



Rural Development Programme for England  
for rural businesses and communities in South West England

# News Release

8 June, 2009

## Grant gets nursery off the ground

This autumn will see a significant change for the Farthing family in Lovington when farmer's wife Katherine Farthing opens her long-awaited children's day nursery at Brue Farm, catering for children aged from three months to five years.

Over the past two years the project has gradually taken shape with a feasibility study, discussions with local schools and parents, the drawing up of detailed plans and obtaining planning permission.

Now the final part of the process is complete. With the award of a £129,000 Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) grant towards costs, work is underway.

Brue Farm, together with the adjoining Alford Farm, which has a herd of 300 cows, is farmed by third generation dairy farmers Mrs Rachael Farthing and her son, Justin,

The idea for the nursery was born when Justin's wife, Katherine, decided to return to work when the youngest of their three children was a few months old.

"I looked around for day nursery care and it soon became apparent that there was nothing within a nine mile radius of us, including Castle Cary," said Katherine.

The family decided that their farm would provide the ideal location for a day nursery, and over the last two years Katherine has devoted her time, energy and enthusiasm to the project, commissioning her feasibility study and starting her childcare training, which is still continuing.

She got in touch with the South West Rural Enterprise Gateway to find out how to progress her idea and was told about the RDPE grants. Once she had forwarded her outline proposal, Graham Woolcock, SW REG adviser for Somerset, visited the farm to assess requirements, and brokered-in professional support in the shape of business adviser Roger Bacon. He helped the Farthings complete cash-flows projections and a robust business plan.

The construction is being undertaken by Wrencon Ltd based in Taunton and the nursery is scheduled to open at the beginning of October '09.

There has been overwhelming local support for the nursery project and already a lot of interest from both prospective parents as well as possible employees.



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"We will take children aged from three months to five years and be open from 8am until 6pm for 50 weeks of the year," said Katherine. "We aim to provide a safe and happy environment which will bring new opportunities for children to learn and enjoy a purposeful day.

"The emphasis will be on quality care with the advantage of raising children's awareness of the countryside around them. We strongly believe that *Quality Country Care Produces Contented Children*. I will be recruiting a fully qualified and experienced manager together with qualified full and part-time staff as well as being hands-on myself.

"We have also been building relationships with local food businesses because we will provide home-cooked meals prepared in the nursery kitchen using locally sourced ingredients.

"Our outdoor space is very important to us. We will keep hens, have a pet corner and also have plans for a vegetable garden and a Forest School."

In developing their plans for the new building, Katherine and Justin paid great attention to the design of the building from a functional perspective, and visited a number of other nurseries for their valuable input.

The design incorporates energy and water efficient technologies which will reduce its carbon footprint. The nursery build will include:

- A ground source heat pump to reduce the requirement for heating oil.
- Zoned sensor lighting
- Roof window vents to eliminate the need for air conditioning
- Water butts
- Bicycle stands to encourage cycling

"This project has the potential to benefit this rural area by providing nursery places where none currently exist. It will also create employment opportunities, both at the nursery itself and by enabling families who have started a family to return to their work," said Alan Titcombe, of the South West RDA, which manages the Rural Development Programme for England in the region.

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For further information, please contact Pat Murray, of the South West RDA press office, on 07733264756 or Mrs Katherine Farthing on 07970 891784

## Notes to editors

### RDPE

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) runs from 2007 to 2013. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy and aims to support the creation of genuinely sustainable farming, forestry and food sectors, whilst also bringing wider benefits for the economy, the environment and rural communities. It



provides the major financial vehicle for protecting and enhancing the environment and securing a range of public benefits for society. Defra is the Managing Authority.

The RDPE has three priorities for rural development:

1. Improving competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sectors
2. Improving the environment and the countryside
3. Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity

In this region, the South West of England Regional Development Agency (RDA) will deliver priorities 1 and 3 with a budget of £156.8 million over the seven years. The RDA is also responsible for ensuring that five per cent of the RDPE funding is spent on enabling community involvement in rural development. The delivery partners in the South West aim to ensure that investment in each of the three priorities will help support investment in the others.

The RDPE priority for improving the environment and the countryside is being delivered nationally by the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme and Natural England's Environmental Stewardship Scheme. In addition, a minimum of 5% of the programme will be delivered through a local community-led approach.

The aims, objectives and priorities for delivering RDPE in South West England were agreed for the socio-economic investments with regional partners and these are set out in the Regional Implementation Plan. On the basis of a thorough analysis of South West England's rural characteristics and economy, the Plan sets out eight themes:

- i. Skills development
- ii. Social enterprise
- iii. Business support
- iv. Supply chain and adding value
- v. Resource management (soil, water, energy, waste)
- vi. Sustainable rural tourism
- vii. Biodiversity and landscape
- viii. Community-led development

Further more information on the RDPE and the schemes see [www.sw-ruralgateway.info](http://www.sw-ruralgateway.info)

#### Organisations involved in delivering RDPE

The South West RDA leads the development of a sustainable economy, investing to unlock the region's business potential. It works in partnership with public, private and social purpose organisations to drive up the region's productivity by giving people the skills they need, encouraging enterprise, improving infrastructure, regenerating places and promoting the strengths of the region. For more information see [www.southwestrda.org.uk](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk)

Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas. It conserves and enhances the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings. For more information see [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk) Environmental Stewardship (ES) was launched in 2005, builds on the very best practice already evident in British farming. During the period 2007-13 the national budget for ES will be £2.9 billion. The objectives of ES are to:

Conserve wildlife (biodiversity).

Maintain and enhance landscape quality and character.



Protect the historic environment and natural resources.  
Promote public access and understanding of the countryside.  
Natural resource protection.

The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry in Great Britain. It supports woodland owners with grants, tree felling licences, regulation and advice; promotes the benefits of forests and forestry; and advises Government on forestry policy. For further information, visit [www.forestry.gov.uk/england-swe](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/england-swe)



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