



**Spring Bulletin
2009**

'It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.'

Charles Darwin

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

Bulletin Contents

- [Business Health Check](#)
- [Supporting Businesses through the Economic Downturn](#)
- [Government launches 'Solutions for Business' to help companies succeed](#)
- [Insurance giant and Royal Forest Of Dean College pioneer unique apprenticeship scheme](#)
- [Forest of Dean District Business Directory](#)
- [What on earth is Market Towns Regeneration?](#)
- [Lydney Area Action Plan](#)
- [Massive investment approved for Cinderford](#)
- [First Stop Local Shop – rebrand and big push](#)
- [MARKET TOWNS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Forest Bookshop bucks the trend!](#)
- [Market Towns: Dates for the Diary!](#)
- [New destination website for the Forest of Dean](#)
- [Forest of Dean to benefit from predicted boom in UK holidays](#)
- [TOURISM BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Hotel guru to mentor Forest hotel](#)
- [Dean Outdoors Festival](#)
- [Destination marketing continues after closure of Visitor Information Centre](#)
- [Support & advice for businesses](#)
- [Networking opportunities](#)
- [Useful contacts](#)
- [Appeals for Help](#)
- [Forest of Dean District Council](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Business Health Check

It may sound like a very obvious thing to say but the one reason a business fails is money – or lack of it where and when it's needed.

Supporting Businesses through the Economic Downturn

Help is available from the District Council's Economic Development Team...

Government launches 'Solutions for Business' to help companies succeed

A national package of publicly funded business support products.

London General Insurance and the Royal Forest Of Dean College pioneer a unique Modern Apprenticeship scheme

Forest of Dean District Business Directory

The Economic Development Team at Forest of Dean District Council has launched an online business directory to help organisations find the goods and services they need locally.

MARKET TOWNS NEWS

What on earth is Market Towns Regeneration?

Market Towns Regeneration Officer gives her perspective on what 'regeneration' means...

Lydney Area Action Plan

A new planning process offers a practical way forward to ensure the regeneration of Lydney

Millions approved for Cinderford

A massive investment from the National Coalfields Programme has met with universal acclaim

First Stop Local Shop – rebrand and big push

First Stop Local Shop looks to add value and help beat the recession blues...

MARKET TOWNS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Forest Bookshop bucks the trend!

The Forest Bookshop in Coleford reports that despite the gloomy forecasts, business is booming...

Market Towns: Dates for the Diary!

Support your market towns at these fantastic events...

TOURISM NEWS

New destination website for the Forest of Dean

The Forest of Dean has launched a brand new website design in a bid to attract more visitors from across the UK and abroad to discover this area.

Forest of Dean to benefit from predicted boom in UK holidays

Forest of Dean Tourism is gearing up for a bumper season.

TOURISM BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Hotel guru to mentor forest hotel

The historic Tudor Farmhouse Hotel in the heart of the spectacular Forest of Dean is celebrating the completion of a front of house refurbishment programme and selection for a prestigious mentoring programme.

Dean Outdoors Festival

The annual outdoors activities festival will be taking place this year from 25th April to 3rd May.

Destination marketing will continue following closure of Visitor Information Centre

The district council has confirmed that destination marketing will continue following the closure of the Visitor Information Centre at the end of September.

SUPPORT & ADVICE FOR BUSINESSES

NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES: BUSINESS CLUBS

USEFUL CONTACTS

APPEALS FOR HELP

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



first stop local shop

Buying into the Forest





Business Health Check

It may sound like a very obvious thing to say but the one reason a business fails is money – or lack of it where and when it's needed.

If you fail to recognise at an early stage that you are in a shrinking or rapidly changing market place, then you will find yourself in a vulnerable state very rapidly with eroded margins and declining sales.

This can lead to major cash flow difficulties and shortage of working capital. Poor cash controls and overspending can be a lethal cocktail especially if you are unprepared for a dip in sales. Over optimistic planning and lack of adequate management control, financial information and strategy will all contribute to the demise of a previously profitable business in difficult economic times.

Now is the time to stop and think – how healthy is your business? By taking a simple health check you may be able to take preventative action that will stop a major problem from developing in the future.

So what can you do to protect your business?

First of all you need to recognise that you have a problem – look for the signs:

- You are taking longer than 45 days to collect payments from debtors
- You are extending lines of credit and worsening your exposure to key debtors
- You have an increasing amount of work in progress that is not billed on time
- Your bank balance is steadily reducing
- You have overreached your overdraft facilities
- You seem to have little control over costs
- Long-standing suppliers are not keen to do business with you, or you are widening your range of suppliers simply to obtain more credit
- Your stock levels are rising while sales remain static
- Your business is largely reliant on one or two customers who are not paying as well as they used to
- Your outstanding debtors or potential bad debts seem to have increased suddenly
- You are involved in contract disputes
- You are increasing borrowings just to keep the business running
- You are more than a month behind in payments to HM Revenue & Customs
- You are receiving final demands or writs

This list is by no means exhaustive, but it does give an idea of where to look for signs of impending trouble. You should constantly be on the lookout for these signs – let them be your early warning system.

All is not lost

If you detect any of the above signs, all is not necessarily lost – provided you take remedial action immediately. If you don't, and you appear not to be in control of the situation, your creditors are likely to force the issue by taking action against you.

In the current climate, the emphasis is much more on attempting to rescue failing businesses rather than enforcing insolvency proceedings. This does not reflect a more charitable attitude on the part of creditors, rather the simple fact that they stand to reclaim more of their investment if the business is rescued rather than wound up.

But rescue is not guaranteed. Whether or not a business can be rescued depends upon many factors – and the single most important is early action. The longer you leave the problem, the more difficult it will be to recover.

We therefore recommend that if you detect just one of the signs mentioned above, you talk to an expert and take advice. You can then determine the seriousness of the situation and if necessary prepare and implement a turnaround strategy. This would include:

Cash management

To survive long term, you need to survive short term, and this means implementing an aggressive cash management programme to make sure you have enough cash to keep the business going.

Recovery plan

You will need to appoint an expert who will help you prepare and implement a detailed recovery plan.

Confidence building

If they are going to support you in your recovery efforts rather than pull the plug on you, your major stakeholders such as banks and suppliers need to be reassured that you have a viable plan and the necessary support and skills to see it through.

Prevention is the best cure

Of course, the best scenario is to avoid a crisis in the first place, and the best way to do this is to introduce a sound financial management strategy:

- Prepare and follow a business plan
- Use professional management accounts to monitor your business
- Prepare regular performance projections and cash flow forecasts and be ready to review and amend in a rapidly changing environment
- Regularly measure actual performance against the projections and forecasts
- Monitor costs as closely as you monitor sales
- Monitor debtors and creditors closely
- Implement a good credit management policy and stick to it
- Make that cash flow!

The key to survival is taking action at an early stage to prevent problems spiralling out of control. Just by talking to a business recovery specialist you can increase your chances of survival – we've usually seen it all before and can help you by passing on the benefit of our experience.

The best way of working through your problems is by taking advice and planning ahead. If you do find yourself in difficulties the earlier you deal with the issues the more likely you are to avoid formal insolvency.

Diane Hill
CLB Coopers Chartered Accountants
dhill@clbcooper.co.uk

[Return to home page](#)



Supporting Businesses through the Economic Downturn

Forest of Dean District Council's Economic Development Team is committed to working more closely with local businesses over the coming months to provide help and support through the economic downturn.

We would like to remind you of some of the ways in which the District Council can help:

- The Council can consider **applications for business rate relief for small businesses with a rateable value of under £15,000**. In some cases the relief could potentially cut a business rates bill by half. There is an application process, and anyone interested in applying should in the first instance contact the Business Rates Team at the Council – Tel: 01594 812532
- The Council has committed to **pay invoices for services purchased by the Council within 14 days**, provided that these invoices are not in dispute
- The Council has committed to **source supplies and services from Forest based businesses where this is possible**, and where it does not contravene best value or our own purchasing rules on tendering etc.

Should you wish to discuss in confidence any issues affecting your business with any member of the Economic Development Team, please telephone one of the following members of staff:

Small businesses	Richard Morgan on 01594 812642 or Jessie Wainwright on 01594 812611
Tourism Attractions or Accommodation Providers	Nicola Greaves on 01594 812389 or Claire Evans on 01594 812384
Manufacturing and other businesses	James Woodcock on 01594 812610

[Return to home page](#)



Government launches ‘Solutions for Business’ to help companies succeed

The Government has recently launched ‘Solutions for Business – funded by government’, as a national package of publicly-funded business support products.

The package is made up of 30 advice, loan and grant products that share a common look and feel.

The products will be accessed via Business Link and a new Business Link Strategy Group will ensure customer input directly helps drive up Business Link performance by bringing senior business leaders into the strategic management of the service.

All the ‘Solutions for Business’ products will be in place by March ‘09 and are a result of a streamlining exercise whereby the government committed to reduce more than 3,000 products to less than 100. Monitoring will ensure the number of schemes stays low.

The aim is to make it easier for companies – starting and growing, small and large, new and existing – to find the right products to help them with common business issues such as finance, export, skills, environment, innovation and growth.

Businesses had complained they found government support complex and confusing. ‘Solutions for Business’ responds to their concerns and the business community has been involved in developing the package.

It is estimated tighter targeting of schemes will collectively add up to £1.4bn per year of value for businesses while easier access will save them up to £1.5m in saved search costs.

Rationalisation will ensure effective use of taxpayers’ money through more efficient delivery as all levels of government – national, regional and local – will, for the first time, share the same products.

Solutions for Business

Funded by
government

Secretary of State for Business, Peter Mandelson said: “It is our vision to make the UK the most enterprising place in the world but we are aware more can be done to create the right environment for enterprise. Publicly funded business support – advice, loans and grants – can help individuals realise their entrepreneurial potential, businesses start and succeed, and communities prosper and flourish.”

To find out more go to: www.businesslink.gov.uk/solutions or contact your local Business Link adviser on **0845 600 9966**.

[Return to home page](#)



Insurance company and Forest college pioneer a unique apprenticeship scheme

Royal Forest of Dean College (RFDC) and London General Insurance Company Ltd (LGI) have pioneered a unique Modern Apprenticeship at Mitcheldean. The scheme has created a team of apprentices, unlimited by age or academic attainment, working in a special learning cell within the LGI operations centre at Mitcheldean, receiving comprehensive day-to-day support from RFDC.

James Tomlin of LGI and **Lisa Taylor** of RFDC have in partnership devised a scheme where modern apprentices have real jobs, including working as advisors in the Customer Service Centre and playing their part within an integrated customer service environment that provides customers' first point of contact, and handle enquiries on a wide range of products.

Allison Crossland, who will be managing the project for RFDC, said: "Here we have taken a proactive approach, and worked with LGI to match

James Tomlin of LGI and Allison Crossland of RFDC in the new LGI operations centre at Mitcheldean



the College programme precisely to LGI's induction and continuous learning processes programme from day one of apprentice employment. We intend to ensure that not only do the apprentices achieve success, but that they are also equipped with transferable skills to benefit their future careers."

Ian Kenny, LGI's operations director, said: "We aim to support our apprentices with the very best training we can provide, since our business depends upon customer service at the highest level.

"We expect that this scheme will not only provide opportunities for young people in the Forest of Dean, but will also give older people interested in re-training or returning to work an excellent opportunity to add to their skills and qualifications in a new and exciting working environment."

[Return to home page](#)



Forest of Dean District Business Directory

Is your business missing out on potential local orders and contracts?

Does your organisation look outside the district for goods or services?

The Economic Development Team at Forest of Dean District Council has launched an online business directory to help organisations find the goods and services they need locally.

Whatever your business you can advertise for FREE and promote your services to the local and wider business community.

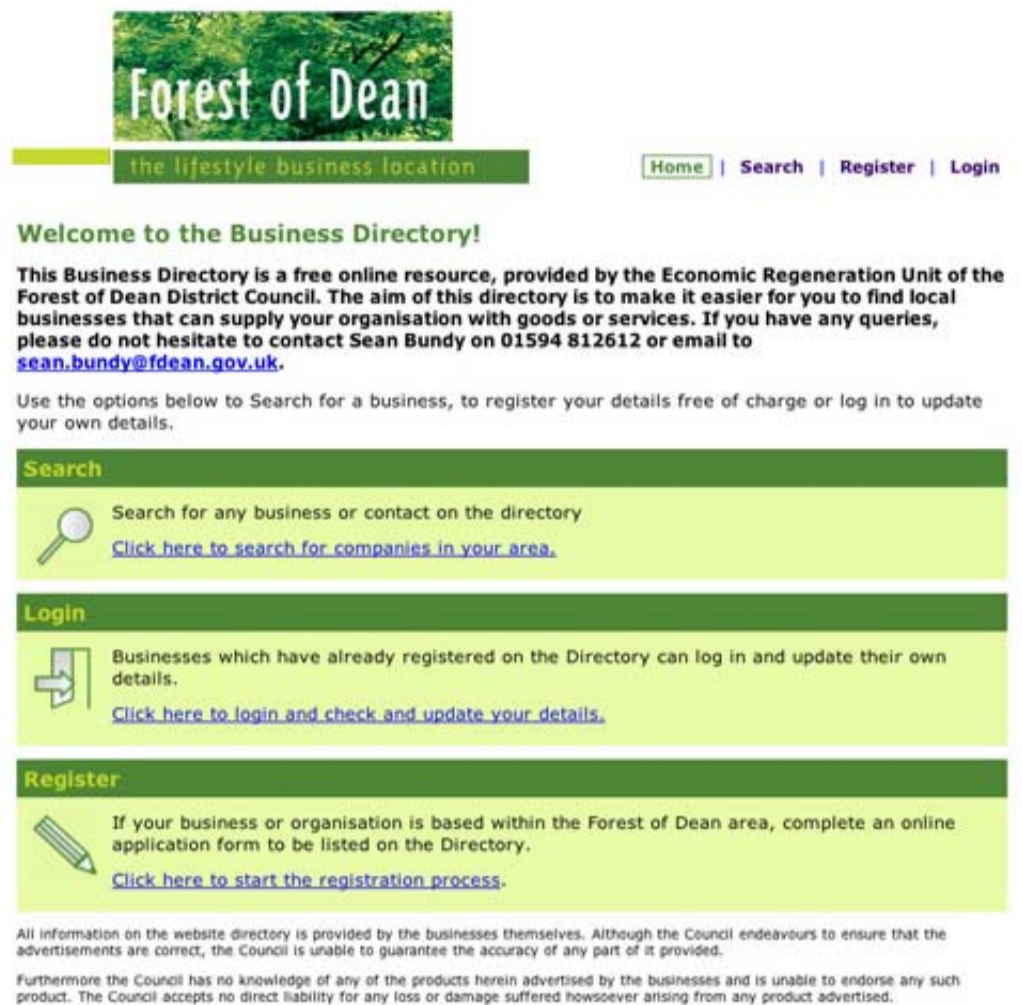
Register today via www.fdean.gov.uk/business and select 'Business Directory' from the menu.

Remember, if you're not listed you could be missing out.

Please contact James Woodcock if you require further information or support.

Tel: 01594 812610

Email: james.woodcock@fdean.gov.uk



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Forest of Dean Business Directory. At the top, there is a logo for 'Forest of Dean' with the tagline 'the lifestyle business location'. Below the logo are navigation links: Home, Search, Register, and Login. The main heading reads 'Welcome to the Business Directory!'. A paragraph explains that the directory is a free online resource provided by the Economic Regeneration Unit of the Forest of Dean District Council, aimed at helping users find local businesses. It includes contact information for Sean Bundy (01594 812612 or sean.bundy@fdean.gov.uk). Below this, there are three main sections: 'Search' with a magnifying glass icon and a link to search for companies; 'Login' with a key icon and a link to login and update details; and 'Register' with a pencil icon and a link to start the registration process. At the bottom, there is a disclaimer stating that the Council does not guarantee the accuracy of the information provided and does not endorse any products advertised.

[Return to home page](#)



What on Earth is Market Towns Regeneration?



Lydney



Cinderford



Coleford



Newent

Market Towns Regeneration is ultimately about ‘bringing back to life’ the Forest’s market towns. These once-thriving local centres of Lydney, Cinderford, Coleford and Newent have, like towns across the country, fallen into decline as people’s lifestyles and spending habits have changed.

The rise of the car has resulted in more people commuting out of the area for work, the rise of the supermarkets have meant that people are less likely to use their local shops, fashions dictate we buy from certain clothes shops, and more often than not those shops are not located in small market towns but in larger centres that can accommodate them. Yet we still want our local centres to be the thriving and healthy centres they once were whilst retaining their small town charm.

What is the answer? There is no one answer. Regeneration is a lot like a sudoku or a crossword puzzle – you need to solve a lot of problems at once in order to solve the whole puzzle, and more often than not, just like a crossword, you need a lot of different people’s ideas to make it work.

Market Towns Regeneration deals with communities and how they access the services they need. We look at the role of small businesses and the life blood they provide to small market towns and we support them through schemes like ‘First Stop Local Shop’ and through grants to improve their shop fronts.

We look at how development occurs and work with planners and policy makers to try to ensure ‘appropriate development’ that fits the function of the towns. We work with our partners within the community and at county level to devise and raise money for schemes that will help improve the appearance and safety of the towns. Most importantly, however, we deal in optimism and the turning of problems into opportunities and finally... into solutions. Then it’s onto the next problem!

Jessie Wainwright
Market Towns Regeneration Officer

To speak to Jessie and find out more about how you can get involved in the regeneration of the market towns call her on 01594 812 611 or email jessie.wainwright@fdean.gov.uk

[Return to home page](#)



Lydney Area Action Plan

A new planning process offers a practical way forward to ensuring the regeneration of Lydney

Forest of Dean District Council is preparing to begin an 'Area Action Plan' for Lydney in partnership with the local community and the hinterland parishes that it supports.

What is an Area Action Plan and how does it work?

An AAP is a detailed brief for developers setting out a long-term vision for the area that will be achieved over the next 15 years. It defines the type of development that can take place in certain areas, giving the community much more control over the way their town develops. This is in contrast to traditional planning practices which give vague 'allocations' to large blocks of land and which often results in the town growing in an ad hoc way that suits the needs of developers rather than the community. An AAP must be able to be implemented over its 15 year lifespan so must combine 'blue skies thinking' with practical considerations.

"Lydney has a wealth of attractions that have the potential to make it a wonderful place to live, work, visit and do business," says Jessie Wainwright, Market Towns Regeneration Officer.

"The trouble is that most of these assets are hidden from view. The AAP will give us an opportunity to define what is special about Lydney and how we can make the most of them."

Will the AAP cover the whole town?

The area covered by the AAP will be open to debate but generally AAPs are restricted to a certain defined area that has a single purpose. Nigel Gibbons, who is leading the process, says: "Initial thinking is that the overall theme will be to improve the links between the town centre and the docks area. However, if there is strong feeling from the community that an alternative approach would be better, we'll look at that."

How can local people get involved?

To register as a formal consultee or find out more, please phone Jessie Wainwright, Market Towns Regeneration Officer on **01594 812 611** or email her at Jessie.wainwright@fdean.gov.uk

The district council team will also shortly be launching a website which will keep everyone up to date with the aims of the process and consultation workshop dates.

[Return to home page](#)



Millions approved for Cinderford

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the national housing and regeneration agency, has confirmed it has got approval to proceed with an investment of £14.75 million from the National Coalfields Programme, to help in the regeneration of Cinderford.

Colin Molton, South West Regional Director for the HCA said: “I am delighted we now have approval to proceed with this key regional priority. We have worked very closely with the Cinderford Regeneration Board; local stakeholders such as the Forest of Dean District Council, South West of England Regional Development Agency, and Gloucestershire County Council; to ensure that we are funding something that is a high priority for the local community.

“The HCA board has made a decision to invest in Cinderford’s regeneration, by delivering a high quality mixed use sustainable development to help bring transformational change to the town. It is an important rural regeneration project which will benefit the whole area.”

Proposals for the investment have received widespread support from the local community and will provide for:

- a major new access road from the A4136 to open up the Northern United and Steam Mills sites for redevelopment
- 189 mixed tenure homes with an emphasis on affordability;
- 20,000 sq m of employment space;
- Recreation and amenity space which will be owned and maintained by the Forestry Commission;
- 19.7 hectares of reclaimed brownfield land
- a new state-of-the-art further education college campus that includes sport facilities and recreation space that will be shared by the local community;
- public realm works

The development will be delivered within a ‘Green Charter’ which will promote exemplar environmental and design standards.

Colin Molton said: “Cinderford is well positioned for growth. It has amenities close by and is near to Gloucester and the M5 and M4; it has excellent tourism potential in its own right and is located in a stunning forest setting which happens to be one of England’s few remaining ancient forests.”

In responding to the announcement, Tim Perrin, CEO of the Forest of Dean District Council, said: “This is a tremendous boost for the Forest and especially for Cinderford. It will provide exciting opportunities for employment, affordable housing and a range of projects for the community.”

Graham Morgan, Gloucestershire County Councillor and CPR Board member, said: “This is absolutely fabulous. It is what we’ve always wanted and needed: investment in the area. This funding will enable the town to come to fruition and bring new opportunities to those who have not had that chance. Gloucestershire is an affluent county, but Cinderford still bears the economic scars from the closure of the mines. This will put Cinderford right and take us out of the rut that Cinderford has been in for such a long time. It is absolutely brilliant.”



Colin Molton, South West Regional Director for the HCA: ‘It is an important rural regeneration project which will benefit the whole area’



Graham Morgan, Gloucestershire County Councillor and CPR Board member: ‘This is absolutely fabulous. It is what we’ve always wanted and needed’

Forest of Dean Councillor and CPR Board Member, Patrick Molyneux, said: “This is fantastic news for Cinderford and the Forest of Dean. It will be the start of its regeneration and provide a catalyst for change and its future growth. It will help attract new investment to the area and give Cinderford and the local economy a real boost.

“I’d like to offer a big thanks to all those involved including the National Coalfields Programme, the Homes and Communities Agency and everyone else who contributed in getting us this far.”

Barry King, Director of Environment, Gloucestershire County Council, said: “This is great news for Cinderford and the Forest of Dean, and we look forward to working with all the partners to make this happen.”

As part of the regeneration of Cinderford, the HCA and the Forest of Dean District Council are working with the Royal Forest of Dean College on the feasibility of relocating the college to the Steam Mills site. This would provide another impetus for further development in Cinderford.

Separately, the HCA is also looking to support funding initiatives for a 2,000 m sq community resource centre in the centre of Cinderford. The centre has the potential to include a community health centre supported by the PCT, educational and community meeting space, crèche facilities and other leisure and social facilities.

[Return to home page](#)



First Stop Local Shop – rebrand and big push

First Stop Local Shop looks to add value and help neat the recession blues...

First Stop Local Shop campaign has had a facelift and rebrand as it gets set to go to the next level in the campaign to encourage Forest of Dean shoppers to keep their custom local.

The award-winning scheme has been nationally recognised as an example of best practice and is being used by market towns across the country as a template for local shopping campaigns.

“We hear little other than doom and gloom everywhere about the economic downturn,” says Richard Morgan, Retail Support Officer at FoDDC, “but the fact is that independent businesses are actually in a stronger position than many of the multiples if they harness their joint marketing power and produce real bargains for local people on their own doorstep.”

The scheme works by offering local independent businesses an opportunity to reclaim customers from neighbouring centres by offering individualised bargains or ‘rewards’ for shopping locally. To date, the scheme, which has been running for three years, has focussed on retailers within the four market towns but that is due to change with the scheme being extended to leisure and cultural attractions and service businesses.

“By extending the scheme out of the four towns and including a wider range of businesses we have a real opportunity to ‘add value’ to the Forest Reward Card,” he adds. “There is no doubt that the economic downturn presents a serious challenge to all businesses, and it is crucial that we use every tool at our disposal to make the Forest of Dean as competitive as possible.”



first stop **local shop**

Buying into the Forest

The team will be encouraging businesses to ‘think like a supermarket’ and actively promote their offers to shoppers and ask every customer for a rewards card.

“Local shops are frequently found to be more cost-effective than supermarkets,” says Richard. “The trouble is that supermarkets are better at promoting their offers. With a wider-reaching scheme and more rewards available on a huge range of products local shops will have a major advantage – but we need to shout about it!”



As well as encouraging businesses to advertise their offers, the team have produced a new range of marketing information including bags, car and window stickers and posters. They have also created a new website that allows businesses to update their product and discount details so that shoppers can check what is available on their doorstep before getting in the car to head for larger centres.

For more information on the scheme and how you can get involved, please contact Richard, Retail Support Officer or Jessie in the Market Towns Regeneration Team on **01594 812 642**, visit www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk or email richard.morgan@fdean.gov.uk

[Return to home page](#)



Market Towns Business Spotlight!

Each edition of the e-newsletter will feature a different market town business.

This quarter: **The Forest Bookshop, Coleford**

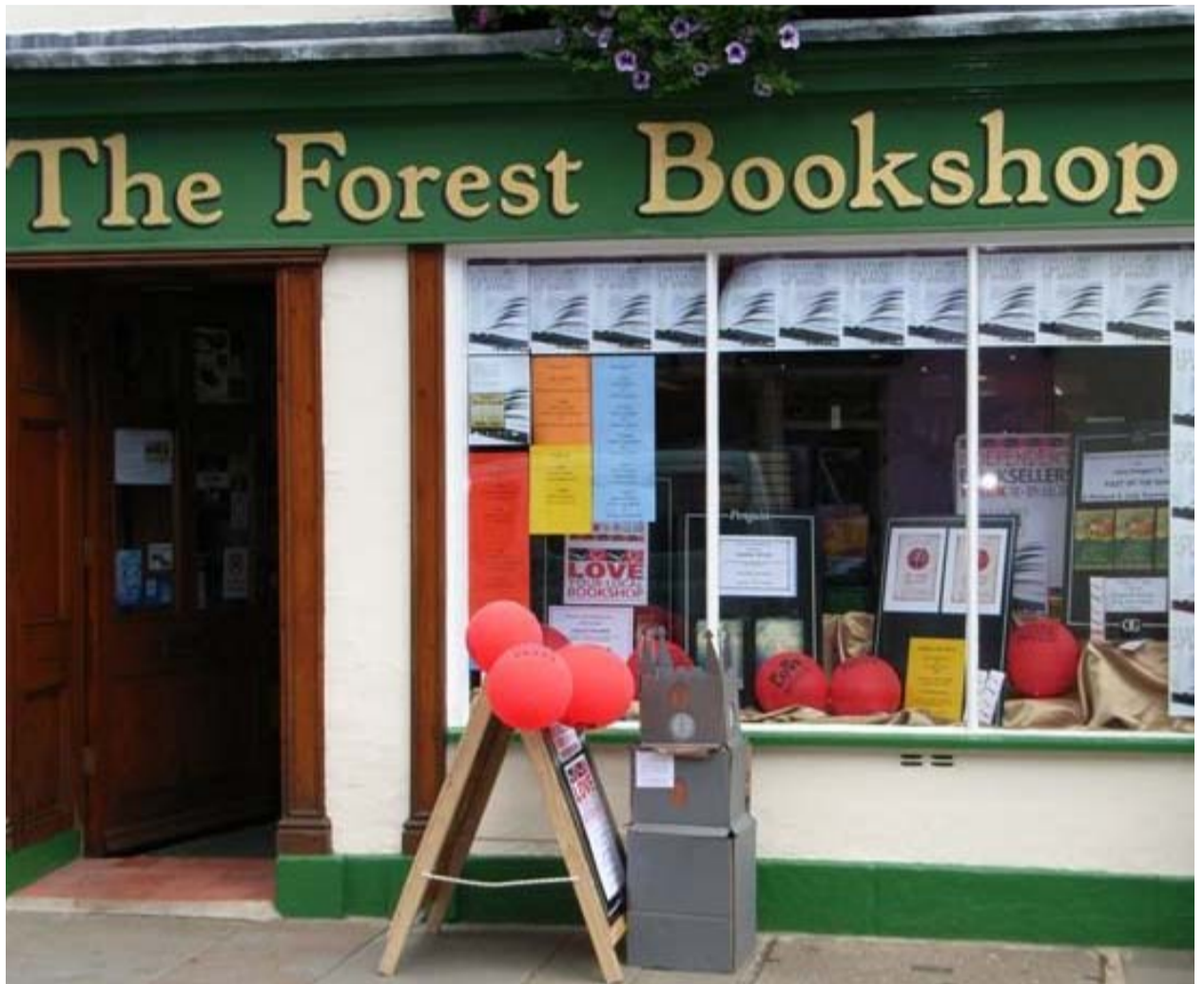
Latest national data just released demonstrates that book sales are outperforming the wider economy. Over the past two months they grew by 0.1% over the same period last year.

While some of the big chains report poor results and concerns for the future, independent bookshops report a better than expected start to the year. This is certainly true at the Forest Bookshop.

Alison's of Tewkesbury say: "The picture is not as bleak as newscasters make out"* and City Books of Hove add: "We are very perky and upbeat."*

We have had several approaches from journalists at the Forest Bookshop apparently seeking sob stories. However, we can only share our optimism and enthusiasm – which does not always get into print. Come and enjoy the cheery atmosphere with us soon.

*Source *The Bookseller Journal*



[Return to home page](#)



Market Towns: Dates for the Diary!

Come and support you market towns at these fantastic events! We will update them throughout the year so please send your events news to jessie.wainwright@fdean.gov.uk

COLEFORD

Please note that sadly the Coleford Music Festival has had to be cancelled this year due to prohibitive costs for policing the town centre event. The organisers will instead be staging several events at various locations throughout the town and are looking at different options for staging the festival in 2010.

April

13: Carnival of Transport
01594 812 388

June

29 - July 4: Coleford Festival of Words
01594 833 334

November

29: Festive Foods & Christmas Crafts
01594 832 925

NEWENT

September

12: Newent Onion Fayre
www.newentonionfayre.co.uk

November

14: Joe Meek Tribute Concert
01594 812 381

LYDNEY

April

4 -19: Children's Easter Activities, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

May

23 - 31: Children's Whitsun Activities, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

June

6: Fringe Festival, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

July

Lydney Festival: various venues
www.lydney.org.uk

4 - 26: Open Studios Taster Exhibition
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

18 - August 31: Summer Arts Project
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

August

29: Fire Sculpture Day
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk
01594 844 841

September

26: Mushroom Hunting, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

26 - 29: Harvest Display, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

October

11: Kite Day, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

11: Mushroom Hunting, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

17 & 18: Local Food Market, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

18: Taurus Fashion Showcase, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

21- November 1: Children's Autumn Activities, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

24: Christmas Marquee, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk

December

5, 6, 12 &13: Christmas Markets, Taurus Crafts
www.tauruscrafts.co.uk



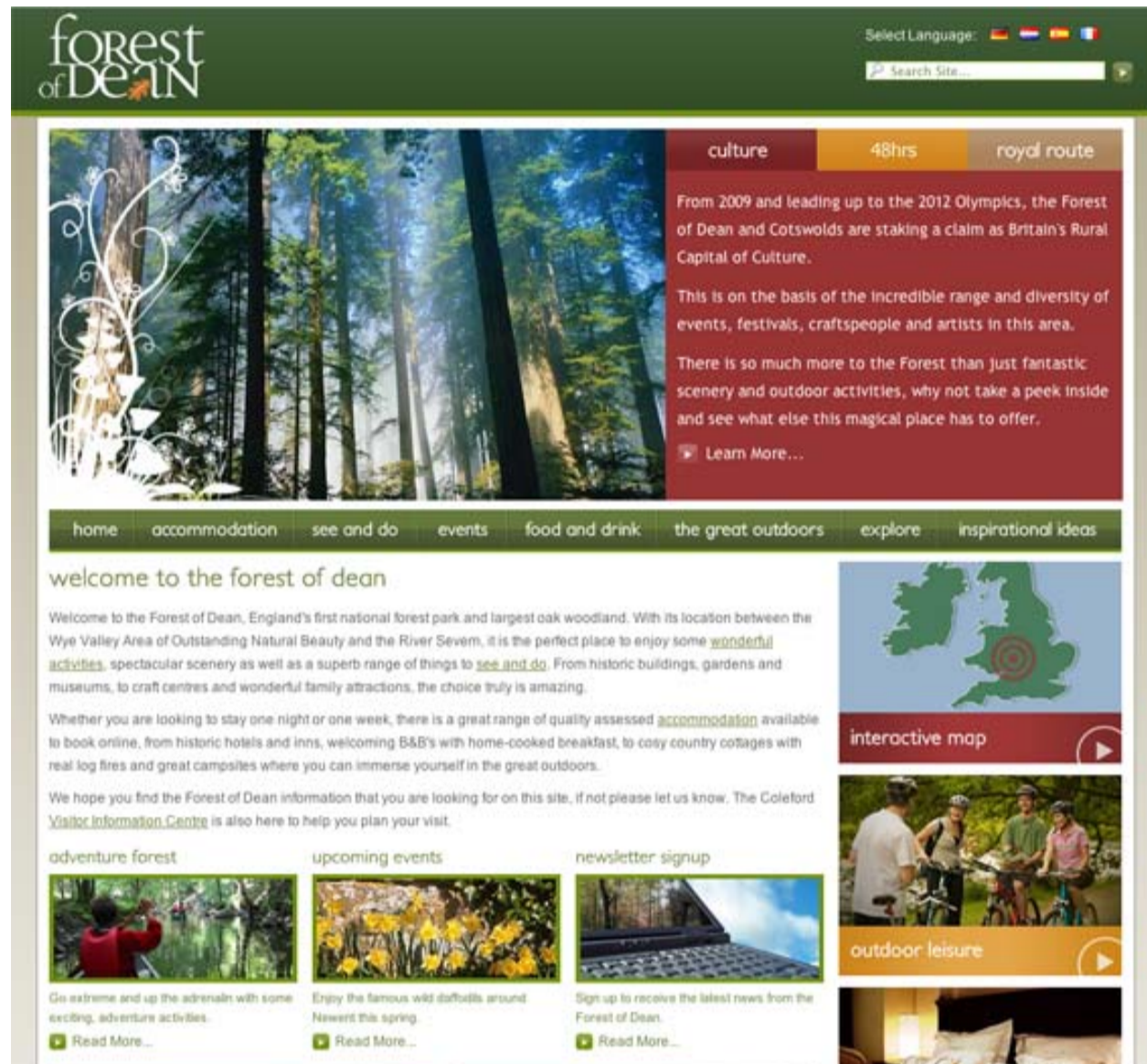
Taurus Crafts: The burning of a fire sculpture created by Phil Brews

[Return to home page](#)



New destination website for the Forest of Dean

The Forest of Dean has launched a brand new website design in a bid to attract more visitors from across the UK and abroad to discover this area.



With more than 660,000 unique visits to the Forest of Dean official tourism website, 2008 was a record year for the Forest's online promotional activity and, thanks to a fresh new look and feel, this year is expected to attract even more visitors – both virtual and real!

The new site contains a wealth of destination information and, in addition to the online booking and enquiry service, new services include interactive maps, downloadable guides, themed itineraries and specific sections for the media and group travel organisers. The site also contains a late availability page plus a 'special offers' section providing tourism businesses with the opportunity to highlight special rates and short term offers. Banner advertising spots are also available to businesses looking to highlight their services on specific pages.

While the new site is intended to assist in the marketing of the Forest of Dean on a national and international scale, it will also provide a source of events and attractions information for local residents looking for ideas about great days out in the area.

Any businesses wishing to have a listing or take banner advertising on the website, should contact Claire Evans for further details. Claire Evans, telephone **01594 812384**, claire.evans@fdean.gov.uk

For further information: www.visitforestofdean.co.uk

[Return to home page](#)



Forest of Dean to benefit from predicted boom in UK holidays

Forest of Dean Tourism is gearing up for a bumper season.

Forest of Dean Tourism is gearing up for a bumper season after it was announced by VisitBritain that up to 5 million more British people could take holidays within the UK this year to avoid losing out as a result of the weakened pound.

The tourism agency also predicted that the strength of currencies such as the euro against sterling could lead to more foreign tourists taking holidays in Britain this year.

VisitBritain executive chairman Christopher Rodrigues, who was speaking at an annual stakeholder event in London, underlined the importance of the tourism industry during the economic downturn.

“Despite current economic woes, tourism is one of the few industries that could show growth, with a real opportunity to grow to a £133bn industry by 2018,” he said.

“Our priority this year has to be working with the industry to encourage Britons to explore their own country and foreigners to visit us right now, when we offer great value.’

The Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO) is hoping to exploit this boom with the launch of **Britain’s Rural Capital of Culture** campaign. As a tongue-in-cheek take on Liverpool’s Capital City of Culture, from now until the run-up to the Olympics the DMO will be showcasing the wide range of cultural activities that this area has to offer – events, festivals, arts and crafts, galleries, museums, musical performance and much more.



Forest of Dean Tourism Manager, Nicola Greaves, (pictured), said: “The Forest of Dean is well-placed to take advantage of a boost in domestic tourism. Its location, range of accommodation and wealth of things to see and do make it an ideal short break or longer holiday destination for both visitors from this country and abroad.

“The new culture campaign will also help us to show potential visitors that not only do we have great scenery and outdoor leisure activities, but we also have a rich and interesting cultural heritage side to explore.”

For further information go to www.visitforestofdean.co.uk

[Return to home page](#)



TOURISM BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Hotel guru to mentor Forest hotel



The historic Tudor Farmhouse Hotel in the heart of the spectacular Forest of Dean is celebrating the completion of a front of house refurbishment programme and selection for a prestigious mentoring programme.

Robin Hutson, founder of the Hotel du Vin Group of hotels, is going to mentor owners **Colin** and **Hari Fell** over the coming months, advising them on how to make the most of their business.

Robin is recognised throughout the hospitality industry as a hugely innovative and successful hotelier. The 'Better Business' mentoring series is run by Caterer & Hotelkeeper, the UK's leading magazine for hospitality professionals. The magazine selected Colin and Hari's hotel from hundreds which applied for the honour. Over the next six months, they will work closely with Robin to improve and build on all aspects of running and managing the hotel, with their story documented in detail each month!

The Hotel, which has 20 individually decorated bedrooms, has also recently invested in a brand new, state of the art kitchen to help maintain its reputation for consistently high quality, good food. The restaurant currently holds two coveted AA rosettes.

Colin and Hari took over the substantial, 13th century former farmhouse five years ago. Said Colin: "We are very excited both by the completion of the refurbishment, and by the prospect of working alongside Robin. The hotel is looking fantastic and now offers guests a really comfortable stay in a beautiful part of the world."

The hotel's main reception area and function room have been completely updated and redecorated, while a new contemporary conservatory-style link to the cosy lounge area is an ideal setting for light lunches or morning coffee. The décor of the 40-seat restaurant reflects the heritage of the ancient building yet features contemporary artwork by local artist **Kathy Lewis**.

Tudor Farmhouse Hotel was originally a large working farm house before part of it was turned into the hotel in the 1970s. It was acquired by Hari's parents in 2004 with the couple taking over in 2007. Five of the 20 bedrooms, some of which feature half testers and jacuzzis, are in the main house with others in the Barn and Cider Houses a few steps away across a landscaped courtyard.

"Updating and refurbishing the house has been a huge undertaking over the last few years but we are now really proud of all that this wonderful old building has to offer," added Colin.

[Return to home page](#)



Dean Outdoors Festival

The annual outdoors activities festival will be taking place this year from 25th April to 3rd May.

The festival has grown in popularity and attracts a wide range of visitors looking to try their hand at something new or just enjoy a fun day out with friends and family.

In contrast with previous years where there has been a main one-day event at a central venue, this year's event will take place at venues across the area over the 10 days. Activities on offer throughout the festival include archery, clay shooting, canoeing, kayaking, Go Ape! high wire adventure, miniature golf, llama trekking, the new adventure tower at Beechenhurst, outdoor laser combat, little red riding hood fun at Puzzle Wood, plus lots more.

For further information and full programme, go to www.visitforestofdean.co.uk

The Tourism team will be promoting the festival at this year's OS Outdoors Show where they will be sharing a stand with Monmouthshire and Herefordshire Tourism teams. The Show takes place at the NEC from 27th to 29th March. Visit www.outdoorsshowextra.co.uk for further details.



[Return to home page](#)



Destination Marketing will continue following closure of Visitor Information Centre

The district council has confirmed that destination marketing will continue following the closure of the Visitor Information Centre at the end of September.

A full council meeting was held on 26th February, during which the budget was discussed and subsequently agreed.

To keep the increase in council tax as low as possible, the council faced a difficult budget round and the challenge of finding over £1 million in savings for the next financial year. As a result we will be closing the Visitor Information Centre at Coleford at the end of September and our one-stop shops in the towns of Cinderford, Lydney and Newent.

In answering a question from the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association, the cabinet member for economic regeneration, Cllr Patrick Molyneux, confirmed that the Council would continue to maintain the Tourism Marketing Team and would continue to market the Forest of Dean as a visitor destination across the United Kingdom, Europe and North America.

A working group made up of the District Council, tourism partners and local tourism businesses is investigating ways of minimising the impact of the closure of the TIC and branch offices and finding alternative ways of providing the service. Updates on future actions can be found in the next issue of the newsletter. For more information please contact Nicola Greaves, Tourism Manager on **01594 812 389**



*Cllr Patrick Molyneux:
Confirmed that the
Council would
continue to maintain
the Tourism Marketing
Team and would
continue to market the
Forest of Dean as a
visitor destination
across the United
Kingdom, Europe and
North America*

[Return to home page](#)



Support & Advice for Business

BURSARIES AVAILABLE FOR RETAIL SUMMER SCHOOLS

Skillsmart Retail has once again teamed up with Retail Trust to offer ten free places to the Oxford Summer School. Celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, the Oxford Summer School has been described as the 'jewel in the crown' of UK retailing and offers the chance for junior managers from all areas of retail to take part in a challenging academic programme. There are ten bursaries available which are open to all retail managers in independent and multiple businesses of all sizes.

Retailers should download the application form from the events section of www.skillsmartretail.com

For more information on the Oxford Summer School, visit www.oxfordsummerschool.co.uk

KEEP YOUR BUSINESS FIGHTING FIT WITH BUSINESS LINK

Are you preparing your business for challenging times ahead? The Government is taking action to help you through the recession and to emerge stronger on the other side.

There is a range of free support to help you find finance, raise productivity, or save money by reducing waste and saving energy. Whether you need to increase cashflow, keep your staff on, improve their skills and flexibility, or simply reduce costs, you can get real help to keep your business fighting fit.

An easy to use 'one stop shop' web portal has been established to help you access this support. To find out more go to: www.businesslink.gov.uk/realhelp or contact your local Business Link adviser on 0845 600 9966.

DEVELOP YOUR BUSINESS WITH PARKLIFE

Monday 30th March 2009 sees the return of Parklife's successful Business Development Programme. The programme, which has been run for the last four years, is open to small businesses across Gloucestershire.

What does the programme do?

- Improves the effectiveness of businesses by preparing and implementing a strategic business performance plan.
- Explores business solutions, developing practical strategic plans for the future.
- Investigates organisation constraints and develop practical solutions to minimise these effects.
- Works with like-minded business people, recognising the positive benefits of businesses working together.

The programme comprises of four sessions. Between sessions you will implement the knowledge and understanding you gain back in the workplace. You will also receive a 1:1 company visit to look at your individual business needs.

The programme takes place at **Park Life Business Centre, VIBIXA, Kingsditch Lane, Cheltenham, GL51 9NG**. The cost of the programme is £500. However, **FULL FUNDING** will be made available through Train to Gain.

What do participants have to say about the programme?

"The BDP has provided me with a reminder of how to run a business and how to adapt to change. The programme, led by Stuart Barnes, also provides the opportunity to share experiences and challenges with other delegates. I consider the programme to be beneficial to sole traders and corporates and I have already booked a place for my co director to attend the next course."

Gerry Dupree, Gerry Dupree & Co Ltd

To find out more about the programme contact Shelley Price, Parklife Administrator:

Tel: 01452 450030

Email: parklifeshelley@glosfirst.co.uk

HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS WHATEVER THE MARKET CONDITIONS

Discover how to grow your business whatever the market conditions

Where: The Cheltenham Chase Hotel, Brockworth

When: 30 March; 17:30 - 19:30

Price: Free

GROWING GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONFERENCE

This year's conference will be themed around Inspire, Grow and Sustain and will continue to offer the latest thinking in business and personal development.

Where: University of Gloucestershire, Park Campus, Cheltenham

When: 25 June; 08:30 - 16:45

Price: Early bird offer: £45 + VAT

LET'S TALK... MORE PROFIT!

Learn how to make the profit you need to live the lifestyle you aspire to in this interactive workshop.

Where: Hatherley Manor Hotel, Down Hatherley, Gloucester

When: 01 July; 09:00-14:00

Cost: Free

For further information or to book onto any of the above events, please contact Claire Stokes at Business Link on 01242 864169 or email: claire.stokes@businesslinksw.co.uk

[Return to home page](#)



Networking opportunities: Business Clubs

Being part of a group will become more important as the cold winds of recession whistle around. Creating communities or forums for respite from the chills 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 Jessie Wainwright, Market Towns Regeneration Officer on 01594 812 611 or jessie.wainwright@fdean.gov.uk

CINDERFORD BUSINESS CLUB

If you would like to get involved with the Cinderford Traders Association please contact Sharon Cinderey

Tel: 01594 824478
Email: scinderey@btconnect.com

NEWENT AND DISTRICT BUSINESS CLUB

Meet every three months.
Enquiries to Julie Gooch

Tel: 01531 821084

COLEFORD BUSINESS CLUB

Call for expressions of interest
We would like to hear from any parties interested in forming a trader-led Business Club for Coleford.
Please call Richard Morgan to discuss.

Tel: 01594 812642

LYDNEY BUSINESS CLUB

Call for expressions of interest
A covering letter and questionnaire has been sent to Lydney businesses, in order to gauge interest in reforming the Lydney Traders Association. If businesses are in favour of reforming the group, they will be invited to an initial meeting.
Interested parties can call

Terry Glastonbury on **01594 562102**

David Cooksley on **01594 844400** or

Richard Morgan at the Forest of Dean District Council on **01594 812642**

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

Tel: 01594 812610.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Provides local networking and business support, lobbying and other services.

Web: www.gloscci.org

WYE VALLEY & FOREST OF DEAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Tel: 0845 053 1173

Web: www.wyedeantourism.co.uk

FOREST OF DEAN FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

Web: www.fsb.org.uk

[Return to home page](#)



Useful Contacts

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
Web: 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: 08456 047047
Email: traintogain@blpeninsula.co.uk
Web: 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

ACHIEVING BEST PRACTICE IN YOUR BUSINESS

Provides impartial information, access to online tools and a monthly email newsletter:

DTI Achieving Best Practice in your business

EMPLOYMENT LAW

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

Web: www.emplaw.co.uk
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

RATES OF PAY

For information about rates of pay, see:

Web: www.dti.gov.uk/employment/pay/national-minimum-wage/index.html

TAXATION AND NATIONAL INSURANCE

See the Inland Revenue web site:

Web: www.inlandrevenue.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
Web: www.glosebs.co.uk

Return to home page



Appeals for help

This section of the ebulletin offers an easy opportunity to ask over a thousand other Forest-based businesses for their help or advice. Simply email your query, including contact details, to Jessie.wainwright@fdean.gov.uk and we will include it.

FLORISTRY BUSINESS

Retirement sale, town centre, Forest of Dean.

Attractive, spacious premises, long lease available. Established seven years as designer florist, good customer base. Would suit qualified florist with ambition.

£15,000 for goodwill, fixtures and fittings + sav.

Telephone evenings only 01594 829268



[Return to home page](#)



Forest of Dean District Council

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.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY:

Our online directory aims to make businesses more aware of the products and services available within the district in order to reduce mileage, cut costs and support the local economy. Businesses may advertise in the directory and manage their own listing, allowing them to ensure that information is always up to date.

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

Tourism: Tourism businesses should contact Nicola Greaves (**01594 812389** Nicola.Greaves@fdean.gov.uk) or Claire Evans (**01594 812384** Claire.Evans@fdean.gov.uk)

Market Towns Regeneration: Small businesses in and around the market towns or villages should contact Jessie Wainwright (**01594 812 611** Jessie.Wainwright@fdean.gov.uk) or Richard Morgan (**01594 812 642** Richard.Morgan@fdean.gov.uk)



[Return to home page](#)