our helpline on 0800 101 901.

**Introduction**

The public sector spends around £220 billion per year on goods and services. Government recognises that this is a large potential market for small firms and is committed to seeing more small businesses bidding for, and winning, public sector contracts ensuring that SMEs can access and acquire the necessary skills to do so.

Winning the Contract is one of a number of Government initiatives designed to help businesses, and in particular SMEs, gain the necessary skills required to bid for, and win public sector opportunities. Developed and published by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), this authoritative resource helps businesses understand the procurement process, and how they can make it work for them.

**Who is the course for?**

This course is for people with responsibility for developing their business, such as business owners, managers and business development managers. It is aimed at growing businesses in all sectors.

Winning the Contract will be useful to businesses who want to bid for public sector contracts, but are confused by the processes involved. No prior knowledge or experience is needed and there are no formal entry requirements.

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## Being creative in Gloucestershire

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**Animator and Sculptor Brian Anderson shares his perspective, and discusses how his recent free training from the Gloucestershire Media Group (GMG) has provided him with some treasured experiences...**

The creative industries are a significant part of the economic make-up of Gloucestershire. Many of these are micro-businesses, consisting of sole traders or small partnerships. The establishment, sustainability and growth of these micro-businesses are often pointed out as the first indicators of economic upturn.

With the first green shoots of recovery now officially showing, we talked to local animator, sculptor, and businessman Brian Anderson about where support for his business comes from.

“As an experienced artist and animator (*Fireman Sam, Joshua Jones, Star Hill Ponies*), I moved to Gloucestershire in 2008 and was keen to establish industry contacts in the area. I have been in the creative sector for many years. I have seen many changes, especially in technology. It has become increasingly important to keep up with the way the sector is developing,” he says.

Brian has taken the opportunity over the last year to catch up on some of these changes.

“I think you are never too old to learn something; in fact I think that I gain more out of every course I take now than when I was an 18-year-old. GMG proved to be of great help in this respect.”

**The GMG is a not-for-profit organisation, established in 2003 as a support network for creative media businesses and freelancers in the county.**

“We have been acutely aware of the need for support and up-skilling in the county,” says Director Anna Krenkova, “so we developed the Evolve training project with financial assistance from the European Social Fund and via the local Learning Skills Council to bridge this gap with free, high-quality, bespoke training from industry professionals, delivered over evenings and weekends.”

Brian has made full use of this free facility – and it has brought unexpected opportunities.

“A course in 2D animation, using Macromedia Flash and Adobe After Effects was fascinating and led to me winning a competition where I brought to life a logo for the And/Or Book Awards, drawn by David Hockney.

“My short animation was screened at the British Film Institute at the beginning of the awards ceremony. There I met David Sproxton and Richard Golezowski from Aardman Animation, who later showed me and my family round their studios. Then in the summer came the main prize – a day with David Hockney at his studio and out and about at locations that he paints. An experience to treasure!

“I also benefited from participating in The Knowledge course. Increasing my awareness of the state of the media industries and gaining extra qualifications on the subject and health and safety may well have played a part in my securing a part-time post as 3D technician at Cirencester College, which I have just started.”



*Brian Anderson pictured with David Hockney*

“In the last year, Brian has engaged in a lot of free up-skilling training with the GMG,” says Jessica Marklew, Project Manager for the GMG’s Evolve training project. “Because of his experience he has also been a valuable member of all the courses, passing on his expertise to others.”

The project runs until December 2010 and provides training opportunities specifically developed to support creative individuals and businesses throughout Gloucestershire.

GMG understand that it is often hard for creative people to find useful training. Through business support and advice, short courses, seminars, masterclasses and networking events, they work to bring the training wanted, in the way it is wanted, at an affordable price:

- Training is in short bursts, and usually on evenings and weekends
- It is delivered to a high standard with professional tutors who are active in the industry
- Places on course are limited (usually 10 to 15 ), to provide the best experience
- Training is free or highly subsidised

The aim is to create industry specific training that will up-skill freelancers and businesses, making them more effective. Training on offer includes:

- Specialist Software
- Media Industry Knowledge
- Risk Assessment – Principles and Practice
- Single Camera Programme Making
- Production / Project Management
- Attracting Investment to your Creative Business
- Marketing and Finance for Creative Businesses

Further information is available at: [www.thegmg.org](http://www.thegmg.org) Alternatively, please call: **01242 542712** or email: [info@thegmg.org](mailto:info@thegmg.org)

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## Graduate Challenge

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**The University of Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire First, the countywide economic partnership, have joined forces to enable businesses in the county to benefit from the skills of local graduates.**

Graduate Challenge provides local businesses with the opportunity to hand-pick a recent higher education graduate to participate in a structured four-month work placement that fulfils a project brief designed by the business.

Getting involved in Graduate Challenge not only helps to retain this valuable talent within the county but also makes good commercial sense. In the current economic downturn, this is a cost free way to add new skills to your work force.

Graduate Challenge will offer your company:

- **A four-month cost free graduate placement, hand-picked by you**
- **The chance to deliver a live project relevant to your business**
- **Additional training and support from Gloucestershire First**
- **Access to potential additional training and consultancy support from the University of Gloucestershire**
- **Potential funding support from the programme partners**
- **An invitation for eligible organisations to join a Business-to-Business 'Action Learning Network' aimed at building resilience and identifying collective solutions to common issues faced by local businesses**



Businesses participating in Graduate Challenge need to have an office in Gloucestershire where the placement will take place. The business will be expected to cover any additional non-pay expenses incurred by the graduate in delivery of Graduate Challenge, e.g. business travel.

To find out more about the programme please click on the following link:

[www.glos.ac.uk/businessandpartnerships/graduatechallenge/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.glos.ac.uk/businessandpartnerships/graduatechallenge/Pages/default.aspx) Alternatively, you can e-mail the Graduate Challenge Team at: [graduatechallenge@glos.ac.uk](mailto:graduatechallenge@glos.ac.uk) or call them on 01242 714104.

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## A fresh approach to apprenticeships

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A new company has been established in the South West to enable more small businesses to benefit from apprenticeships.

The South West Apprenticeship Company (SWAC) is based on a successful Australian system and acts like a recruitment company that employs an apprentice directly. It provides a low risk opportunity to all employers who have found it difficult to commit fully to an apprentice.

SWAC extends the accessibility and advantages of 'traditional apprenticeships' by providing additional benefits such as more flexibility, security and opportunity. The support provided by SWAC includes:

- **Handling payroll and administrative responsibilities**
- **Interviewing all applicants**
- **Conducting assessments to measure potential, and match them to your business and skills needs.**
- **Providing businesses with a shortlist of suitable candidates to interview and select from**
- **Providing a free expert Health and Safety assessment of the workplace**
- **Providing assistance with induction**
- **Managing the performance of the apprentice**
- **Providing mentoring and pastoral support to ensure the placement is smooth and successful**



SWAC provide an apprentice for as long as your business needs them -there are no long term employment contracts, although it is hoped that you will be able to provide the apprentice with the opportunity to complete their apprenticeship and move to full time employment with you. However, if business is slow or things just don't work out SWAC will work with you and the apprentice to find a new host employer.

You can find out more at [www.theswac.org.uk](http://www.theswac.org.uk) . Alternatively, please email SWAC at: [info@theswac.org.uk](mailto:info@theswac.org.uk) or call them on 0800 334 5767.

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## Business clubs round-up (page 1 of 2)

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### COLEFORD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

In our last newsletter we told you of plans for a new business group in Coleford and we are delighted to be able to announce the formation of the Coleford Business Association.

At the meeting back in November Allan Wasley was elected Chairman with Annie Lapington volunteering her services as Secretary.

The group's aims are:

- To have a more influential voice in the town
- To have a forum for consultation with statutory bodies
- To support each other and pool resources
- To have a greater understanding of what is happening in the town
- To raise common problems and issues

Car parking and general security around the town are high on the group's agenda, as is the need to better connect businesses in Pyarts Court with those in the town. The group will be looking into better town signage.



*Allan Wasley, Chairman, Coleford Business Association*

The next meeting is scheduled for March and is open to all businesses.

If you would like to attend or get involved, please email [allan@deanestateagents.co.uk](mailto:allan@deanestateagents.co.uk) or call **01594 835751**. The meeting will be held at the Town Council offices, starting at 5:30pm and finishing by 7:00pm at the latest.

### LYDNEY TRADERS ASSOCIATION



The Lydney Traders Association (LTA) is pleased to announce that £300 was raised at the

Christmas 'JingleFest' event. The amount will be split between the Victoria Centre and the Youth Café. The organisers want to thank all those businesses that helped make the day a success and plans are in place for the 2010 event.

The LTA is planning to join in the celebration of the 200th birthday of steam railway by holding a day of musical entertainment and a food fair in the town.

Spring will bring a clear up of the river Lyd and volunteers are needed. Call Charlotte on **07866 480327** or Louise on **07810 646663** if you can help.

A Business Fair is also on the agenda for this year with more information to follow shortly.



*The river Lyd at Lydney... volunteers are needed to help with the clear up*

## Business club support

The Market Towns Regeneration Team is providing small grants of up to £1000 to facilitate websites for business clubs who do not already have one in the four market towns.

There is also a small fund to help meet the costs of capacity building training for such clubs. The overarching aim is to empower businesses, allowing them a strong voice with which to confidently assert the needs of the business community in each of the market towns to ensure a more responsive approach from the local authority.

For more information please contact Richard Morgan on 01594 812642  
[richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk)

**For more business clubs news, click here:**

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## Business clubs round-up (page 2 of 2)

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### NEWENT & DISTRICT BUSINESS CLUB

#### Newent and District Business Club



Working together for prosperity

The Newent and District Business Club encourages businesses to network with each other and is busy planning quarterly breakfast meetings.

The club has also launched their new eco-friendly Local Shopping Bag which is on sale now.

For more information please call Gareth Roberts on **01452 348163** or email [gareth@gdrsolutions.co.uk](mailto:gareth@gdrsolutions.co.uk)



*The new, eco-friendly Newent Bag is on sale now*

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF JOINING A BUSINESS CLUB?

Each club has its own unique member benefits but here's a list of just some of the incentives:

- **Collective Marketing** – work with other businesses to successfully promote your town and attract more customers
- **Website as a source of information** on meetings, useful links etc

- **Friendly meetings offering network opportunities** to exchange news and information
- **Comment on Local Authority Consultations** – have your say on things that affect your area and your business
- **Business to Business Promotion** – spread the word about your business through mutual promotion.

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## MARKET TOWNS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Ripping Yarns, Cinderford

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A popular TV presenter has helped flush out customers for a new Cinderford business with an unusual location.

Karen Buckley has recently converted the town's old toilet block into a wool and haberdashery shop. Karen says a spot on property guru Kirstie Alsopp's last programme, *Kirstie's Homemade Christmas*, has given her a flying start.

"We opened just before Christmas and the show gave us quite a boost," said Karen. "People were watching it and coming in to buy ribbons, beads and other items to make the things that Kirstie demonstrated."

"The recent snow actually helped us out too as people were walking into town instead of driving, giving them a chance to see that we had opened."

Ripping Yarns stocks designer yarns such as Debbie Bliss and Louisa Harding as well as old favourites like Patons alongside buttons, beads, bows and much more!

Ripping Yarns is open Tues – Sat from 10am till 3pm and can be contacted on **01594 823007** or by email: [rippingyarnstore@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rippingyarnstore@yahoo.co.uk). A website is coming soon.

Just like almost all Cinderford businesses, Ripping Yarns is listed free of charge on [www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk](http://www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk)



**We opened just before Christmas and the TV show gave us quite a boost**

**Karen Buckley**

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## Footfall and Vacancy Rates

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### National Footfall

Footfall in the UK's high streets increased by 11.2% from November to December 2009 (mirroring exactly the monthly change in December 2008). However, footfall declined annually by 9.5% in December. This is a disappointing outcome for high streets in the light of the 4% like-for-like increase in sales in December reported by the British Retail Consortium.

#### ALL TOWNS AND CITIES

Annual Change:	
Dec 08 to Dec 09	-9.5%
Nov 08 to Nov 09	-15.4%
Oct 08 to Oct 09	-6.3%

The Forest of Dean District Council monitors both the footfall and vacancy rates in the market towns. Footfall is counted annually and compared against regional and national figures – we'll soon have the final results for 2009 and will include them in the next newsletter.

### Vacancy Rates

Vacancy rates within the market towns are measured quarterly. Although the picture is constantly changing, the percentage of empty commercial units at the end of December was as follows:

<b>CINDERFORD</b>	<b>15.69%</b>
<b>COLEFORD</b>	<b>7.3%</b>
<b>LYDNEY</b>	<b>8.16%</b>
<b>NEWENT</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>Overall vacancy rate</b>	<b>9.75%</b>

National shop vacancies increased to 12.4% in the six months to December 31, compared with 10% in the previous six month period.

For more information on these figures and how they are calculated please call Richard Morgan on **01594 812642**.

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## Training opportunities at Coleford's new Enterprise Centre

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The Main Place (the centre's new name) is gearing up to host a comprehensive range of training courses in areas including Health & Safety, IT, Accounting & Finance and Personnel Development, meaning that Forest of Dean businesses will be able to access local, cost-effective training.

Business Link will also be based at the centre two days a week, providing a guiding hand for new ventures.

The Centre began operation on 15th February 2010 and further information can be obtained by emailing [info@coleford-area.org.uk](mailto:info@coleford-area.org.uk) or writing to Coleford Area MCTI Partnership, The Main Place, Old Station Way, Coleford. Glos. GL16 8RH.

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## New 20 mph zones for Cinderford & Newent Town Centres

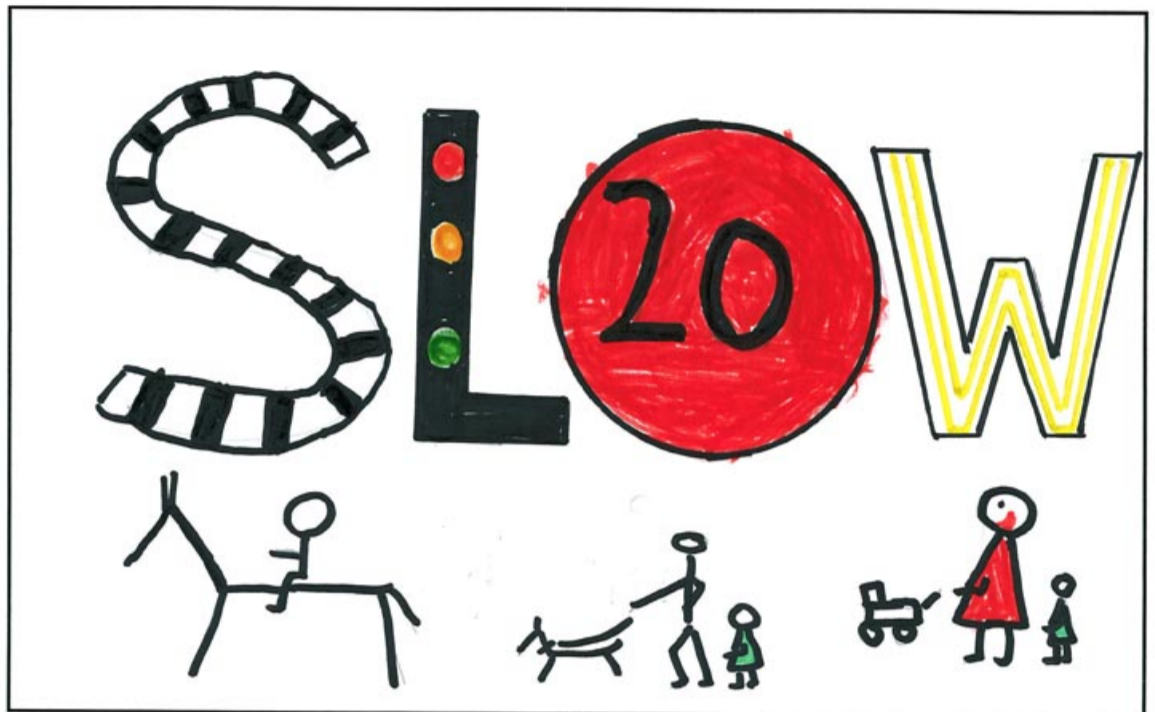
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The District Council has been working with the County Council and Gloucestershire Highways to introduce new 20mph speed limits in the centre of Cinderford and Newent.

Proposals are now out to consultation and, assuming they are successful, new signage and road markings will be in place during April 2010.

Pupils from Heywood School in Cinderford and Picklenash Junior School in Newent have been busy adding their own touches to the design of the signs with the winners selected by the Town Councils.

The need for town centre traffic calming measures were identified through recent studies and the new zones are aimed at increasing pedestrian use and enjoyment.



*The winning design for Newent's 20mph sign courtesy of talented young artist Briony Bishop from Picklenash Junior School*

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## Market Towns: Dates for the Diary!

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Come and support your market towns at these fantastic events!

### COLEFORD

#### April

**5:** Coleford Carnival of Transport  
10am-5pm  
Free Entry

The annual Carnival of Transport takes place throughout the town centre and includes vehicles of all shapes and sizes. Includes Craft Fair at the Main Place (The new Community Enterprise Centre) with homemade refreshments.

Tel: **01594 832925**

Email: [marrot@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:marrot@tiscali.co.uk)

#### June

**12 & 13, 19 & 20:** Art In The Garden  
Tan House, Laundry Lane, Newland  
£4 for adults

The third year of this excellent event for those who wish to enjoy modern art in a lovely garden setting. Sculptures and other work to see over two weekends. Some evening viewings may be arranged for party bookings only.

Tel: **01594 832222**

#### August

**7-14:** Coleford Festival of Words  
Coleford District  
Various entrance fees

Returning for its third year, this is a festival for all ages, expressing a celebration of words in all art forms.

Tel: **01594 833334**

Email: [info@forestbookshop.com](mailto:info@forestbookshop.com)

### NEWENT

#### March

**3-6:** Production of High School Musical  
7:30pm-10pm

Newent Community School & 6th Form Centre

Wed/Thur £5: Fri/Sat £6 DOORS OPEN 7.00pm

We're all in this together – come and see our production of High School Musical – great music and terrific dancing, altogether a fantastic evening to be enjoyed by all the family.

Tel: **01531 820550**

**18:** Quiz Night

Sheppard House, Onslow Road, Newent

7:30pm-10pm

Tickets £5 to include a glass of wine and supper.

Tel: **01531 821227**

**25:** A Spring Concert

Newent Community School & 6th Form Centre

Tickets available in advance from Finance Office or on the door  
Refreshments available

Tel: 01531 820550

#### April

**3:** Easter Egg Hunt

10:30-11:30am

£2 per child

Sheppard House, Onslow Road, Newent

Come along and hunt for your Easter eggs.

Tel: **01531 821227**



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## 2010 Visitor Guide –

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## A wealth of information on the Forest of Dean

The recently launched 2010 Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Visitor Guide aims to bring in more visitors than ever this year. 50,000 copies have been produced for distribution nationally to airports, attractions, hotels, libraries and tourist information centres.

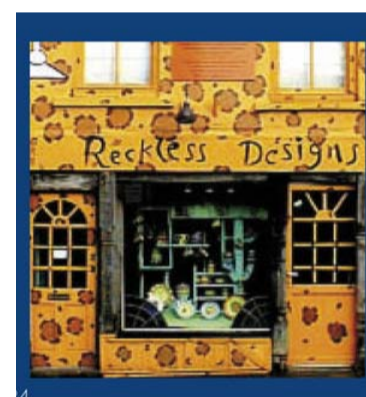
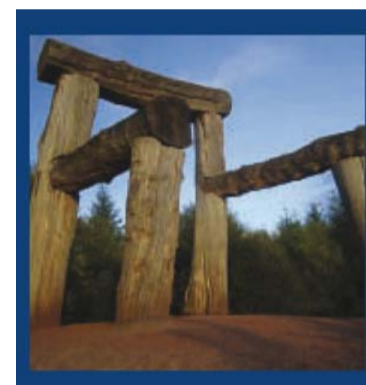
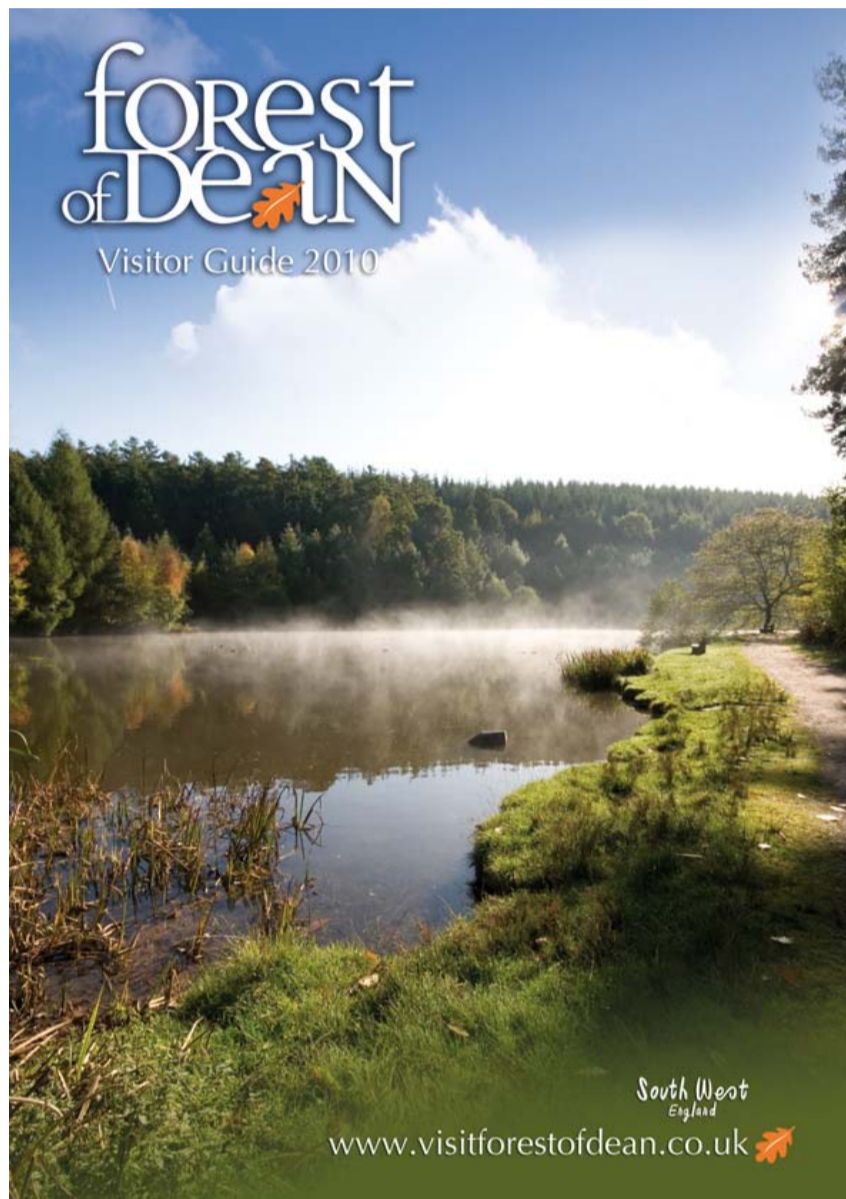
The new 52 page glossy guide is produced by the Forest of Dean District Council and is packed full of stunning photography, interesting facts and information about the area as well as highlighting the best sights, attractions, local food and accommodation. The increasingly popular pocket-sized pull-out visitor map is also included in the new guide.

A new addition to this year's guide is 'Forest Fame', so forget the red carpet and spotlights... the Forest of Dean offers a real 'on set' experience. The Forest of Dean's magic and tranquillity fuel creative imaginations, and many stories have been brought to life here including Harry Potter, Merlin and Dr Who. There are many more too; look out for the Film & TV Location Tours advertised within the Guide.

Councillor Patrick Molyneux, portfolio holder for Economic Regeneration said: "The Forest of Dean has already been voted a fantastic place to bring up children and this guide shows that it's also a fantastic place for anyone to visit, stay and explore."

You can download the Guide from the official tourism website [www.visitforestofdean.co.uk](http://www.visitforestofdean.co.uk) or log on and request a copy to be posted to you.

There are also a whole host of leaflets and brochures available, promoting individual attractions and places to eat produced by The Wye



**This guide shows that the Forest of Dean is a fantastic place to visit and explore**

*Portfolio holder for Economic Regeneration,  
Patrick Molyneux*

Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association in conjunction with the District Council plus each individual attraction and many of the accommodation providers produce their own.

Many of these leaflets are available to request from the leaflet distribution company Glide Media using their online ordering system. Why not register online today by visiting

[www.glidemedias.co.uk/promodirect](http://www.glidemedias.co.uk/promodirect)

Once you have requested the leaflets you would like to display on your premises they will be delivered to you free of charge.

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## TOURISM BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT THE ROCK BED & BREAKFAST

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The Rock B&B was formerly the Rock Inn with parts of the building reputed to be over 400 years old. Reference to it as an inn was recorded in 1748 when it was called The Cock. By the mid-19th century it was renamed the Rock probably due to its proximity to Symonds Yat Rock. It ceased trading as an inn about seven years ago when the former owners changed its use to bed and breakfast and a tearoom.

Chris and Lindy Lathan bought The Rock and moved in during December 2007. Neither had experience in the hospitality industry, although Chris's experience as a Business Operations Manager in the FM department of a large blue chip company and Lindy's background as a nurse and midwife teacher meant they were good at dealing with people and working with the increasing regulations imposed on a bed and breakfast business.

The main attraction of The Rock is its location. It is situated just a 20 minute walk along forest tracks from Symonds Yat Rock and is positioned on the ridge above the Wye and Ruardean valleys, offering views from the garden for over 25 miles. There are miles of footpaths accessed just 30 metres from The Rock. From here it is possible to walk towards Welsh Bicknor and Goodrich, Symonds Yat East and Biblins bridge over the Wye River. Longer walks include the view from the Kymin overlooking Monmouth then returning back along the Wye valley walk and up to the Rock B&B for a well deserved soak in the hot tub.

*The picturesque Rock B&B boasts fine facilities including a hot tub - just the thing for tired walkers - combined with a rich sense of history*

Currently The Rock has four guest rooms, recently redecorated and new carpets laid. Further improvements include updating with new digital TV. The business is expanding; three more bedrooms were planned to open for Easter, but due to the bad weather over Christmas and New Year they are likely to be delayed by a month or two. As soon as these are complete they will be photographed and included on the web site.

The Rock tries to be environmentally friendly, recycling where ever possible and using E-cloths and biodegradable cleaning products. Part of this policy is using locally produced British pork in breakfasts. Lindy also makes vegan sausages so vegetarian guests don't miss out on a full English breakfast.

This Autumn Chris and Lindy are planning to open the tearoom for pre-booked walking groups which can use the car park and the tearoom facilities.

Chris has many self-guide walks on laminate sheets for loan. He is also able to offer guided walks. On completing their walk, groups can return for hot soup and a roll or tea and cake

For more details contact Chris or Lindy on:  
**01594 837893**  
or visit [www.stayattherock.com](http://www.stayattherock.com)



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## What's going on in The Forest?

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### Don't forget to tell us about your events

The Forest of Dean is host to a range of activities and events. In fact not a weekend goes by without something going on. Arts and craft exhibitions, guided walks, fetes, carnivals, sports... whatever your event, if it is open to the public let us know and we can promote it on our website and via the 24 hour touch screens. Go to [www.visitforestofdean.co.uk](http://www.visitforestofdean.co.uk) and click on the events button to find information about the latest events.

email your event news, details and images to:  
[rebecca.endacott@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.endacott@fdean.gov.uk)



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## Support and advice for businesses

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DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	PRICE
10 Mar	09.15 - 14.00	<b>'Communicate or alienate' workshop</b> The art of effective communication. Improve your business communication skills in terms of body language and e-commerce.	Stonehouse Court Hotel, Bristol Road, Stonehouse	Free
26 Mar 10	07:45 – 09:20	<b>Breakfast Meeting:</b> Looking the business – be your own shop window!	Conference Centre, Building 9, Vantage Point Business Village, Mitcheldean	Free
30 Mar	09.20 - 14.00	<b>Talking up your business – maximise your networking skills</b> For business owners who would like a greater understanding of how their own behaviour impacts on the success of their business networking.	Hatherley Manor Hotel, Down Hatherley, Gloucestershire	Free
31 Mar	10.15 - 14.00	<b>Business finance options – the choices simplified</b> Want your business to survive and thrive but don't know how you are going to finance it? Join us for this free of charge information seminar, delivered by Business Link's Finance Adviser, Mike Stutter.	Cotswold Water Park Four Pillars Hotel, South Cerney	Free

For further information or to book onto any of the above events, please contact Claire Knight at Business Link on 01242 864169 or email: [claire.knight@businesslinksw.co.uk](mailto:claire.knight@businesslinksw.co.uk)

For more information on the support that is available for new and existing businesses call Business Link on 0845 600 9966, email [enquiry@businesslinksw.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@businesslinksw.co.uk) or visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest)

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## Networking opportunities

Being part of a group is key to the survival and growth of your business. Creating communities or forums for respite from the current economic difficulties helps you to build a following, build credibility and of course sales, as well as addressing common problems.

The following are business clubs that the Economic Development Team either organise, support or are kept up to date with. If you know of any other business clubs or networks that would be useful to businesses please let us know by contacting Richard Morgan on 01594 812 642 or [richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk)

### CINDERFORD BUSINESS CLUB

If you would like to get involved with the Cinderford Traders Assoc please contact Richard Morgan on 01594 812642 or email [richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk)

### NEWENT AND DISTRICT BUSINESS CLUB

The club meet every three months.  
Enquiries to Gareth Roberts on 01452 348163 or email [Gareth@gdrsolutions.co.uk](mailto:Gareth@gdrsolutions.co.uk)  
*Please see our Business Club Round-Up article for more information.*

### COLEFORD BUSINESS CLUB

Please call Allan Wasley on 01594 835751 or email [allan@deanestateagents.co.uk](mailto:allan@deanestateagents.co.uk)  
*Please see our Business Club Round-Up article for more information.*

### LYDNEY TRADERS ASSOCIATION

Please call: Charlotte Matthews on 07866 480327 or Louise Parker on 07810 646663  
*Please see our Business Club Round-Up article for more information.*

### FOREST BUSINESS FUTURE

A strategic partnership between local businesses and the public sector that influences and enables the development of the local economy in the Forest of Dean District.  
For further information please call James Woodcock on 01594 812610.

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### GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Provides local networking and business support, lobbying and other services.  
[www.gloscci.org](http://www.gloscci.org)

### WYE VALLEY & FOREST OF DEAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Telephone: 0845 053 1173  
[www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk)

### FOREST OF DEAN FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

[www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

### BUSINESS FIRST

This new referral group aims to provide its members with business opportunities, the opportunity to learn from peer group experiences and access support and advice. The group meets every Tuesday from 07:15 to 08:30 at Bells Hotel, Coleford. The joining fee is £45 for eligible businesses; this includes not only breakfast but also your own designated web page. Monthly subscriptions are also priced at £45. If you would like to sample the group before committing funds, an introductory rate of £10 is payable on the day of the meeting. Please contact the group to arrange.

Apply to join online or contact Allan Wasley on 01594 835751.  
[www.businessfirstglos.co.uk](http://www.businessfirstglos.co.uk)

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## Useful Contacts

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Below is a list of useful contacts who we work in partnership with:

### BUSINESS LINK SOUTH WEST

Business Link provides the information, advice and support you need to start, run and grow a business, and are the Government's official gateway to business support. Their service is impartial and their motivation is to provide practical solutions to customers and offer a fresh insight and an independent solution to their particular business needs. They offer a range of services, from workshops for start up businesses to advice on buying or selling a business; from health and safety to employing people and international trade.

**Tel:** 0845 6009966

**Email:** [enquiry@businesslinksw.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@businesslinksw.co.uk)

**Web:** [www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/southwest)

### TRAIN TO GAIN

The Learning and Skills Council's Train to Gain service provides impartial, independent advice on training to businesses across England. It can help businesses improve their productivity and competitiveness by ensuring that employees have the right skills to do the best job.

**Tel:** 0800 015 5545

**Web:** [www.traintogain.gov.uk](http://www.traintogain.gov.uk)

### DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Government information can be found on the Department of Trade and Industry web site:

**Web:** [www.dti.gov.uk](http://www.dti.gov.uk)

### EMPLOYMENT LAW

For advice about employment law, see the following web sites:

**Web:** [www.emplaw.co.uk](http://www.emplaw.co.uk)

[www.dti.gov.uk/employment/index.html](http://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/index.html)

### RECRUITMENT

If you are looking for staff you can try Job Centre Plus

**Web:** [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp)

### RATES OF PAY

For information about rates of pay, see:

**Web:** [www.dti.gov.uk/employment/pay/national-minimum-wage/index.html](http://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/pay/national-minimum-wage/index.html)

### TAXATION AND NATIONAL INSURANCE

See the HM Customs and Revenue web site:

**Web:** [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

### GLOUCESTERSHIRE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS SERVICES

Gloucestershire Enterprise Business Services (GEBS) aims 'to work for the development of a more prosperous Gloucestershire'. It seeks to achieve this by providing a range of services and programmes designed specifically to assist and support smaller businesses in the County.

They are a 'not for profit' company but do need to cover their costs so have modest charges for their services.

If you would like to see how they can help your business contact **Emily** or **Georgina**:

**Tel:** 01242 864200

**Email:** [info@glosebs.co.uk](mailto:info@glosebs.co.uk)

**Web:** [www.glosebs.co.uk](http://www.glosebs.co.uk)

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## Forest of Dean District Council

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The development of the local economy is a key priority for Forest of Dean District Council.

We encourage start-ups as they plan their first steps; provide services to help established businesses continue their growth and support relocating businesses to achieve a fast and effective transition to a new and profitable environment.

The team is made up of Economic Development, Tourism and Market Town Regeneration staff to support all facets of the local economy.

We work closely with other key Council functions to provide holistic solutions for businesses in the Forest of Dean including:

### BUSINESS SUPPORT:

We can provide you with useful advice and support and put you in touch with local, regional and national business support services. We facilitate business project development and help businesses to access council services. We also support business clubs and facilitate the local shopping campaign 'First Stop Local Shop' which aims to bring shoppers back to their local high street.

### PREMISES:

Whether you are looking for office space, industrial units, retail outlets or land, our online database aims to give up to date information on premises available within the district.

### PLANNING:

If you are looking to expand existing premises or check on the suitability of new premises, we can provide advice on planning applications, planning permission and building regulations to help you through the process.

### CONTACT US

Economic Development: Larger or manufacturing businesses should contact James Woodcock in the first instance.

Telephone **01594 812 610** or [james.woodcock@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:james.woodcock@fdean.gov.uk)

Tourism: Tourism businesses should contact Becky Endacott

Telephone **01594 812 384** or [rebecca.endacott@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.endacott@fdean.gov.uk)

Market Towns Regeneration: Small businesses in and around the market towns or villages should contact Richard Morgan

Telephone **01594 812 642** or [richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk)



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## Appeals for Help

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