



## Clinton Devon farmers help Europe-wide climate project



John Wilding and Pete Falloon

Farmers from Devon are helping scientists working on a pan-European project understand more about how long-range weather forecasts can help to preserve landscapes and support land management decisions across the globe.

The EUPORIAS project – which is made up of 24 organisations from across the continent, including the Met Office in Exeter – has enlisted the help of Clinton Devon Estates to provide meaningful information from the soil-face.

Dr Pete Falloon, from the Met Office's Hadley Centre, said: "A major aim of the EUPORIAS project is to better understand the needs of the people of Europe for weather and climate predictions, so we as a society can become more resilient and prepared for the future. What we are learning will also, we hope, be transferable to other parts of the world.

"A large part of this work involves understanding farmers' needs for weather forecasts not just looking at the next few days but weeks, months, seasons and even years ahead, and also understanding what those people responsible for managing our landscapes might do as a result of longer-term weather forecasts.

"Recent advances in science and technology mean we can now provide more accurate long-term forecasts over large areas, particularly during the winter in the UK. For instance, the chance that forthcoming seasons will be warmer and wetter than average, or colder and drier.

Now we want to understand in what form to provide this information to farmers and other land managers, and when, so they can make best use of it.

"We're particularly keen to understand what choices farmers make when planting winter cover crops such as rye corn which are used to protect the soil, to stop nutrients and indeed the topsoil itself being washed away in bad weather."

He revealed that discussions with a variety of farmers on Clinton Devon Estates land in both East and North Devon had so far shown a wide range of weather-related concerns including slurry storage, equipment and contractor hire, lambing time, and when to plant cover crops, when to move animals and when to get in the harvest.



Many of the farmers have said they would prefer earlier indications of autumn and winter conditions to better help them make key decisions about planting and harvesting, and want forecasts to be clearer and more specific for their areas, rather than for Devon as a whole, as well as information more relevant to agriculture such as dry days, rain days and heavy rain spells. Most would prefer a web-based system, as they all use the internet as well as their own observations to get current forecasts and other weather information.



Meeting some of these needs will not be without its challenges. Seasonal forecasts are normally presented as probabilities, which can be more difficult to interpret than standard weather forecasts. And at present, at county and UK scale, the seasonal forecasts are much less reliable for rainfall than they are for temperature. This is why working closely with the farmers is so critical to the project. Dr Falloon said: “We’ve found the farmers to be incredibly conscientious about looking after the landscape, and they are only too keen to have access to as much relevant information as possible about the weather and climate.

“We’ve learnt that what they really want are better forecasts about what each season has in store. For instance, at the moment, the farmers we spoke to seemed keen to be able to plant grass in the late autumn, rather than rye corn, as grass lasts longer and protects the soil better.

“But they are only able confidently to plant grass if they know they’re going to have six or seven weeks of mild weather. So these longer term forecasts could provide useful background information alongside shorter-term forecasts to support decision-making across a wide range of agricultural sectors.”

Indeed, the forecast for last winter helped Clinton Devon Estates themselves make a timely decision on whether to start felling trees in one of their sustainably managed forests.

John Wilding, the estates’ Head of Forestry and Environmental Economy, explained that a seasonal forecast provided by EUPORIAS last winter was that it would be wetter than average: “Based on that information we decided not to start felling in one

particular area in November as if we had started work and found we had to stop unexpectedly due to wet weather it could have resulted in damage to the soil.

“As forecast, that November was wetter than average, so in this case, the prediction proved particularly useful. We carefully manage our woodlands to make sure we have a wide range of tree species and age structures to provide habitats for numerous plant and animal species, and anything which helps us manage them better and keep erosion at bay is to be welcomed.”

Dr Falloon added: “We’re incredibly grateful to Clinton Devon Estates and the farmers in both East and North Devon for their time and valuable insight helping to shape the EUPORIAS project.

“What this help means is that we can provide information in the best way, and at the right time, so it is as useful as possible. We’ll now be using the valuable feedback we’ve had so far to help us develop a new version of the EUPORIAS land management prototype which we hope will be more closely aligned with the needs of farmers.

“Armed with what we now know we will be working with the NFU and talking to farmers further afield to gather more information about what could be required across the rest of the country.”

For more information on Euporias, see the website [www.euporias.eu](http://www.euporias.eu)



# Bicton Arena hosts charity fundraising event

Bicton Arena hosted a special charity evening on 22<sup>nd</sup> August, on behalf of The Eventing Family, an organisation set up to support four charities associated with friends and families within the eventing sport.

The evening, attended by a number of famous faces, raised nearly £40,000 for Motor Neurone Disease Association, Cancer Research UK, Teenage Cancer Trust, and Spinal Research.

Andrew Nicholson, William Fox-Pitt, Sam Twiston-Davies, Paul Nicholls, Philip Hobb, Sharon Hunt, Lucinda Green, Nick Schofield and Lucy Wieggersma are just a few of the names who pledged their support of the event, as well as Badminton and Burley Horse Trials which donated prizes for the charity auction.

Money raised will be split between the four charities that have been selected following tragic events and illnesses that have struck well-known and respected members of the community.



International event rider Aaron Millar launched The Eventing Family when he was left seriously injured after a car crash. Friends, family and colleagues rallied round him with support and formed a committee to create a fundraising party.

The eventing community was soon rocked further by even more sad news, learning that four star event rider Ben Hobday and 17-year-old Hannah Francis are battling with cancer and the news that Bicton Arena Manager Helen West's mother is suffering from motor neurone disease.

The team decided to host a special evening to raise funds as part of Bicton Arena British Eventing International Horse Trials.



Guests at the event were treated to a live performance from Joey the Lips and an auction of promises as well as a slave auction with members of the eventing community giving up their evening to become 'slaves' for the lucky bidders.

Helen West helped to host the event alongside Bicton Arena colleagues Beccy Barrett, Gemma Cooke, Debbie and Alex Jackson, Miranda Collett and Lucy Johnstone. In addition, British Eventing technical advisor Andrew Fell has taken on the role of Director of the committee whilst well-known riders such as Mary King, William Fox-Pitt, Harry Meade and Matt Frost all made generous donations to the auction to help boost funds.

Helen said: "The whole eventing community has been shocked and saddened this year by a string of bad news. We are a very dedicated group of people, a true family, and we support each other whether we are competing against each other or riding alongside.

She continued: "It has been an honour and a privilege to be a part of something so positive in the wake of these sad events. The community has really pulled together to host a fantastic event where top riders, officials, coaches, grooms and volunteers alike all got together to celebrate our wonderful sport and raise much needed funds for these four fantastic charities. Our work won't stop here; we will continue to work together to support one another, but we would like to thank everyone involved and all those who joined us for this special evening."

To find out more about The Eventing Family, please go to [www.eventingfamily.com](http://www.eventingfamily.com)

# Taylor Wimpey announced as Plumb Park development partner

Clinton Devon Estates has announced a joint venture partnership with Taylor Wimpey Exeter to deliver the first stage of the prestigious Plumb Park development in Exmouth.

Taylor Wimpey Exeter will build 264 new homes to a high quality specification, set-out by Clinton Devon Estates and inspired by the Avenues Design Statement.

The new homes at Littleham - 40 percent of which will be designated affordable housing for rent or shared ownership - will be set around 14 acres of parkland, community allotments and orchards and will feature over a mile of Devon banks.

The joint venture contract between Clinton Devon Estates' development company Littleham 2010 and Taylor Wimpey Exeter was awarded following a rigorous selection process followed by legal agreements to ensure the delivery of Clinton Devon Estates' vision for "a quality environment and a positive, lasting legacy for Exmouth".

A reserved matters planning application, detailing the design, layout and specification of the first 264 homes - of a total 350 granted outline planning consent in June 2013 - will be submitted to East Devon District Council following a public consultation.

John Varley, Estates Director for Clinton Devon Estates said: "Our selection process to secure the very best joint venture partner for Plumb Park has taken the best part of a year. It was imperative that our Trustees, our Board and our professional advisers were wholly confident that our chosen developer could deliver our stringent requirements for a positive, lasting legacy for Exmouth.

"The Avenues Design Statement will inspire the character of the whole of Plumb Park and the 105 affordable homes that this project will deliver for local people will meet the same design credentials.



"Plumb Park is in a highly sustainable location, providing pedestrian, cycle and public transport links to local amenities, the sea front and employment in both the town and at Liverton Business Park.

"We will do our utmost to ensure that the whole community will be proud of this part of Exmouth - now and for many generations to come."

Andrew Tildesley for Taylor Wimpey Exeter said: "Plumb Park is a prestigious scheme which we are delighted to have won on merit. It will be a bespoke Taylor Wimpey project in terms of the specification, design and materials and we very much look forward to working with Clinton Devon Estates to deliver the first new homes next year."



## Granite stone marks completion of partnership development

A granite stone has been unveiled by Lord Clinton to mark the completion of a distinct development of new homes and allotments in the East Devon town of Budleigh Salterton.

The Horizon development at Greenway Lane is a joint venture partnership between Clinton Devon Estates and Cavanna Homes which has provided 48 new homes, designed in the Arts and Crafts style of architecture, with 19 of the properties designated as affordable housing.

Head of Property and Land for Clinton Devon Estates, Leigh Rix said: "Our vision was to provide a good mix of well-designed new homes and more allotment space to meet the specific needs of this community. With clever master planning by LHC Architecture and working closely with our construction partner Cavanna Homes and Cornerstone housing association we have been able to deliver 40 percent affordable housing as well as increasing the allotments from 56 to 87."

East Devon District Councillor and Budleigh Salterton Town Councillor Tom Wright said: "This development has not only provided much needed housing in the area, but the new and improved allotments have helped to form a real sense of community amongst the



gardeners, with the allotments now acting as a hub of social activity."

Fred Sureshkumar, Head of Construction for Cavanna Homes said: "It is fantastic to see this development complete and we are pleased to say that there is now only one home that has not yet been sold."

Rick Williams, Chief Executive of Cornerstone housing association, which manages the affordable housing at Horizon said: "Rural communities such as Budleigh Salterton are finding it increasingly difficult to provide homes for younger people which results in them having to move away, often to a city, to find their first home. Projects like this which deliver a good mix of affordable rent and shared ownership are really important to ensure that communities like this are able to thrive."



# Celebrating the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths

Each July, families flock to the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths for Heath Week. An exciting range of free outdoor events take place throughout the week, celebrating the heritage, wildlife and beauty of this rare lowland habitat.

The events give local residents and visitors a chance to meet local experts and learn about the history, landscape and conservation work that make the heathlands so spectacular.

Illustrated talks and guided walks, an art exhibition, orienteering, bike rides and expeditions in search of the rare nocturnal Nightjar were among the many activities hosted this year by the Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust alongside partnership organisations such as the Devon Wildlife Trust, the East Devon countryside team and the RSPB.



The week kicked off with Heath Week Family Festival Day, an event that brought together a wealth of local organisations with plenty to interest all the family including wildlife rambles, art and crafts, mountain bike taster sessions and short pony rides.

A joint event organised with the Royal Marines saw over 800 people enjoying assault courses, weapon and vehicle displays and even trying ration pack food! The Royal Marines are based at nearby Lymstone Commando Training Centre and their recruits are a regular heathland feature, completing much of their commando training on the Woodbury Training Area. This event offered an opportunity for local people to find out just what they get up to and why the heathland is essential to their training regime.

The Pebblebed Heaths cover 2,800 acres and are estimated to be more than 240 million years old. The land, owned by Clinton Devon Estates, is managed by the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust



with the aim of ensuring this threatened ecosystem is protected.

The Trust is also responsible for ensuring all wildlife associated with the heathland flourishes, public access is protected and promoting environmental education.

The Heaths are located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and have both UK and European designations, including a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Without careful management, heathland can deteriorate into scrub, and this valuable open habitat with its rare animal and plant life would be lost. The Trust works with local community groups to demonstrate how and why the heaths are managed as they are; to maximise both the wildlife and public value of the site. Heath Week is an invaluable opportunity to discuss conservation grazing and heathland management, in addition to getting families out to see what the heaths can offer everyone.

Kate Ponting, Countryside Learning Officer for Clinton Devon Estates, said: "Heath Week is a great opportunity to get out and about in this beautiful part of the world and learn about the variety of wildlife living in this rare habitat. The heaths are very special and are enjoyed by thousands of people each year for walking, cycling, horse riding and bird watching. The events this year were a huge success, with hundreds of people turning out to show their support. We have a range of events planned throughout the rest of the year too, so it's not too late for people to get out and about and make the most of the heaths."