

## April 2014 Update

# Lancashire's Rural Development Programme for England

Since 2009 the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) funding has benefitted over 120 businesses and organisations across Lancashire's rural areas.

Lancashire County Council has delivered the programme on behalf of Defra, providing over £5.5 million worth of grants, with £8.8 million of private sector investment and creating 290 jobs.

Although the 2009-2013 RDPE Programme has now closed, a new programme will start in early 2015. The RDPE team is currently working on a Local Development Strategy for the rural areas of Lancashire, which will set out the issues to be addressed and activity to be supported from 2015 onwards.

We have funded a wide range of projects across rural Lancashire including the Wellbeing Farm in Pennine Lancashire, which offers a range of services including llama and alpaca trekking, corporate and event facilities and lifestyle courses focusing on work/life balance, wellbeing and traditional rural crafts. The business was shortlisted for the 2014 Lancashire Business View Red Rose Awards in two categories: Rural Business of the Year and Green Business of the year. They went on to receive a highly commended award in the Green Business of the Year category. Canal Boat cruises also benefitted from RDPE funding and they won the Rural Business of the Year award 2014.

### Wellbeing Farm



[www.thewellbeingfarm.co.uk](http://www.thewellbeingfarm.co.uk)

### Canal Boat Cruises



[www.canalboatcruises.co.uk](http://www.canalboatcruises.co.uk)

## Box Tree Farm



Box Tree Farm received 50% funding towards the purchase of six new camping pods, landscaping and access at the farm, creating two full-time and one part-time job, and attracting new overnight visitors to the area.

<http://boxtreefarm.co.uk/>

## Grandma Singletons Cheese



Singletons Cheese obtained a 40% grant towards the purchase of a new cutting machine, to make the business more efficient and enable them to offer a wider range of product sizes. This resulted in new sales, an increase in turnover and increased exports.

<http://www.singletons.uk.com/>

## The Odd Chair Company



The Odd Chair Company received a 50% grant towards the cost of creating additional workspace, in order for the business to expand and become more efficient, creating three new jobs and increasing turnover.

<http://www.theoddchaircompany.com/>

## Local Development Strategies

The rural funding is delivered via the LEADER approach, which is designed to be 'bottom-up', taking in the needs of the local communities and businesses by consulting with local people.

Each of the current areas is represented by a Local Action Group (LAG) made up of representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

A range of consultation activity will be taking place across Lancashire's rural areas over the coming months, in order to agree priorities based upon local needs, which will then feed into new Local Development Strategies.

We are very keen to consult with a wide section of the community, so if you are a resident in a rural area, have a rural business or work in the voluntary/community or faith sectors; and would like to become involved with your Local Action Group please get in contact.

The full LAG usually meets once per year. An Executive Group is nominated from the LAG, playing a vital role in deciding how the funding is delivered, recommending projects for approval and commissioning activity.

We're in the process of conducting a skills audit of each of the Executive Groups to see what type of skill/knowledge or experience we need to recruit. The Executive Groups usually meet 6 to 8 times per year.

If you are interested in becoming a member of your Local Action Group, please contact Karen Kerrigan on 01772 538797 or email [ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk).

## Co-operation projects

These are actively encouraged as they provide an opportunity to share best practise, exchange ideas and develop new solutions to common issues. The Lancashire LAGs conducted very little co-operation activity in the last programme, so they're keen to receive project ideas.

To ensure that co-operation activity is included in each Local Development Strategy, we'll be exploring a range of opportunities including collaboration with neighbouring LAGs or LAGs with similar landscapes. In addition, if appropriate, we might also develop links with European partners.

A wide range of projects have been funded across Europe that could provide us with a model of best practise to explore. If a particular issue arises in Lancashire, we can seek to work with a UK-based LAG that has a solution to the issue and is willing to share best practice.

If you have a co-operation project idea please contact Rick Patterson on 01772 538796 or email [ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk).

## Grant funding

Although we do not have any funds available for 2014, we hope to have funding available in early 2015. Therefore if you have a project idea or you would like an informal discussion please get in touch by either completing an [online project registration form](#)

## Contact details

If you have any questions or would like further information please contact:

Karen Kerrigan on 01772 538797

Rick Patterson on 01772 538796

Email: [ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:ruralfunding@lancashire.gov.uk)

## Boost Business Lancashire



Boost Business Lancashire is a £7.2 million ERDF-backed Business Growth Hub that was launched in 2013. The aim is to give ambitious businesses simple access to leading edge business support from experienced public and private sector partners in order to fuel growth.

Boost can help businesses via a wide range of support including:

- Developing a growth strategy
- Raising finance
- Leadership development
- Starting a business
- Growth mentoring and coaching
- Sales and marketing
- Profit improvement
- Product and service development

If you are a growth-hungry business and need support to realise your company's potential, get started today. Call 0800 488 0057 or visit:

[www.boostbusinesslancashire.co.uk](http://www.boostbusinesslancashire.co.uk)