

weekly news

Plunkett's weekly news update on:

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Improving rural livelihoods
through co-operative and social enterprise

Plunkett Foundation News

30th July 2010

FREEDOM FOR FARMERS' MARKETS

Did you know that a circus is allowed to use temporary signs to promote themselves but farmers' markets are not? Due to planning legislation which came into being before farmers' markets really came into prominence, farmers' markets are not able to use signs to promote themselves. Through Making Local Food Work, The Plunkett Foundation and FARMA (The National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association) have undertaken retail health checks with a wide variety of farmers' markets across England. We know from this work that these signs are the best way to let people know that a farmers' market will be taking place. After all, not everyone is good at figuring out which is the third Sunday of the month when driving.

Some councils insist on removing temporary signs whereas others use what we feel is a common sense approach and allow farmers' markets to use signs to promote themselves. As farmers' markets have been proven to be good for farmers and for the areas which they are held, we strongly feel that they should be allowed to promote themselves.

On 1 July the Government launched 'Your Freedom' a website which enables the public to submit their ideas to reduce pointless regulation and unnecessary bureaucracy. In order to get this issue noticed and the comments taken on board it is important to keep interest in it active. Please post your support at <http://s.coop/farmersmarkets>.

PLUNKETT ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

To follow the Plunkett Foundation on Facebook visit

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=79687818921&ref=nf>

To follow the Plunkett Foundation on Twitter visit <http://twitter.com/PeterCouchman> or

http://twitter.com/Mike_Plunkett or <http://twitter.com/HarrietPlunkett>

Co-operatives and Social Enterprise News

VOLUNTARY SECTOR IS ASKED FOR IDEAS ON HOW TO DO MORE FOR LESS

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Francis Maude, and Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd, have written an open letter to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors asking them to contribute their ideas to help reduce the deficit. They are being asked to share ideas about how they can help reduce the deficit directly with the Office for Civil Society. Tackling the deficit and restoring confidence in the economy is a high priority. Significant savings have been made across all areas of Government, but the deficit reduction plan is not just about cuts. It is also about finding better ways of doing things.

Voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations are being asked to share their innovative ideas of how things can be done more efficiently. Those in the sector have a wealth of experience from delivering services on the frontline, often in the most disadvantaged areas, and can see what is working well and what can be improved. Ideas and examples from the sector can be posted on the Cabinet Office website or e-mailed directly to sectorchallenge@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk.

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/100729-voluntary.aspx

© Cabinet Office

BIG SOCIETY BOOST FOR NHS ENTERPRISES

A scheme that puts NHS staff in the driving seat of innovative projects to transform patient care was given a boost by Care Services Minister Paul Burstow. 15 projects will form the second wave of NHS organisations that want to set up social enterprises, a scheme that gives public sector workers the ability to take over the services they deliver. The NHS arm of the scheme, known as 'Right to Request', gives all Primary Care Trust staff the right to request setting up social enterprises.

The new projects span two thirds of Strategic Health Authorities and include cities like London, Bristol, Leeds and Birmingham. Projects include a wide range of services like increasing access to psychological therapies, improving end of life care and a wider range of children services. They build on the first wave of Right to Request projects that are already putting their plans into action. These include a specialist health-visiting programme in Derby that is already improving the health and well-being of some the community's most disadvantaged children and families by offering parenting support and skills. And, a one-stop-shop for homeless people in Leicester that offers vulnerable people medical and outreach services and access to night shelters.

<http://tinyurl.com/34pzm7r>

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FIRST REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF STRUCTURAL REFORM PLANS

In a further demonstration of the Government's transparency and accountability, the first monthly reports detailing the Government's implementation of its Structural Reform Plan commitments have been published.

The Prime Minister launched the Draft Structural Reform Plans earlier this month with departments setting out their reform priorities and actions, within a specified timetable and alongside measurable milestones.

Draft Structural Reform Plans are the key tool of the Coalition Government for ensuring that departments are accountable for the implementation of the reforms set out in the Coalition Agreement. The publication of regular monthly reports on the progress departments promote openness and transparency across Government and will allow people to check that departments are meeting their commitments.

<http://www.scottishsocialenterprise.org.uk/news/1094>

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Farming and Food

MORE MONEY FROM FIRST MILK

First Milk's cheese and balancing pool producers will receive price increases from August 1 but there is nothing for those supplying the liquid pool. The milk for cheese prices increases by 0.65ppl to a new standard litre price of 23.02ppl while the balancing price goes up 0.4ppl to the same 23.02 ppl. Chairman Bill Mustoe said improved returns had been secured from the strengthening cheese and whey sectors.

Mr Mustoe also announced a new move – from now on, anyone under notice of resignation will not receive any future price increases that might be announced. He said the move recognised the value of members committed to the ongoing supply of volume.

<http://www.farmersguardian.com/home/business/business-news/more-money-from-first-milk/33467.article>

© Farmers' Guardian

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE ON GROCERIES CODE ADJUDICATOR CONSULTATION

Farmers, suppliers and supermarkets are one step closer to having supply disputes investigated by a Groceries Code Adjudicator (GCA). The Government has published the response to its consultation to take forward the establishment of a body to monitor and enforce the Groceries Supply Code of Practice (GSCOP). The Department for Business will bring forward new legislation in order to set up the GCA, which will reside within the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). The GCA will have the power to receive complaints about the way supermarkets interact with their primary suppliers from anyone in the supply chain at home or overseas, and deal with them anonymously. This includes farmers who may not directly supply the large supermarkets. Although non-governmental organisations, trade associations and other organisations cannot lodge complaints directly, they still have a useful role to play in offering advice and assistance to their stakeholders.

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=414819&NewsAreaID=2>

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NEW URBAN AGRICULTURE WEBSITE LAUNCHED

City Harvest is an online resource which demonstrates the wide range of benefits associated with urban agriculture with the purpose of strengthening and developing the movement in the UK and across the globe. On the site you will find a host of publications documenting the social, educational, environmental, economic and health-related impacts of urban agriculture as well as case studies which provide working examples of these benefits in action. City Harvest is a resource for everyone interested in food growing and sustainability and aims to be particularly useful for anyone who is looking for "hard" evidence to support urban agriculture related projects.

<http://www.sustainweb.org/cityharvest/>

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UK CARE FARMING CONFERENCE: SEP 16, 2010

How farming communities can 'help to meet the health and social care needs of our society' will be the main topic of discussion at a conference held at Harper Adams University College on September 16 2010.

The 'Care Farming – Working Partnerships' conference will examine the practical issues facing care farmers, the importance of partnerships in developing successful care farms, and developing an organisation to support the movement across the UK. Organised by the National Care Farming Initiative, or NCFI, the day will feature both care farming and commissioning speakers, alongside representatives from care farm support and networking groups from across the UK. <http://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/press/article.cfm?ID=201126>

© Harper Adams University College

Rural Development

FUTURE OF RURAL SCOTLAND

Communities have been urged to speak up for rural Scotland and join the debate into its future.

A three month consultation has been launched on plans devised by the Rural Development Council to help economic recovery. Speaking at the Turiff Agricultural Show, Rural Affairs Secretary Richard Lochhead said: "Rural Scotland and its people have a central role to play in strengthening Scotland's economy. It has an important role in meeting the nation's challenges in relation to food, water and energy security and is critical to our efforts to tackle climate change."

The Rural Development Council is an informal group set up in 2008 to provide independent and impartial advice on all rural issues. Their advice is contained in the document "Speak Up for Rural Scotland" which covers issues such as the economy, land use, renewable energy, community empowerment and activity. All members of the Council have particular expertise and interests in rural issues. Brief details of each of the Council members are contained within the Speak Up for Rural Scotland consultation document. Members include Kate Braithwaite, Director of Carnegie UK Trust Rural Programme, Stuart Housden, Director of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Scotland, and Neil MacLeod, Chair of the Scottish Crofting Foundation.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/08/02114941>

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VILLAGERS SET UP ULTRA CHEAP BROADBAND

People power has dramatically improved the lives of a remote Westcountry village, after the community clubbed together to build its own broadband connection. Northlew, seven miles from Okehampton in Mid Devon, was repeatedly told by BT that the majority of homes would never have the high-speed service because they lived too far from the exchange. However, despite being quoted at least £400,000 to build the communication facility that people in urban areas take for granted, the village persevered. Now, they have found new technology which has finally delivered the connection they need. Residents helped raise funds, and the local chapel makes up part of the infrastructure.

The village had already formed a company, which had tried several times to introduce the service, to no avail. In the end, Mr Marson found state-of-the-art technology from Israel which works along a line leased from BT, exclusively to serve Northlew. It comes in through the chapel, in an underground cable, and is broadcast from the church tower via a radio signal. Houses with a receiver now get the speed they need.

<http://tinyurl.com/2dtxm7y>

© Okehampton People

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR SUMMER FETES

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles wants to stem the flow of relentless form filling, high costs and red tape for organising summer street parties and fetes. Extortionate, inconsistent costs and paperwork for road closures, risk assessments, and temporary event notices are barriers to community events. It can often take weeks and cost thousands of pounds for councils trying to process these applications, which can deter both councils and organisers from putting on events. There is often an inconsistent approach by councils who charge different fees and use a number of conflicting regulations.

Good practice guidance will be set out for councils and more upfront transparency on what organisers need - whether it's public liability insurance, road closure notices or health and safety assessments.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/newsstories/newsroom/1660358>

© CLG

BIG LOTTERY INVESTS IN LOCAL TRUSTS

The Big Lottery Fund in England is investing up to £200 million in 100 – 150 urban and rural neighbourhoods that have been overlooked for funding. The funding is to set up an independent charitable Trust that will support local funding schemes in the targeted neighbourhoods.

The local funding schemes will enable people to make their communities better places to live in, now and in the future, by helping them develop the skills and confidence they need to identify priorities that matter to them and to take action to change things for the better. The Trust will have up to ten years to allocate its endowment.

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_biglocaltrust.htm?regioncode=-uk

© Big Lottery

SURGE IN MOBILE TECHNOLOGY UNDER GOVERNMENT PLANS

The UK is set to benefit from a new generation of wireless services and improved mobile broadband coverage under new Government plans to revolutionise the country's digital infrastructure.

Minister for Communications, Ed Vaizey, launched a programme of measures for radio spectrum modernisation, which will allow mobile operators to deliver the latest technologies to consumers and extend the reach of mobile broadband across the country. The Minister commented:

"The past 20 years has seen a revolution in mobile technologies and devices that have transformed the way we communicate, learn and do business. We want the UK market to remain at the fore of delivering devices like the iPad and smart phones but they need the networks to continue to improve and increase services. Under our plans, our mobile industry will have access to the 21st Century infrastructure it needs to give UK consumers the latest technologies and even better coverage for broadband on their mobile phones."

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=414707&NewsAreaID=2>

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HOW LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN MAKE THE MOST OF COMMUNITY LED PLANNING

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and Action for Market Towns (AMT) have announced the launch of a new project that will examine how local authorities can make the most of Community Led Planning (CLP) and promote the Big Society. CLP has long been used by some local authorities to involve communities in local decision making and the improvement of services. A step-by-step approach to community empowerment, it provides communities with the opportunity to identify social, economic, environmental and cultural priorities for their area and enables them take on the responsibility for bringing about any improvements they desire, rather than waiting on others to do things for them.

<http://tinyurl.com/36kzaa7>

© ACRE

International News

EUROPE – STUDY ON SUPPORT FOR FARMERS' COOPERATIVES

The European Commission has launched a call for tenders for a study entitled "Support for farmers' cooperatives". The overall purpose of this study is to provide the background knowledge that will help farmers organise themselves in cooperatives, as a tool to consolidate their market orientation and so generate a solid market income. In this context, the specific objectives of the study are:

- * to provide a comprehensive description of the current level of development of cooperatives and other forms of producer organisations in the 27 EU Member States, and
- * to identify specific support measures and initiatives that have proved to be effective and efficient for promoting cooperatives and other forms of producer organisations in the agricultural sector.

The maximum budget attributed to this project is EUR 1,500,000. The deadline for submitting offers is 1 October 2010. The Commission intends to award the contract by the end of 2010, following the evaluation of the offers received. The contractor will have to carry out the study within 23 months from the signature of the contract.

<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/newsroom/en/404.htm>

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USA – NATIONAL FARMERS' MARKET WEEK

In the USA, National Farmers' Market Week 2010 is August 1-7th, and last year, Farmers' Market Coalition (FMC) asked people to say why they loved farmers markets. This year, FMC are giving people the opportunity to share ideas for celebrating and communicating the benefits of farmers markets in their community/state during National Farmers Market Week. Visit their website for more information.

http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/fmweek_2010_ideas/

©FMC

NEW WEBSITE FOR UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES 2012

The official website on the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) provides information on events planned throughout the year, as well as suggestions on how to get involved and participate.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development, in particular recognizing their impact on poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

Visit the new website here: <http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

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