

# West Side

## Story

With its largely rural environment, West Kent has a distinct set of business issues. The West Kent Partnership works for the area.

**T**he West Kent Partnership is an Economic and Strategic Partnership operating across Sevenoaks District and the boroughs of Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling.

By bringing together organisations from public, private, community and voluntary sectors the Partnership works on strategic issues that impact on quality of life and economic success in West Kent.

### Leading the way

The Partnership has an ongoing focus on sustaining and strengthening the local economy. The Partnership recently secured a £2m Leader programme that offers an exciting new source of funding for farmers, growers, foresters and rural businesses and communities to help secure a sustainable future for West Kent's rural areas.

The funding is being made available from the Rural Development Programme England (RDPE) and a Local Action Group (LAG) for West Kent has been established to lead the programme's implementation. West

Kent LAG investment is intended to improve the long-term viability of businesses and reduce reliance on future support funding. Leader will help add value and ensure and enhance sustainable development.

Recent Leader grant contributions to support West Kent businesses include:

- Marketing and promotion of Mitchell & Peach, a new luxury toiletries range using locally farmed lavender
- Branding, bottling, website development and launch events in support of Arena Gold apple juice. As well as being sold commercially, this product will market the outdoor pursuits parent company, Arena Pursuits.
- Supporting the ongoing viability of Kentdown Mushroom farm – the only remaining mushroom farm in Kent – by contributing to the purchase of wood processing machinery that keeps a steady staff workload during winter months.

### Supporting West Kent

Alongside addressing common economic issues, the Partnership identifies strategic issues for lobbying

and other interventions. Projects currently underway include lobbying on transport routes in West Kent and commissioning a new Investment Strategy to support West Kent businesses.



[www.westkentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.westkentpartnership.org.uk)

