

herefordtimes.com/news

# Bid for funding to help town traders fight back

BY JESS PHILLIPS

jessica.phillips@herefordtimes.com

A LEOMINSTER business is proposing novel ideas to help independent firms and market towns across the UK.

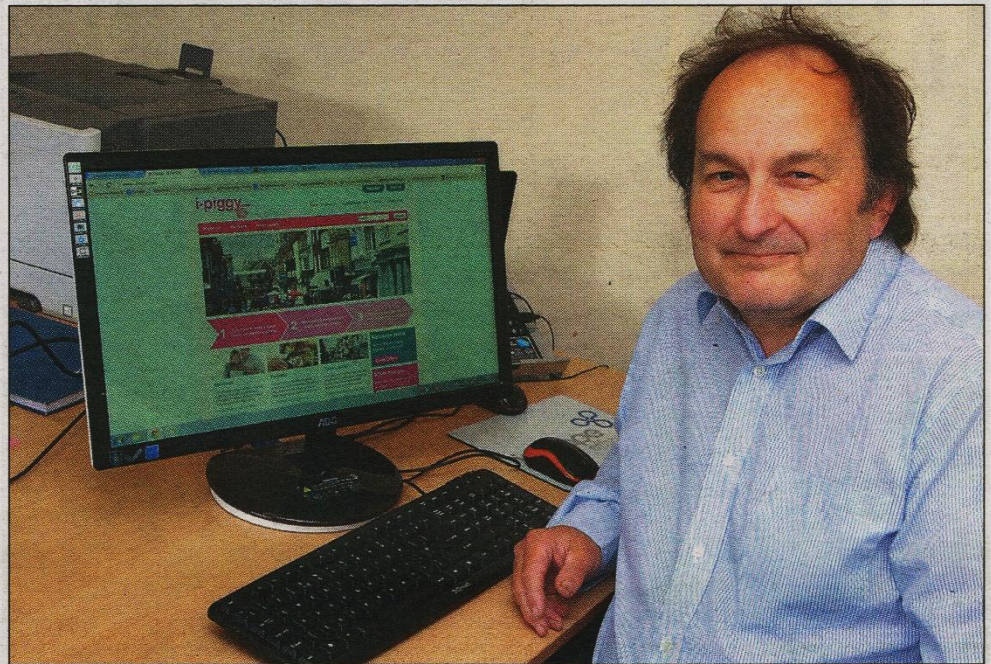
I-piggy, based on Southern Avenue, will this week bid for a substantial investment through the crowd-funding platform seedrs.com.

The business plans to introduce loyalty points cards to encourage shoppers to stay local, as well as using incentives and rewards.

Managing director Peter Domanski said: "If we are successful we will be able to move i-piggy into an operational phase and sponsor up to three pilot towns before making the service more widely available to help UK towns and their independent retailers and small and medium enterprises.

"We know there are a number of schemes running and initiatives to make town centres more attractive to customers – but in our opinion in these tough times it's practical and economic-based measures that are needed – and providing compelling incentives and modern communications is central to the i-piggy concept."

Mr Domanski said i-piggy



will create incentives to attract customers back into towns as well as a new communications channel for i-piggy partners to alert members to the latest offers and deals.

He said: "Our view is that increasingly savvy customers are so used to locating goods and services online and being constantly updated by emails from the big retailers, that smaller, town-based business are losing their voice – even if their product range, prices and services are on par or even beat the bigger guys."

I-piggy will be a national scheme but organised into individual town schemes and run by local managers.

Organisers also hope to operate a profit sharing scheme that will benefit children's savings and charities.

There may also be new employment opportunities in the county, providing the next stage funding can be raised.

Luke Conod, one of the co-founders of the successful Truffle card scheme in Herefordshire, said: "The more people that are help-

ing independent businesses, the better."

Nearly 11,000 people have signed up to the Truffle card scheme and more than 600 businesses are involved.

"It's extremely tough out there so anything that helps customers spend their money with local businesses and helps them survive is a good thing," added Mr Conod.

Above: Peter Domanski believes he can help independent firms. 132303-1.