

# northwoods news



2 - Welcome and update

3 - Tynedale Tree Skills

4 - NEWHeat

6 - Ignition09

7 - bioNErgy

8 - Northumberland fire group

9 - About Northwoods

Informing the north east's tree and timber businesses  
since 2000

# Welcome and staff update

This edition of the Northwoods News comes to you at a time of seismic economic events which could impact on all of us.

Unfortunately, those of us working in the tree and timber or wider rural development sectors are not immune from the turmoil engulfing the financial markets and related sectors, but increasing diversification of traditional forestry into things such as biomass can greatly improve our ability to weather the storm.

We also have news about several new programmes which could help you and your business with expansion or training.

The first training programme is called Tynedale Tree Skills, and it can potentially fund individuals or small businesses up to 75% of their training costs in forestry-related skills.

The budget is limited, so there may be caps on how much can be claimed, but please get in touch if you would like to find out more.

We are also waiting to find out what will come from the RDPE forestry training package - this is still being worked on, and the training deliverers have yet to be appointed, but as soon as we find out more we'll publish the details on the Northwoods website.

Since our last newsletter we have taken on a new project officer to run the RDPE bioENERgy grant scheme for woodfuel supply in the north east.

Jennifer Hewitson is a native of Northumberland, and has a great pedigree with assisting businesses in the rural sector. She has an MSc in Rural Development from Newcastle University, and has worked in the sector for several years.

She has already made a great start to the project and has been instrumental in getting a number of businesses through the grant process.

Further information on the bioENERgy scheme can be found later in this edition of Northwoods News.



Katarzyna Zielewska - our new project officer who will be joining us in November.

She will be managing the European BEN project which has partners from Germany, Poland, Austria and Italy (as well as us in the UK).

# About RDI

Finally, the European-funded Biomass Energy Networks project will be starting in November, and we have a new staff member to carry out that work.

Katarzyna is our latest recruit, coming to us from her work in the Faculty of Forest Sciences at Frieberg University, Germany. She speaks fluent Polish and German, which should come in useful in a project with German and Polish partners (amongst others).

The project officially kicks off at the end of November, and we'll give you a full breakdown of what to expect from it in the next

newsletter. However, some initial activities will include:

GIS mapping of the north east to link up heat loads and biomass resource

Strengthening existing biomass networks in the region

Working on development of a web-based resource to help decision-makers with biomass specification

Rural Development Initiatives is a not-for-profit organisation which runs a variety of projects in the sector.

RDI runs two Woodland Initiatives, one of which is Northwoods, the other being our sister organisation in Yorkshire, Yorwoods.

For further information about RDI and the projects we run, visit the RDI website (details at the end of the newsletter).

## Tynedale Tree Skills

Tynedale Tree Skills is the latest training programme to come out of the Northwoods training stable.

Launched earlier this year with funding from Tynedale Council, the programme provides a grant subsidy to people wishing to enter the forestry sector, or to improve the skills of existing workers in the field.

There has been considerable

interest in the scheme, which can offer up to 75% funding for individuals or small businesses (50% funding for larger businesses) for relevant training.

If you want to improve your skills in the forestry sector, please get in touch with Pam Baker (see contact details at the end of the newsletter), to check whether you are eligible.



# NEWHeat - going from strength to strength

NEWHeat is entering the home straight, with only 6 months to go until the project ends (March 31st 2009)

This means that businesses, social enterprises and other revenue-generating organisations have only a short time in which to take advantage of the free or heavily subsidised services offered.

The main aim of the programme is to provide 300 site visits and feasibility studies for businesses in the north east, in order to help them decide whether or not biomass heating is a viable option for them.

In today's climate of high fossil fuel prices, there are many businesses which could save a considerable amount on their heating bills by switching to wood heating.


Modern biomass boilers are extremely efficient (more than 90%), environmentally friendly, and the fuel can be considerably cheaper than oil or LPG. With recent price rises, we are even seeing sites with access to mains gas which can reduce their bills by switching!

The local wood fuel producer group, NEWFuels, can help advise you on the best fuel, and ensure that the delivery

is from local, sustainable sources. This service is also provided as part of the overall package, and free of charge.

The services offered by NEWHeat are summarised overleaf - get in touch if you want to find out more about any of them.

**MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES. BUT LOWER HEATING**





# What can newheat offer you??

- 1 Free site visit and feasibility study on whether your business (or other revenue-generating operation) could benefit from biomass heating
- 2 80% subsidy for detailed design work which is necessary for the biomass installation
- 3 Handholding through all stages of the development through to installation
- 4 Assistance on getting a local, sustainable, high-quality and reasonably-priced source of wood fuel
- 5 Subsidised training places on the award-winning Ignite course, currently being offered at different sites in the north east

## BILLS DO.

The fuel of the future is cheap, clean and sustainable. It's also rather familiar. A wood-fuelled boiler can be up to 50% cheaper to run compared to fossil fuels and reduces carbon emissions by more than 90%. And with subsidised installation costs it could pay for itself in less than three years. Hundreds of companies are already enjoying the benefits of wood heat – take a leaf out of their book and contact us today for free impartial advice.

0845 4786 300  
[www.newheat.org](http://www.newheat.org)



newheat



# Ignition09 - the UK woodfuel expo

Coming soon to a Sage near you (March 11th and 12th 2009) - the Ignition09 UK woodfuel expo.

Brought to the north east courtesy of One NorthEast's NEWHeat project, we are delighted to present a two-day woodfuel extravaganza, taking place at The Sage, Gateshead in March 2009.

The event is completely free for visitors, and features an exciting range of exhibitors and workshops on all aspects of woodfuel and wood heating.

With exhibitors and visitors from across the UK, there are sure to be superb networking and business

opportunities - or perhaps you just want to catch up on the latest technological developments in the sector.

The event kicks off with a heated debate - a panel discussion involving some of the most outspoken and experienced people in the business, including a star guest speaker to be announced.

The extensive workshop programme includes issues such as:

- Local authority heating schemes
- District heating schemes
- ESCOS
- Supply chain Logistics

- Buyers guide to woodfuel
- Calculating whole life costs of wood fuel systems
- Specifying biomass boilers
- Planning issues

There is also a series of field trips which will take in a number of regionally-important biomass installations to give a good understanding of what makes a successful biomass project.

To find out more about the event, go to [www.ignition09.co.uk](http://www.ignition09.co.uk)



ignition 09  
The UK Woodfuel Expo

# bioENERgy - supporting woodfuel supply in the region

# B

The RDPE bioENERgy support programme is now up and running from the Northwoods office. The aim of the programme is to offer grant intervention to strengthen and develop the emerging bio-energy sector in the North East region. The grant will run until December 2009 and the total fund available is £1.2m, this has been split between application rounds throughout the programme.

The first application round saw the decision making panel give the green light to five applications, subject to the provision of additional information and satisfactory resolution of some small

queries. These applications will result in over £70,000 worth of grant aid being awarded to rural micro-businesses across the North East region.

The successful projects included the purchase of a second hand harvester, firewood processor and tipping trailer, a forwarding trailer and the construction of a wood chip store and chip trailer. These grants will provide valuable support for businesses investing in bioenergy and will help to grow the sector in the NE.

The next application deadline is 19 November 2008, if you would like to meet this date please get your expression of interest in as soon as possible.

To discuss the programme

and/or your ideas further please phone the project officer Jennifer Hewitson at Northwoods, or e-mail [jennifer@northwoods.org.uk](mailto:jennifer@northwoods.org.uk).

To see guidance notes and an expression of interest form visit the RDI website and follow links for 'bioenergy'

# NE



# Fire groups - Northumberland and Cumbria

The Northumberland Fire Group is moving into its third year and support from our partners in Northumberland County remains strong. Wildfire activity was low this past year in Northumberland, but a major wildfire occurred in West Yorkshire and there were numerous wildfires around the UK.

Wildfire potential in the Northumberland countryside remains high and the Fire Group will seek to strengthen ties with our partners through participation in group member activities to ensure that we will be prepared for the next wildfire in Northumberland.

Landmarc, land agent for the Ministry of Defense, will be giving £25,000 to the Fire Group for the purchase of an Argo Cat (see below). The Argo Cat will be based at Otterburn Camp and will be available to members of the wildfire group in the event of a wildfire.

BBC Radio 4 aired a piece on

the Northumberland Fire Group on their "Open Country" programme in August. The show was a great opportunity to spread the word about the sterling work of the Fire Group.

A Wildfire Public Awareness DVD that explains the potential for wildfire to occur in Northumberland and the potentially devastating impacts of these wildfires has been created by the Fire Group and is available to view from the Northwoods website.

A Fire Group evaluation is currently being completed. The evaluation will help the group to identify areas of the project that could be improved and also determine future group activities.

We are also delighted to be working with a range of partners in Cumbria to start up a Wildfire Group there.



The steering group has approved the work programme, and we will shortly be commencing work on fire plans and related activity in Cumbria. Watch this space in future Northwoods News for further information....



# And finally....

After many years of loyal service, we're about to replace our website with something new. The new website will hopefully be live by the time you read this - if not, just wait a few days!

Navigation has been improved, so you should find it easier than ever to find the information that you need. And the back end is more user-friendly, so it'll be much more straightforward to keep up to date from our side - more reason to visit our online presence than before to keep up to date with our events, training and project activities.

Let us know what you think about the new site!



...it's out with the old...  
...and in with the new!



# About Northwoods

**N**orthwoods is the woodland initiative for the north east. We run a wide variety of projects to do with forestry, renewable energy, wildfire management and training.

We work with a wide range of partners across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

We currently have five staff, and are will shortly take on our sixth when Katarzyna joins us to run the BEN project in November.

We also recently said goodbye to Katie Coombs, who completed her placement with us in August with the publication of her MSc dissertation on the waste wood stream - the

dissertation is an excellent primer on the biomass waste stream, and is available for download from our website.

We wish Katie all the best in her post-MSc job hunting!

## Northwoods is....

David Clubb - Project Director  
Ethan Bigelow - Project Officer (Wildfire)  
Jennifer Hewitson - Project Officer (bioENERgy)  
John Farquhar - Project Officer (Biomass)  
Katarzyna Zielewska - Project Officer (BEN)  
Pam Baker - Admin Assistant

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