

**August
2014
Issue No 42**

Area East Bulletin



Website: <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/communities/area-working/our-work-in-area-east>

- 1. Planning Aid England**
- 2. LEADER Programme – Heart of Wessex Local Action Group**
- 3. Retail Support Initiative (RSI) grant**
- 4. SSDC funding assistance for your projects**
- 5. The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership**
- 6. FREE Playdays coming to a community near you**

1. Planning Aid England

Planning Aid England (PAE) provides free, independent and professional advice on town and country planning issues to community groups and individuals. They believe everyone should have the opportunity to get involved planning their local area and provide people with the knowledge and tools to do this.

The range of services they offer include:

- A free web resource called Planning Aid Direct, which provides clear & simple answers on how the planning system works and where to go next
- An advice service by qualified planning advisers who can offer a maximum of 15 mins via email or telephone on planning related issues
- Additional support for eligible individuals, communities & groups, which may cover training on the planning process, specific advice & assistance on making representations on the Local Plan and responding to a planning application or appealing against a planning application decision
- Neighbourhood planning advice & guidance as part of the Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood planning initiative
- Looking at expanding their services to offer mediation & wider community engagement, support & assistance

With limited resources they try to focus on those who really need help and cannot get assistance from elsewhere. With this in mind they:

- Do not provide pre-application advice about a specific site or planning application and refer enquirers to their local planning authority for pre-application advice
- Do not provide free advice to other professionals (eg: architects, surveyors) or business owners who may find it helpful to use the RTPI Directory of Planning Consultants to find a professional planner

For further information on the services they offer please visit their website: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/> email: advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk tel: 0330 1239244

2. LEADER Programme – Heart of Wessex Local Action Group

The funding bid is taking shape and if successful will attract around £2m to the programme area to support rural business and economic development from 2015-2021. To discuss any project ideas, please contact the Programme Manager Sarah Dyke-Bracher on tel: 07826 907361 or visit the website: www.heartofwessex.co.uk. We shall let you know the outcome of the bid this Autumn.

3. Retail Support Initiative (RSI) grant

The Retail Support Initiative (RSI) grant gives funding support for shops, farm shops, public houses, restaurants and other service businesses in Area East. The maximum grant of up to £1,500, to help with up to 50% of the project costs, is available for shop front improvements to retail units or farm shops which:

- Visually enhance the heart of the town or village
- Add to the viability of towns/villages such as multi trader loyalty schemes
- Business rates assistance during the first 2 years of trading (new businesses only) which do not compete with other businesses in their town/village (up to 50% assistance of actual payments due)

These grants could include assistance with shop fittings & displays, which improve the layout, upgrading or purchasing new equipment such as tills and marketing initiatives including those by traders working together locally. Projects should not commence before any grant has been approved as grants cannot be paid retrospectively. For further information please contact: Chery Wilkins, Personal Assistant to ADM, telephone: 01963 435013 or by email: chery.wilkins@southsomerset.gov.uk. Please find attached a leaflet giving details, which we would be grateful if you would distribute as appropriate.

4. SSDC funding assistance for your projects

Capital Grants

The Community & Leisure Capital scheme can provide grants of up to £12,500 (maximum 50% of total project costs) to help Town/Parish Councils, village hall committees and other local groups deliver improvements to existing facilities or to develop completely new ones. The next round of capital grants will be considered in December 2014 with an application deadline at the end of October. For more information, to discuss a project idea or to request an application pack, please contact: Tim Cook or James Divall, Neighbourhood Development Officers – Communities, on 01963 435088/435023 or email: tim.cook@southsomerset.gov.uk/james.divall@southsomerset.gov.uk

Parish Infrastructure Fund

This is suitable for small infrastructure projects. The minimum grant is £1,000 and grants will not normally exceed £5,000 although affordable housing top up will have no upper limit. Eligible projects include those that tackle safety issues and/or improve the quality of life in Parishes. For further information, please contact: Tim Cook or James Divall, Neighbourhood Development Officers (Communities) telephone: 01963 435088/435023 or email: tim.cook@southsomerset.gov.uk/james.divall@southsomerset.gov.uk or contact Pam Williams, Neighbourhood Development Officer (Economy) telephone: 01963 435020 email: pam.williams@southsomerset.gov.uk

5. The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership

The Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership has been doing wonderful things along the Bristol to Weymouth line in the last 12-months, with the help of many volunteers. At Bruton Station a complete renewal of all station signing to replace existing signs and additional large free standing boards welcoming customers to Bruton has taken place. To find out more and to read their Annual Report 2013/14 visit their website: www.heartofwessex.org.uk. Please encourage your parishioners to use this vital resource!

6. FREE Playdays coming to a community near you

SSDC's Young People's Officer has worked closely with a number of communities to bring FREE play fun right across the District during the summer holidays – in Area East the dates are: 9 August (Mudford), 11 August (Bruton), 20 August (Wincanton), 21 August (Milborne Port), 20 September (Castle Cary). For more information please contact: Steve Barnes, Play & Young Facilities Officer tel: 01935 462408 email: stephen.barnes@southsomerset.gov.uk