



Funding Forestry - Pilot Grant Scheme for North East

On the 1st of July, the Forestry Commission launched a pilot grant scheme which covers the southern part of the Region and offers financial support to forestry businesses. The *Woodland Harvesting, Processing and Marketing Grant* is available to forestry businesses looking to invest in harvesting and primary processing machinery. Activities which develop and promote new outlets for the use and marketing of forestry products are also covered. This could include woodfuel feasibility studies or developing new technology and products. The third strand of the grant scheme supports the establishment of associations of forest holders to help them improve the sustainable and efficient management of their forests.

For more information on the grant scheme and to find out if you are eligible, please contact the Northwoods office on 01669 621 489 or visit www.northwoods.org.uk

Grants start at £2000 and can go as high as £50,000, based on a contribution of 30%, although producer groups can claim 50%. Don't delay - the application window closes in October!



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www.neforestry.info

Selling yourself the e-business way

Every business can benefit by being on-line. It could help you contact more people through e-mail, increase your customers by having your details available on the internet and raise your business profile with a smart and effective website.

It is currently estimated that over 35 million people in the UK (that's over half the entire population) have internet access. By having your business on-line, you are making your business accessible to all of those potential customers.

How do I get my business on-line?

Northwoods have established the North East Forestry Portal. It's a website that provides information and services to businesses, the public and Northwoods partners. The portal has a specific "business listings" feature which allows users to search for local businesses. Just let Northwoods know your contact details and what goods or services you offer.

How do I get my own business website?

Northwoods are offering local wood-related businesses a free 3-page website for 12 months. Design and development will also be taken care of, you just need to tell us what you want your website to say and provide a couple of photos.

How do I manage my website?

We'll be running a series of local workshops to show you how to build your own website and help you get your business on-line. You don't even need to know how to use a computer - we'll show you that as well! The workshops will be short sessions at times and places convenient to you and will cover all the basics of on-line marketing.

>> Watch out for event fliers in the coming months.

For more information on the North East Forestry Portal visit:

www.neforestry.info

Have you visited our website lately?



You might be surprised if it's a while since you paid our website a visit. We put a lot of effort into making sure it's kept up-to-date with the latest information, news, training courses and events from the world of forestry, arboriculture, timber processing and allied trades.

So why not pay us a visit - it's the best way to keep up with what's happening across the Region and further afield.

What's happening with woodfuel?

If you're sitting in the forest reading this, it may not look like an awful lot. However, if you're sitting by the weighbridge at one of the UK's coal fired power stations - you'd have noticed that a hell of a lot has been happening with biomass! Large-scale woodfuel consumers will need hundreds of thousands of tonnes of biomass over the next few years - some very large contracts to supply this fuel have already been given out, with the knock-on effects starting to run right the way through the industry, right down to the contractor working at the sharp end.



On the supply side:

The application for funding to set up a North East woodfuel producer group has been submitted and a decision is expected from Defra's Crops for Energy Branch in London at the end of July.

>> Read more in "NEW Fuels - rapidly emerging market for your woodland products" (see below)

And on the demand side:

We all know that putting the boilers in is the expensive part. Regionally, plans are well advanced to establish a grant fund which will provide the support necessary to put more boilers in to schools, offices, shops and homes across the North East. Northwoods, along with a range of other organisations, are working closely with potential woodfuel consumers - building a strong economic and environmental case for woodfuel heating and power generation. In the short to medium term we anticipate seeing a network of small, medium and large scale consumers coming on-line across the Region - sourcing their fuel from local woodlands and forests.

what are wood fuels?

■ **chips** are wood fuel in the form of pieces of about 1-5cm with a relatively high moisture content (mc) of 20-50%, which puts demands on handling & storage.

■ **pellets** are finely ground material pressed into cylindrical pieces. Diameter usually <25mm, and mc no more than 10%. Produced from sawdust, cutter shavings, chips or bark.

■ **briquettes** are rectangular or round pieces produced by pressing together finely ground material with a piston press. Diameter >25mm, mc not normally above 15%.

NEW Fuels

NEW Fuels - a rapidly emerging market for your woodland products

The North East's Woodfuel Producer Group

Northwoods have submitted a bid to set up the first woodfuel producer group to cover the North East. The overall aim of the producer group is to make sure there is a guaranteed supply of timber to fuel the increasing number of woodfuel installations across the North East.

>>How will it work?

The Producer Group will be an established network of tree and timber businesses who are able to supply woodfuel to local installations. Northwoods would receive an enquiry for supply to a new installation and would match up local suppliers from the list of group members.

>>Is there any demand for woodfuel?

On an almost daily basis, Northwoods are being approached to provide guidance on the supply of different woodfuel products. Questions such as 'how much woodfuel is available?', 'how much woodfuel will we need?'

and 'where can I get the fuel from?' will all be answered by the NEW Fuels project.

>>Who manages and runs the Producer Group?

Northwoods will provide a comprehensive range of services to the Producer Group. These will include:

- * Promotion and marketing
- * Technical support
- * Membership services
- * Quality control
- * Contract management
- * Administration
- * Training

>>To become a member, or for more information, contact Northwoods.



High hedges for the chop!

New legislation came into force on 1 June this year which enables members of the public to take their complaint over their neighbour's evergreen hedge to their local authority. The authority then has the powers to adjudicate on whether or not the hedge should be given the chop, and just how much should come off.

The legislation comes in the wake of high-profile cases of nuisance hedges causing disputes between neighbours, two of which ended in deaths. Part 8 of the *Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003* was brought in to try and deal with the problem of fast-growing evergreen species such as *Leylandii*, which grow quickly and to considerable heights. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has guidance and information on this subject available on their website at www.odpm.gov.uk/treesandhedges.

If neighbours get into a real barney over their hedge, and it does happen, they may ask you to cut the hedge for them - don't be sucked-in - you'll be breaking the law if you act without the permission of the hedge owner. Northwoods are running a technical seminar on the subject of High Hedges at Houghall College in September. See the training calendar on the back page for more details.

STOP PRESS!

Energy Crops and Logistics Training

A new training course is being developed by Northwoods to address the establishment, processing and logistics associated with the production of short rotation coppice (SRC) and the handling and supply of SRC, wood chip and wood pellets.

The short training course will be a mixture of classroom-based sessions and practical workshops held locally in the North East with the support of the Learning Skills Council, Northumberland.

The course is suitable for foresters or farmers looking to gain new skills or have an interest in renewable energy markets.

Register your interest for the Winter 2005-6 course with Northwoods now.

Trees and Timber Apprenticeship

Helping individuals to develop a career in the trees and timber industry.

How apprenticeships work

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes which provide a structured path to gaining knowledge and skills. Apprentices both "earn and learn" whilst achieving nationally recognised qualifications.

Benefits to your business

The new programme is designed to be flexible so the apprenticeship programme can be tailored to the employers and apprentices needs. As an employer, apprenticeships provide real benefits to your business:

>> Your new apprentice contributes to your bottom line with practical skills and knowledge acquired through training.

>> Apprenticeships produce a worker who is familiar with your business and trained for your industry.

>> An apprenticeship offers high quality training ensuring you get a competent employee.

Employers and individuals wishing to get involved in Forestry or Arboriculture Modern Apprenticeships should contact NPTC on:

Tel 02476 857300 or by visiting www.nptc.org.uk



news in brief

>> new hazardous waste regulations are to be enforced from July 2005. Check the facts and be prepared. A copy of the definition & classification of hazardous waste is available in the Northwoods office or by visiting:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/waste

>> The 1st 10 minutes can be critical!

Northwoods can arrange for you to become an Appointed Person in First Aid, which is HSE recognised and valid for 3 years. Courses run regularly across the NE, and at subsidised cost. Contact Jo Pringle to arrange a 1-day course on Tel: 01669 621 489

>> The Forestry Commission have launched their new woodland grant scheme, the English Woodland Grant Scheme.

e.wgs

The scheme covers assessment and planning, woodland regeneration, improvement, management and woodland creation. Visit their website for further information.

www.forestry.gov.uk

Ignite

Woodfuel is everywhere at the moment - the pages of the forestry press are bulging with chippers, woodfuel boilers, power station statements and wild speculations about new markets for old timber. You can't escape it - and it's certainly here to stay. So, what are *your* options? Become an ostrich; bury your head in an ever increasing stack of low grade, poor quality timber you just don't know what to do with, or come along and take part in the next Ignite session.



What's ignite? The first formal qualification in woodfuel production, Ignite is a three day training course - which brings in experts from across the UK. The course covers the background to woodfuel production, sourcing woodfuel, woodfuel systems and the latest technology available for production.

What will I get out if? Feedback from delegates who have completed the course to date has been extremely positive, and has even inspired some people to go the whole hog and set up woodfuel supply companies. Other businesses are using the qualification to show new and existing customers that they are qualified and competent, supplying quality woodfuels.

Large scale forestry businesses now have a much better understanding of the most efficient harvesting systems and the technology and machines used to supply some of the larger woodfuel consumers. You'll also get a qualification - a VRQ in Renewable Energy (woodfuel).

How long will it take? We've packaged the full ignite course together into three days - covering the essential background to woodfuel, environmental and political drivers, sourcing and processing woodfuel, woodfuel systems and boiler technology.

Where can I find out more? Your best bet is to

phone the Northwoods office and talk to one of us about the next ignite course. Or, you can check the Northwoods website at: www.northwoods.org.uk/ignite. We already have a waiting list for the next course - so we can expect another full house for the September session.

Already done ignite? We're in the process of sorting out the qualification with Lantra. As this is the first qualification of its kind in the UK, there are a few more hurdles to jump and forms to fill in - then we'll be in touch to let you know how and when you can get your hands on the all important bit of paper!

Why do I want a qualification in chopping wood?

Training and Events Diary

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|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--|
| Borders Green Festival | 31 July | Berwick-upon-Tweed | Craig White crw@berwick-upon-tweed.gov.uk |
| Timber Research Update | 13 September | Roslin, Midlothian | Evelyn Hall Tel: 0131 445 2176 |
| Ignite 3-day intensive | Mid-September | Northumberland | Northwoods 01669 621 489 |
| High Hedges Technical Seminar | 29 September | Houghall College | Northwoods 01669 621 489 |
| Tree Safety Management | 29 September | Burnley, Lancashire | Paul Bullimore 01772 533917 |
| Working with Wood Exhibition | 8-11 October | NEC Birmingham | Enquires: 01629 826999 www.w6exhibition.com |
| Arb:North | Mid-November | Houghall College | Northwoods 01669 621 489 |

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A New Home for Northwoods

Following the threat of redundancy from the FCA on our return from the Christmas break, we took the bold step of going teaming up with colleagues in Yorwoods and going it alone.

It hasn't been as smooth a process as it might have been, but thanks to the support of our steering group and many of those working in the Region's tree and timber industries, we've established a new managing company, Rural Development Initiatives, to host Northwoods and Yorwoods. We're still in the same place, doing the same things, and you can find out more at:



www.ruraldevelopment.org.uk



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Supporting the North East's tree and timber businesses