**TREE HEALTH AND PLANT BIOSECURITY INITIATIVE**

**TOWN MEETING**

Trees make a huge impact on our rural and urban landscapes and contribute to a vital part of our heritage, rural economy and well-being. In the last few years, several new pests and pathogens have emerged as significant risks to the UK’s woodlands, commercial forests and urban trees. The outbreak of ash dieback at the end of 2012 illustrates how rapidly new diseases can take hold, and the scale of the threat they can pose to trees.

The Living With Environmental Change (LWEC) Partnership is shortly to announce a new initiative to fund research into tree pests and pathogens, and associated plant biosecurity. At least £6.5M will be available for research projects. Details will be made available on the LWEC website in due course.

The initiative will require collaboration between specialists in tree or forest research, and leading-edge scientists from the wider natural, biological, social, economic or other relevant research communities who have other, broader expertise that could help to advance our knowledge about tree health and disease.

LWEC is holding a Town Meeting in London on 14th February to provide more information about this initiative. The Town Meeting will also provide an opportunity for researchers who do not currently work on tree health but who have expertise which may be relevant to this area to meet potential collaborative partners, and learn more about ongoing research in this area. The Town Meeting is free of charge to attend but please email tree.health@bbsrc.ac.uk to reserve a place.