

E.coli at farm visitor attraction

A popular farm attraction in Godstone in Surrey has recently hit the headlines as the centre of a large *E.coli* O157 outbreak.

A significant number of people were affected including children under the age of 10 year who were seriously ill in hospital.

Earlier this year Wealden's Public Protection Team carried out visits to all of Wealden's visitor attractions where the public are allowed contact with animals, particularly farm animals. The primary aim of the visits was to ensure that proprietors and their staff were aware of the issues with *E.coli* O157 and had appropriate facilities and controls in place. Letters and follow up visits were also carried out where necessary to ensure that all the attractions have adequate hand washing facilities, together with appropriate, clearly displayed, signs explaining why hand washing is important. We also ensured that any 'picnic' or eating



areas are well separated from the animals and that animals are not permitted into these areas even when the attraction is closed.



A high level of co-operation was shown by all of our businesses, with customer safety already high on their agenda.

However, it is important to remember that parents have an important role to play and children should always wash their hands after handling animals and before eating. Farm animals are a major source of the bacteria and it is impossible to ensure that they are all kept free from infection.

Effective hand washing remains the most important way that infection can be avoided.

If you would like further information about the project please contact the public protection team on 01323 443302 or email: foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk

More public toilets through Community Convenience Schemes

By working in partnership with local restaurants, cafés, shops and pubs, the Council hopes to be able to provide a wider choice of clean, safe toilet facilities for the general public in the district's main towns and villages.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services said: "We want to work with local businesses to make clean, safe and accessible toilets available to the public, including tourists in Wealden. We will provide a payment to those premises operating the Community Convenience Scheme and by doing so we will make savings on the overall cost of toilet provision. I believe the increase in facilities will be of real benefit to everyone in Wealden, including our visitors".

The schemes are widely publicised with participating

premises displaying stickers in their windows, signs in public car parks and information on the internet. Crowborough and Forest Row will be first if enough local businesses are interested.

They will then be expanded to other local centres. All premises are assessed and the financial support for the business will depend on the number, standard and type of facilities, and opening hours. The money paid is intended to cover the extra costs incurred.

Agreements will be for a fixed period, normally three years. Businesses will have the option to withdraw from the scheme if necessary.

Businesses interested in learning more should contact Martin Ashdown on 01323 443619, email: martin.ashdown@wealden.gov

FOCUS ON...

using your home as a workplace

If you already work from home or are planning to set up and run a 'work at home' business, there are a number of points to consider.

In some cases working from home can affect your mortgage, your home insurance, your tax situation and even your neighbours.

UK building regulations and planning permission

If running your business from home means that the use of the building changes a lot, or the activities that you undertake have an effect on the area where you live, you may need to apply for planning permission from your local authority.



You may have to apply for planning permission if:

- Your home will no longer be used mainly as a private residence. This is the key test – has it become business premises first and a home second?

- Your business activities will lead to increased traffic or parking in a residential area.
- Your business involves any unusual activities for a residential area.
- Your business may disturb your neighbours at unreasonable hours or create other forms of nuisance, such as noise or smells.
- You are making major structural changes to your property, altering or extending it.

Visit: www.wealden.gov.uk/planning_and_building_control/index.aspx for more information.

Business rates

You may be able to make minor business use of your home without paying business rates. But if you convert part of your home exclusively for business use (eg a workshop), you may become liable.

www.wealden.gov.uk/business/Business_Rates/Index.aspx

Free Business Link Guide 'Use your home as a workplace' can be accessed on the wealden business help website www.wealdenbusinesshelp.co.uk

For more information contact Claire Moran, Economic Development & Tourism Officer on 01892 602884/6 or email: claire.moran@wealden.gov.uk

Is your Safer Food Better Business (SFBB) still valid?

Many of our food businesses have adopted the 'Safer Food Better Business' system of managing food safety within their operation. A lot of them very successfully.

However, officers are continually finding that businesses that started this system have not kept the diary up to date.

If there are no records to back up that the system is operating ie if the diary is not signed off that the opening and closing checks have taken place and all is working satisfactorily, then the business effectively has no food safety management system in place.

Put simply a completed Safer Food Better Business Pack is not valid without the daily records.

Please remember that a written system showing how you manage food safety is a legal requirement. In some low-risk businesses this can be a very simple system which records the simple checks taking place.

SFBB is only one of a number of systems to show how you manage food safety. Higher risk businesses and food production units often use their own system based

on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). All such systems need records to prove controls are taking place .

If you would like more information about food safety management please ring our Public Protection Team on 01323 443302 or email: foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk

If you require more diary sheets for SFBB please contact the Food Standards Agency directly on: www.food.gov.uk or call 0845 606 0667.



NHS Credit Crunch Stressline

Worried about the recession?
So much so you can't sleep?
Or fear the worst?

Talk to us. Call 0300 123 2000,
8am to 10pm, 7 days a week



Mobile catering units

Do you operate or are you thinking of operating a mobile catering unit?

Our officers are often asked about the rules on where you can trade, what regulations apply and what, if any, permissions are needed. The following information should help to explain the situation.

In the area covered by Wealden District Council, there are no restricted streets or areas. However, you will need to check with the land owner before you operate from private land e.g. car park. East Sussex County Council are in charge of most highways and lay-bys, it is best to check they are happy for you to park on a highway location.

In any situation you will need to abide by the Road Traffic Acts and the Highway Code. The police have got power to move traders who are parking illegally.

In some other local authority areas certain streets, lay-bys and land may be either prohibited or restricted for trading purposes. You must check with the Environmental Health Department in other districts to see what, if any, restrictions apply. You may then need to apply for a licence, with that local Authority, if you wish to trade in their area.

Planning permission may also be required in certain circumstances if you wish to trade from private land. Generally this applies if the vehicle remains in one place continually. Both yourself and the site owner should

therefore consult the Council's Planning Department on 01892 602579 for further information on this matter.

Prior to opening a business you must do the following:

- 1 Contact the Environmental Health Officers to arrange for the unit to be inspected and to ensure that you comply with Food Safety Regulations and Health and Safety legislation.
- 2 Register your business with the local authority in whose area you store the vehicle overnight by completing a Food Premises Registration Form.
- 3 If you intend to supply hot food or hot drinks between 11pm and 5am you will need to contact our Licensing Officers for a premises licence to serve late night refreshments.

Once open, the unit will be regularly inspected by Food Safety Officers of Wealden District Council. If you trade outside our area, your unit could be inspected by officers from other local authorities. Trading Standards Officers from East Sussex County Council and Licensing Officers from Wealden will also visit you from time to time.

If you require further information on mobile trading please ring 01323 443302 or email: foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk or 01323 443555 about serving late night refreshments.



Food Standards Agency to support Wealden lunch clubs



Wealden District Council have been successful in their bid to the Food Standards Agency for a £10,000 grant to help support local voluntary lunch clubs. There are over 30 lunch clubs operating across the Wealden area, providing lunches, coffee mornings etc. for older people, many in very rural locations. The clubs provide a vital link for many older people who could easily become socially isolated.

The bid was developed by the Council working closely with Action in Rural Sussex and the two organisations will continue to work together on the delivery of it. In addition a working group has been formed with the Council, Action in Rural Sussex and nine representatives from various lunch clubs. This group will meet on an 'as and when necessary' basis during the life of the project

and be responsible for ensuring effective delivery.

The money will be used to offer training and other support in both food hygiene and nutrition to the voluntary lunch clubs in the Wealden area.

The national grant scheme was open to competitive bids, which were judged against a number of criteria. Wealden were one of 23 successful bids out of over 100 applications from all over the Country.

The project will commence in September and will run through to November 2010.

If you would like more information please contact Jeremy Leach on 01323 443305 or email: jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk

Fraudsters target food businesses claiming to be Food Standards Agency

The fraudsters claim that they are there to carry out inspections and then extract substantial amounts of money as a fixed penalty fee for the premises being allegedly unhygienic. **More information on www.food.gov.uk or ring 01323 443302.**

Gaming machines

Businesses should be aware that from 31 July 2009, category D gaming machines, also known as



Amusement with Prizes machines, will no longer be permitted in general, non-gambling premises such as fish and chip

shops, cafes, takeaway premises and mini-cab offices.

Permits for Amusement with Prize machines, previously issued by licensing authorities under section 34 of the Gaming Act 1968, will cease to have effect from 31 July 2009. It will therefore be an offence for category D gaming machines to be offered in non-gambling premises, such as those listed above, from that date.

Clubs, pubs and bars may continue to offer category C and D gaming machines provided that:

- their S34 permit, issued under the Gaming Act 1968 has not yet expired*; or,
- in the case of alcohol licensed premises, the premises licence holder has given notice to the licensing authority of their intention to make up to two of these machines available; or,
- they hold a relevant permit issued under the Gambling Act 2005

For more advice on any of the above please contact the Licensing Team on 01323 443555 or e-mail: environmentalprotection@wealden.gov.uk

** Any entitlement under such a permit shall cease to have effect from 31st August 2010.*

Keep your registration up-to-date

As you know the law requires all food business operators to register any premises used for a food business (including market stalls, delivery vehicles and mobile vans) with their local authority. This helps the Wealden food safety officers keep an up to date list of businesses in the area.

If you have received this newsletter then we already know about your business, but do we have your details correct? Our officers often find that the businesses have changed hands, or activities, but the changes have not been 'registered' with us.

Registration is free and it helps us to decide how often we need to visit, by keeping us up to date with the activities taking place. It also allows us to keep the right people in the right businesses up to date with any current food safety issues.

If your businesses details have changed contact us for a new registration form on 01323 443302 or email: foodandsafety@wealden.gov.uk

A newsletter from the Public Protection Team of Wealden District Council

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Don't forget to check what's happening to support our businesses on www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk and in the Wealden Business Focus Magazine also on the site.

Funding for rural businesses and development projects

European funding is available from South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) as part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

The money must be used to fund activities that have a long term impact on the profitability and sustainability of land based industries, tourism enterprises, rural businesses and rural communities.


There is £2.4 million of LEADER funding to spend in the Wealden and Rother area, over the next 5 years 2009-2013. Individual projects can apply for up to £50,000.

All of the rural Parishes in Wealden plus the market towns of Hailsham and Heathfield are included.

A wide range of projects are eligible, including activities such as farm diversification; adding value to agricultural and forestry products; tourism; renewable energy and community projects, including projects highlighted in village action plans.

To check if your business could benefit contact Kathy Fordham, Wealden's Rural Development Programme Project Officer on 07985 871792, email: kathy.fordham@wealden.gov.uk



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



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