



Federation of Small Businesses

The UK's Leading Business Organisation

Manchester and North Cheshire Region

Issue 2

Quarterly Comment

December 2011

The FSB is the UK's leading business organisation with more than 200,000 members. It exists to protect and promote the interests of the self-employed, and all those who run their own business. More information is available at www.fsb.org.uk

The FSB's Manchester and North Cheshire Region has over 4,500 members across the geography from Bolton to Rochdale and Northwich to Macclesfield.

In addition to offering its members a range of exclusive services, the FSB applies pressure on MPs, Government and Whitehall and puts the FSB viewpoint over to the media

Regional Committee members:

Chairman: Richard Gregg
 Holly Bonfield
 John Buckley
 Peter Davys
 Simon Edmondson
 David Fernandez
 Sue Fernandez
 Ruth Glover
 Liz Harris
 Chris Jones
 Paul Ruchat
 Tarik Toma



Championing the UK's Real-Life Entrepreneurs™

Setting up and running a business can be a daunting prospect, and it is a lot of hard work. But it is also one of the most rewarding things that you can do and can be one of the most positive changes someone can make for themselves and the community they live in.

In a society dominated by celebrity culture, celebrity entrepreneurs have emerged as inspirational figures. But we at the FSB believe that anyone who has a good idea and takes a risk to put it into practice and grow a business is an entrepreneur. The vast majority will never be celebrities, but they still enrich the lives of themselves and those around them.

These are the people that we champion – the Real Life Entrepreneurs.

And with economic growth having stalled and the Government looking to the private

sector to put the economy back onto firm ground, we believe that it is now time that the UK's 4.8 million Real-Life Entrepreneurs step forward.

The FSB represents Real-Life Entrepreneurs across every sector of the economy and every section of society. The FSB's Real-Life Entrepreneur manifesto sets out some of the measures that we can all take to remove the burdens small firms face setting up and growing

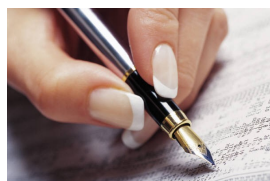
Will you be a champion?



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Real-Life Entrepreneur Champions



We are delighted to announce that the following have signed up as Champions of our Campaign:

Julie Hilling MP

Mark Hunter MP

Clr Carl Austin

Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP



Kate Green MP



Barbara Keeley MP

David Rutley MP

What are the issues?



The Real-Life Entrepreneur Campaign™ focuses on six main areas where the Government could make a difference:

Increase the routes to finance

A local member with a successful business takes time out to raise money for charity but can't access finance to grow her business.

Improve cash flow

Local businesses have ceased to trade simply because their customers have taken too long to settle

their bills.

Adopt a new approach to regulation

Our members believe that Health and Safety regulations are good but that the paperwork is excessive.

Reduce and simplify business tax

Many of our members would like to take on more staff but the tax implications are off-putting. VAT and fuel duty are seen as the heaviest burdens on the economy.

Incentivise job creation

Our members are keen on apprenticeships and have also worked with local schools, charities and clubs to improve young people's employability skills.

Open up export markets

Locally we are looking for export opportunities where our members might be offered a 'soft landing' and we are delighted that the UK India Business Council Summit will be in Manchester again in 2012. FSB members have a reduced attendance fee.

All I want for Christmas . . .

“Cut excessive red tape and let us get on with trying to do business.”

A survey of the Region's membership this week, (December 12th) asking what they would like for Christmas from the Government brought out almost all the 'usual suspects' barriers to growth and issues of concern. Although most hardly need repeating, the top ten are as follows:

- VAT
- Fuel Duty
- Corporation Tax
- Red Tape/ Regulation
- More flexible VAT, PAYE, Tax deadlines
- National Insurance
- Business Rates
- Protect the NHS (new entry)
- Encourage Manufacturing in the UK
- Revitalise Town Centres

Other topics included the obvious need to support the young, simpler employment laws, National penalties for late payment and easier access to public sector contracts.

Housing featured in a number of guises, including help for first time buyers and environmental issues such as the feed-in tariff and a VAT reduction on eco-friendly central heating boilers were also raised.

Good tidings we bring . . .



Many of the comments made in response to the survey were positive and constructive so to provide some counter-balance to the gloom reported elsewhere, here are some of those suggestions:

“A strategy for experienced, older business men and women, particularly those who have been made redundant, to use their expertise to help start-up businesses thrive and develop.”

“Give me the chance to get young people work ready while they are still at school.”

“Let's hear good news of small businesses that are doing well and some tips on how they are doing it.”

“Encourage entrepreneurship in schools, colleges and universities. If we are the 'engine room of the UK economy' then surely the more of us the merrier.”

“Increase community awareness and encourage more people to take part in cleaning up the local environment. That way we all benefit from a nicer place to live and visit.”



Seasons Greetings!

The NatWest everywoman Awards

The Gaia Award

This award is given to the most inspirational and successful female entrepreneur who runs a business with a clearly defined social and/or ethical purpose at its heart and this year it was won by local FSB member Anne Wallace.

everywoman is a partner in the FSB's Real-Life Entrepreneur Campaign



Anne Wallace set up the Startpoint Café to encourage people into the precinct where she has a fish and chip shop but it became much more than that when they added IT courses and internet access to the menu. The café is now the centre of their community with all generations mixing and working together. Anne featured in the last issue of QC too after winning the Technology4Good award.

**“I don't even drink coffee . . .
... we need the café as a community anchor”**

Anne Wallace



Unemployment is set to rise again but small firms are struggling to find skilled staff

The FSB and All Party Parliamentary Small Business Group (APPSBG) are launching an inquiry into entrepreneurship, as new figures show that almost a third of small businesses at start-up stage have difficulty finding suitably skilled staff.

With unemployment at 2.62 million and youth unemployment more than a million and set to rise, this is worrying.

These figures come as the FSB and APPSBG are launching an inquiry with Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions,

into entrepreneurship to see how these barriers can be removed. With 95% of private sector businesses employing less than 20 members of staff, the inquiry will look at how these firms can be encouraged to take on staff and how new entrepreneurs can be supported in setting up their own business against a backdrop of uncertain economic times.

The Government has introduced a raft of new measures aimed at supporting entrepreneurs, however, the FSB's 'Voice of Small Business' Index shows

that employment intentions and business confidence has dropped.

Richard Gregg, FSB Regional Chairman, said: *“Challenges posed to entrepreneurs will always vary, but we know from our members that common issues at start-up stage include, finding suitably skilled staff, complex regulation and access to finance. With the private sector being relied on to drive economic recovery, these barriers need to be removed .”*



Richard Gregg
Regional Chairman

Follow the FSB on Facebook and Twitter

You can follow the activities of the FSB by joining our official fanpage on Facebook.

Become a fan to view regularly updated events, photo galleries, lobbying information and have the opportunity to add your own photos and discuss current small business issues.

Or keep in the loop about the FSB's activities by subscribing to our RSS feed and following us on Twitter which you can do either Nationally : @fsb_hq or locally : @FSBManchester





Comment from John Walker, FSB National Chairman:
"The announcements in the Autumn Statement address many of the concerns raised by small businesses and are therefore to be welcomed. The key now is for the Government to be consistent, and set to the task of translating these policy intentions into tangible actions on the ground."

If any of the articles in this newsletter are of particular interest to you and you would like further information or to meet with us to discuss them further, please contact:

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125 years of creativity!



The staff at Fred Aldous Ltd

"We have noticed during the economic doom and gloom that people are saving money by making items such as soft furnishings or

Our story begins in 1886 in Manchester with a man called Fred. Fred had been working in a cotton mill when he noticed that the cotton was being trundled around in baskets. This gave him an idea and he starting importing the cane for the baskets and Fred Aldous Ltd came to life.

They've grown over the last 125 years but they still supply materials to people who make things. Starting with just 3 products they now stock more than 26,000 and sell to customers all over the world.

Mark Aldous, great-great-grandson of the original Fred, who is joint MD with his cousin Paul Walker, said:

mending and updating their clothes." Mark and Paul both graduated from Manchester Metropolitan University in 3D design.

Fred Aldous Ltd, based in Manchester's Northern Quarter, sells textiles, paint, paper and haberdashery, as well as running classes in sewing, knitting and soft toy-making. Employing 20 staff, the company has also recently launched an artist-in-residence programme to provide emerging artists with studio space and support.

We wish them well for the next 125 years.

Westhoughton Company celebrates 100 years!

James Harry Green and his wife Anne started the family business early in 1911. All the cabinet furniture was made to order and they employed two extra cabinet-makers and a polisher who worked alongside the family.

"He would sit in the evenings whittling away and I have a wonderful set of individually crafted character clothes-pegs of his, which I treasure"

David still designs and makes specialist commissions.

Green's Furnishers passed from James and Anne to their son Harry and his wife Dorothy and is now owned by their son David and his wife Jean, long-standing members of the FSB. The shop sells well-crafted furniture and pottery -being one of the largest stockists of Moorcroft in the North West- along with a range of Poole Pottery, pictures, lamps and other decorative items.

Jean told me *"David's father, Harry, had a real love of wood and was a talented wood carver and cabinetmaker, providing a great many pieces for the local churches in his lifetime as well as teaching his craft at local colleges."*



Anne in front of the Market Street shop