

A little 'TLC' to boost the rural economy

As the economy slowly starts to recover, rural communities across Gloucestershire are being urged to apply for one-off grants to help fund events to encourage more people to buy and trade 'local'.

With funding from Gloucestershire County Council through the county's Economic Taskforce, grants of up to £2,000 are available from the new **Gloucestershire Trade Local Campaign (TLC)** to support events or activities which will help boost rural businesses.

The county-wide campaign will echo the national Federation of Small Businesses 'Keep Trade Local' initiative which states that over 50% of the turnover of independent retailers goes back into the local community, compared to just 5% from supermarkets.

The Gloucestershire Trade Local Campaign is looking to encourage local business groups to work together with town and parish councils and other organisations to promote the 'buy and trade local' approach.

Cllr Will Windsor Clive, cabinet member for economic development at Gloucestershire County Council, said: "This is an excellent scheme which the county council is keen to fund; businesses are facing difficult times and we are committed to supporting them. These grants will encourage people to buy and trade local, benefiting the local economy, safeguarding jobs and boosting regeneration."

David Owen, chief executive of Gloucestershire First which manages the county's Economic Taskforce said: "By actively choosing local suppliers, services and producers – whether on rural high streets or business parks – people are investing in local jobs, making our rural economy more resilient and sustainable."

Market towns across Gloucestershire have already proved they can come up with imaginative and exciting new ways to celebrate what makes their towns special, such as the 'We love our town' events in Wotton under Edge and Cirencester. There have also been successful gift voucher and loyalty card schemes in Tewkesbury and the Forest of Dean.

"We're hoping that by offering grants of up to £2,000, business groups, town councils and community organisations will be able to come together to launch some exciting new ways to support their local economy," added David.

Terry Morgan, Regional Secretary of the Federation of Small Businesses added his support: "We are delighted to support this initiative. It will enhance our national "Keep Trade Local" campaign which encourages co-operation within market towns to support local, small businesses which are at the heart of communities.

"We will be actively encouraging our Members and local Chambers across rural Gloucestershire to come together and get involved."

To find out more and to ask for an application form, contact Dan Judges on 01242 864144 or email daniel.judges@gloucestershire.gov.uk or visit www.glosfirst.co.uk .

The Gloucestershire Trade Local Campaign has received funding from Gloucestershire County Council through the county's Economic Taskforce. The Campaign is being managed by Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum and is supported by the Federation of Small Businesses and the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce.

Notes to editors:

For more information, see www.glosfirst.co.uk or contact:

- Cllr Will Windsor Clive, cabinet member for economic development at **Gloucestershire County Council**: Lisa Bonnell, 01452 425226
- David Owen, chief executive of Gloucestershire First which manages the county's **Economic Taskforce**: 07817 294634
- Terry Morgan, Regional Secretary of the **Federation of Small Businesses**: 01453 753192 or 07703 238205
- Dan Judges, **Trade Local Campaign** project leader: 01242 864144