

RURAL BRIEFING – March 2010

In this briefing –

- Arthur Rank Centre BBC Radio 4 Appeal
- Rural Practitioners Group – Thursday 18th March
- Multi-Parish Training run by Arthur Rank Centre at Worth Abbey (20th -21st April)
- Churchyards
 - Kent Wildlife Churchyard Award 2010
 - Possible funding opportunities (Phillips Fund, Heritage Trees Project)
- Current Agricultural Issues

To register your interest in any of the items below, or further information please contact:

Caroline Pinchbeck, Diocesan Rural Life and Environmental Adviser

Email – caroline.pinchbeck575@btinternet.com

Post - The Rectory, Newnham Lane, Eastling, Faversham ME13 0AS

Telephone - 01795 890487 Mobile - 0789 443 4032

Arthur Rank Centre BBC Radio 4 Appeal – 7th March

The Arthur Rank Centre (ARC) has been a specialist centre on rural issues run by the churches for the last 38 years. It hosts the rural stress helpline and founded the ARC-Addington charity which helps with low cost housing for rural people. It is also the parent body of the Agricultural Chaplains Association. It will be the subject of BBC Radio 4's appeal on Sunday 7th March and Thursday 11th March or online at BBC.co.uk/Radio4.

Rural Practitioners Group –

The Practitioners Group is open to anyone, clergy or lay who has an interest in rural mission and ministry. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 18th March when the group will be visiting the Barham Downs Group. The day starts at 10am with coffee. The group will then be visiting the high spots of the Barham Downs group. Lunch will be in a local pub.

In our fourth year, the other meetings for 2010 are as follows -

Wednesday 12th May – Goudhurst with Kilndown

Thursday 16th September – Biddenden and Smarden

Tuesday 9th November – Ringwould with Kingsdown and Ripple with Sutton by Dover

All meetings start at 10am and end by 3pm.

To book your place contact the Rural Adviser

Multi-Parish Training 20th -21st April 2010 at Worth Abbey

For the first time, the Arthur Rank Centre is running its multi-parish benefice training in the South of England. The training workshop is open to those working in a multi-parish setting in urban or rural contexts and will be held at Worth Abbey from 20th -21st April. Provisional cost is £105. Places are very limited, so to book your place or express an interest in the course, please contact the Rural Adviser – caroline@churchinsociety.org

CHURCHYARDS

Kent Wildlife Churchyard Award 2010

In partnership with the Kent Wildlife Trust Wildlife Gardening Awards, for the first time there will be a special award for the Best Wildlife Churchyard. The award will be the Kent God's Acre Wildlife Churchyard and there will be Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. Entry forms will soon be available.

Kent God's Acre Project

All PCC secretaries have received information about the God's Acre Project and how it can be of use to local churches. They will have received an expression of interest form for the project, which if your church(es) are interested in the project it is vital that it is completed and returned as soon as possible.

Possible Funding Opportunities

The Phillips Fund

The aim of The Phillips Fund is to protect, conserve and enhance the use and character of Kent's rural landscape and its communities. The Fund supports charities, voluntary groups and community organisations using volunteers to deliver small but beneficial conservation and environmental projects to rural communities in Kent.

The kind of activities that might be supported:

- Planting of trees and hedging
- Regeneration of hedgerows or village ponds
- Creation of wildflower meadows, new native woodlands
- Restoration of local habitats

Applications are invited for grants of between £250 and £2,000. Grants will be awarded in April and October

For more information or to arrange a meeting with one of our outreach advisors please call 01303 814500 [The Phillips Fund](#) Kent Community Foundation, Office 23, Evegate Park Barn, Smeeth, Ashford TN23 6SX. E mail: admin@kentcf.org.uk

Kent's Heritage Trees Project - Run by Kent BTCV

Would you like to become involved?

Veteran and ancient trees (Heritage Trees) are the old trees we admire in our woodland and parkland, the gnarled oaks in the hedgerows and the willows alongside our rivers. We are fortunate to have an array of these old trees here in Kent. The great age, size and condition of these trees makes them a unique and vital habitat for wildlife. They are also 'green monuments' within our landscape, giving atmosphere and richness to the environment, in which we live and work.

BTCV (the UK's leading conservation charity) is applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a 5 year Kent Heritage Trees Project. The proposed initiative will help to promote, protect and conserve heritage trees within Kent and we are looking for volunteers of all ages, community groups, organisations and schools to become involved with this project. If our grant application is successful, free training, equipment and advice will be given to anyone who would like to get involved.

For further information contact the Rural Life Adviser

AGRICULTURAL ISSUES -

New business advice website

The business consultants “Business Link” has launched an online resource to help farmers wanting to apply best practice and understand government regulations. The resource brings together information on grants, environmental protection, running a farm business and the organic sector. Information is also available through its network of business advisers; helpline number 0845 600 9006 or www.businesslink.gov.uk

Costs of farm inputs rise

The cost of farm inputs continues to rise, and in the last six months costs have risen by about 2%. The rise in the “Agricultural Inflation Index” is primarily due to rising fertiliser costs, though the agricultural sector most affected has been the dairy sector due to increased protein and feed costs.

Consultation on supermarket ombudsman

The government is consulting on the implementation of proposals to create a supermarket ombudsman. The closing date for responses is 30th April and details are available on the government website www.berr.gov.uk