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Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum Development Fund profile

Development Fund granted	£1,000
Total cost of project	£1,750
Forum member community/ies	Fairford and Lechlade

Overview of project May 2009

Forum boost for award-winning business club

In this particularly harsh economic climate, the Fairford and Lechlade Business Club is playing an increasingly important role encouraging networking and promotion of local companies. Now, thanks to a £1,000 grant from the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum, the Club will have full admin support, including an interactive website at www.flbizclub.co.uk, which will be further developed to support its growing membership.

The Club's administrator, Chris Roberts, said: "We're delighted to have received a grant from GMTF to help with the running of this successful award-winning Club. We now have over 70 members from Fairford and Lechlade and outlying villages as well as Cirencester, Stroud, Cheltenham and Tetbury.

"Evening meetings are held monthly on the fourth Thursday, but the Club has just introduced breakfast meetings for March, June, September and December. If you would like to learn more, call 01285 712150 or email admin@flbizclub.co.uk."

The Club is run by volunteers and funded by annual membership subscriptions and fundraising and already contributed to the success of Fairford in the Calor Village of the Year 2008 competition and helped to win in the Business category. Three Sector Match awarded a prize to the Club for 'the mutual support that exists between the local businesses and the community'.

The Club's second annual Business Awards Ceremony in January was sponsored by businesses such as the Wilts & Glos Standard, Business Link, Intel Corporation, Cotswold Woollen Weavers, The Royal Air Force Charitable Trust Enterprises (RIAT) and The Raven Group. "The fact that these major businesses want to be associated with and support the Business Club is a measure of how successful the Club has been in helping the rural economy," added Chris.

"The Club was formed to bring more visitor spend to the area and increase the local economy. We are currently looking at forming a company limited by guarantee called Fairford and Lechlade Limited. Under this parent company, it is hoped to set up subsidiaries called Fairford and Lechlade Leisure, Fairford and Lechlade Business – offering packages bringing together the skills and services of member businesses - and Community Bio-Diesel."

The Club's Community Bio-Diesel project plans to collect all the waste vegetable oil from local restaurants, take-aways etc in the area and convert it to bio-diesel selling it at 19p per litre to run the Community Bus, school transport, dial-a-ride transport and hospital transport. Any profit generated will be used to fund the winner of the Outstanding Business Student of the Year, a young entrepreneur student from Farmor's School, who has completed a business course and wishes to set up his/her own business.

- For a GMTF Development Fund application form and more details, contact Geoff Wheeler (01453) 545583 or geof.wheeler@btinternet.com