

ESF Funding for Environmental Business Support (October 2008)

Parklife, which provides training and networking while facilitating business support services for companies working from strategic business parks in Gloucestershire, has been successful in its bid for extra funding.

The new cash, £525,000, comes from the European Union Social Fund and an initial sum has been earmarked to launch the scheme in Cheltenham on October 15.

Companies in the Kingsditch and Lansdown areas are being invited to learn more about the environmental and financial benefits of an environmental management system, how to work towards ISO 14001 or BS8555, achieve waste reduction and consider how the environmental impact of a business can be reduced through greater efficiency.

In association with the University of Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire College, Parklife has been tasked with encouraging 150 businesses to consider their carbon footprint and look at how they can reduce their impact on the environment.

Courses offered will include the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health managing environmental responsibilities and a series of business seminars will be held around the green agenda.

Managed by Gloucestershire First, Parklife was the first initiative of its kind in the UK. Since it started in 2004, it has helped to support over 1500 companies become more efficient by providing professional and unbiased business support.

In helping to facilitate networking between companies working from business parks, it has made a big impact by encouraging the sharing of best practice, identifying funding and training opportunities and sourcing centralised purchasing agreements.

Parklife has been applauded by the business community, attracting the attention of government departments regionally and nationally. The new environmental initiative has also been welcomed and work is already underway in response to identified need.

Shaz Siddiqui [pictured] the lead business advocate for this initiative, said he was pleased that the work established over two years by Parklife has been recognised for further development.

“Our approach, pioneered by the Learning and Skills Council and funded by the South West RDA, has been a great success. Though companies on business parks serve different markets, they have similar issues to address, such as legislation, training and the health and safety of employees.

“With new environmental management standards such as BS8555 and ISO 14001 on the horizon, understanding the environmental agenda is becoming increasingly important for companies, manufacturers, distributors and their suppliers.

“Environmental improvement, together with further training and consultancy support to improve business efficiency, will be at the heart of this project,” he added.

Should you attend?

An event to launch the environmental awareness training programme has been arranged in Cheltenham on October 15 for eligible companies in the Kingsditch and Lansdown areas of Cheltenham. Companies are invited to come along to learn more about how they can reduce environmental impact, improve business efficiency and the support available from Parklife.

The event is being held at The Forum in Lansdown Road, Cheltenham between 10am-12 noon followed by a networking lunch. For further information please contact:

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Parklife operates from sites in Cheltenham, the Forest of Dean, Gloucester, Cirencester, Tewkesbury and Stroudwater. It is managed by Gloucestershire First, the countywide economic partnership established to develop the economic wellbeing of the county. By bringing together partners in the field of economic development, including local authorities, the South West RDA and the private sector, it provides an overall strategic plan for Gloucestershire.