



Presentation for

**Economic and Community Development
Advisory Committee**

Thursday 17th March 2016



West Kent LEADER 2015 – 2020

- Source of funding available to farmers, growers, foresters, rural businesses and communities
- Bottom up, community led approach to funding
- Local action groups (LAGs) made up of public, private and civil society
- 80 groups nationally, covering 85% of the rural population in England



Key Facts 2007 - 2013

- Total grant funding awarded of £1.25 million
- Total investment into West Kent in excess of £3.4 million
- 62 projects supported
- Over 35 new jobs created
- 110 existing jobs safeguarded
- 3 new business start ups
- Over 350 businesses expanded as a result of the investment
- 15 projects included renewable energy investment
- Over 12,800 people in rural villages have benefited from improved rural services



- A collaboration between three farmers who have diversified into lavender.
- LEADER funding enabled the purchase of specialist equipment from abroad to harvest the lavender and extract oil.
- The partners provide a contract harvesting service for other lavender growers



- When the local village shop closed in Ide Hill a community shop was built through the sale of shares to local residents.
- The shop fitting was carried out with the help of LEADER funding.



- Westerham Brewery Company brought brewing back to the historic town of Westerham after the closure of the Black Eagle Brewery in 1965.
- LEADER helped this business expand by giving funding towards a new malt system, elevator and cask racking machine and increase fermentation and storage capacity.



- Following the retirement of the external contractor, the estate was able to continue the production of local charcoal utilising the timber from the estate woodlands and using the existing estate labour.
- This was made possible with a LEADER grant enabling the purchase of two second hand charcoal retorts, the construction of two new retorts and the purchase of ten steel storage bins.



- Mereworth Estate is an ancient woodland with a large diversity of plant and animal life carefully managed by the woodland team.
- LEADER funding enabled the purchase of a new timber trailer and crane to reduce the number of journeys required to extract coppiced wood, in its unprocessed form, from the woodland.



- After a series of cuts in the price received for their bulk milk, the Bastable family decided to add value to the milk from their dairy herd by diversifying into making cheese and ice cream on the farm.
- LEADER grant funding helped with the purchase of cheese and ice cream making equipment, as well as website and marketing costs.

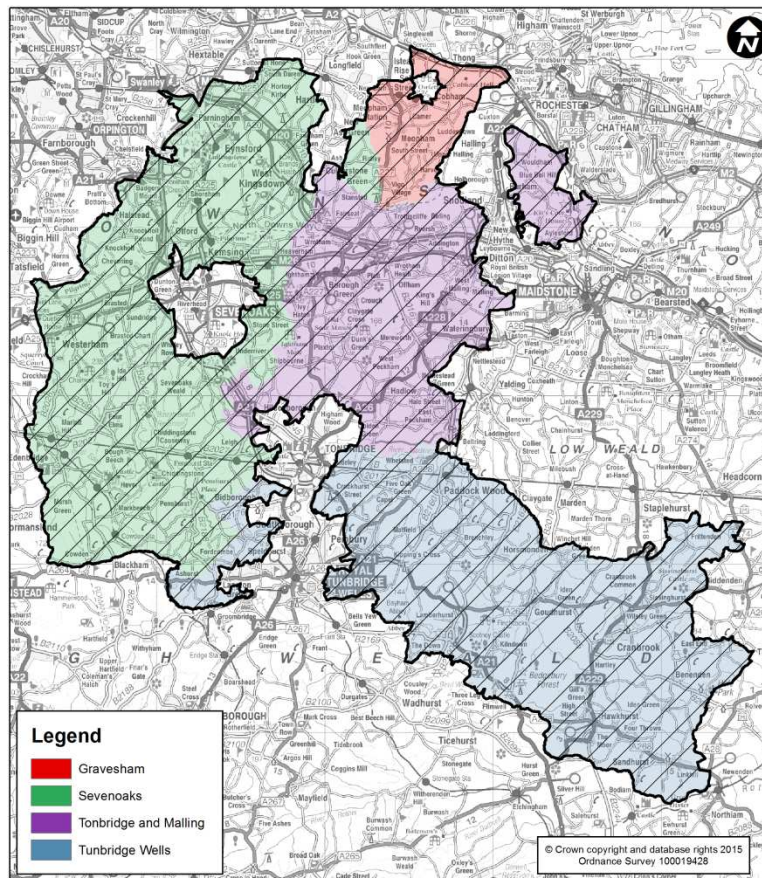


- 16th century Chiddingstone Castle has been owned and lived in by an eclectic mix of people and families. It is now managed by Trustees.
- LEADER funding enabled the upgrade of the car park, which is also used as a village resource, installation of brown Tourism signs and re-decoration of a room in the castle for a village archive facility.



West Kent LEADER

grant support for
rural businesses





- Over €1.8 million to be awarded to projects in West Kent
- A rolling funding programme with no calls for activity
- Minimum grant £2,500
- Maximum grant £50,000
- Typically 40% of project costs
- Emphasis on providing jobs and growth within the rural economy



Six priority areas:

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for increasing forestry production
- Provision of rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activities
- Support for rural tourism



- Two stage process
Outline application
Full application
- Independent assessor
Strategic fit
Value for money
Sustainability
- West Kent LAG - decision making panel



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