

## **Press Release**

**For immediate release – 4<sup>th</sup> January 2017**

### **Heart of Wessex LAG starting the New Year with a boost for rural businesses**

Rural businesses and organisations across south and east Somerset and south Wiltshire are being encouraged to apply for EU grants designed to support the local economy before it's too late. The Heart of Wessex Local Action Group (LAG) was awarded £1.74m through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) to invest in projects that directly support the rural economy in the LAG area. With over £800,000 worth of projects already successfully approved, applicants are encouraged to apply quickly! Current guidance from Defra states that all contracts must be awarded by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, with all project spend completed and claimed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019.

Eligible applicants are businesses, farmers, foresters and community groups across the Heart of Wessex LAG with grants starting from £5,000 up to £100,000 with the LEADER programme designed to promote business growth and job creation in rural communities. Projects should support the LAG's Local Development Strategy and the six National priorities which are: support for increasing farm productivity; support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification; support for rural tourism; provision for rural services; support for cultural and heritage activity and support for increasing forestry productivity.

Projects which have recently been awarded a grant funding agreement include Callen Lenz Associates Ltd based in Chilmark, CLG & J Wadman & Sons based in Wincanton, Hann Farming Ltd based in Frome, Dineley Farming based in Berwick St John and FAW Baker Kingston Farms Ltd based in Haselbury Plucknett. Between them these five applicants will receive over £300,000 in LEADER grant funding to support their projects. Further information on these projects can be found on the Heart of Wessex website ([www.heartofwessex.co.uk/approved-projects](http://www.heartofwessex.co.uk/approved-projects)).

For more information on LEADER funding and the Heart of Wessex LAG visit [www.heartofwessex.co.uk](http://www.heartofwessex.co.uk) for more information and how to apply. Alternatively call Sarah on 07826 907361 for an initial chat, she would be happy to hear from you!

**ENDS**

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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#### **NOTES TO EDITOR:**

For more information on the Heart of Wessex Local Action Group please visit [www.heartofwessex.co.uk](http://www.heartofwessex.co.uk)