



**NORTON CANON:** Patrick Wrixon's business is underpinned by his interest in biodiversity, including wetlands, a wind turbine and areas of pollen and nectar feed

**PRESIDENT**

Herefordshire farmer Patrick Wrixon is keen to promote a holistic system of sustainable development in his new role. **Anita Howells** reports

# 'Integrated farming is the way forward'



**NEW ROLE:** Patrick Wrixon has been elected president of the European Initiative for Sustainable Development (EISD)

**A** HEREFORDSHIRE farmer whose farm is a shining model of agricultural sustainability has been elected president of the European Initiative for Sustainable Development (EISD).

Patrick Wrixon's business at Norton Canon is underpinned by his interest in biodiversity and conservation.

His integrated farming method is something that the EISD is championing in Europe.

Following his election, Patrick stated: "We must not get tired of demonstrating to the public, to representatives of the media, to administrators and to politicians, that integrated farming is a truly sustainable approach, which allows for the efficient production of food, feed, fibre and energy for a continuously growing world population and also takes good care of nature and the environment."

He is hopeful that in the context of the current CAP reform, EU politicians will recognise the holistic system of integrated farming as one of the best ways to achieve sustainability in agriculture.

A quarter of Patrick's 200-hectare farm, Devereux Wooton, has been given over to environmental measures including 35 acres of re-established wetland.

Lapwings have been attracted back to the farm after a 25-year absence, together with curlews and snipes.

Wild bird seed mixes sown around the farm support farmland birds during the winter months and barn owls and kestrels can be seen hunting small mammals and insects living in six metre grass margins around the fields.

Areas of pollen and nectar feed important farm pollinators, like bees, too.

His measures have increased biodiversity on the farm, including the soil, where

higher fertility boosts profitability.

"We believe in integrated farming, balancing all those elements of production with sustainability being the aim. I'm not depleting resources," said Patrick.

A series of alternative energy installations add to his green credentials.

He began installing them in 2010 and in just three years has invested in an 11kw Gaia wind turbine, a 40kw log and pellet burning biomass boiler to heat the farmhouse and farm buildings, 50kw of photovoltaic energy, and an air source heat pump that heats the farm's education facility, The Cart Shed.

Devereux Wooton was



**BUSINESS FORUM:** From left, Peter Wrixon, Anthea McIntyre MEP and David Price from the CLA

adopted by Natural England as an exemplar to demonstrate and promote the Higher Level Stewardship scheme to other

farmers. The Cart Shed serves as an education facility put up for hosting visits from farmers and school groups.

It's also a community interest company, providing rural skills to disadvantaged people, of which Patrick is the director.

At a Herefordshire Conservative Business Forum (HCBF), attended by MEP Anthea McIntyre and David Price from the CLA, Patrick spoke about his responsibilities as a land owner and his integrated farming system.

"The vast majority of farmers and growers have long-recognised their responsibilities as stewards of the land and our flora and fauna.

"Nowadays more and more consumers are expressing their support by deciding to buy foodstuffs produced by agri-environmental businesses," said

HCBF Chairman and MEP, Ms McIntyre.

She added: "I am delighted that Patrick was able to share his practical experiences with our members and to show that caring for the environment is not only the right thing to do but makes good commercial sense as well."

The European Initiative for Sustainable Development in Agriculture was founded in 2001 and is an association of national farmers organisations from six EU Member States including LEAF – Linking Farming and Environment - of which Patrick is a board member.

For more information about The Cart Shed visit [www.thecartshed.co.uk](http://www.thecartshed.co.uk).