



Minutes of the meeting of the South West APU after the AGM at 6pm on May 6th 2008 at Hankridge Arms, Junction 25, Taunton.

Present:- David Ramsden, Jane Chappell, Rob Mulliner, Valerie Stevens, Bill Dedman, Peter Ashton, Terry Morgan, Chris Davey and Vivienne Rayner.

1. Apologies were received from Pat Baker .
2. Jane Chappell as one of our 2 RDA reps was formally welcomed to the meeting.
3. Minutes of SWAPU meeting of March 11<sup>th</sup> were formally agreed and a verbal report on actions resulting from the January meeting was given. The Policy unit were advised that family tax shifting has been deferred for a year, but now the Treasury is now in the first round of meetings about implementation.
4. David Ramsden's Chairman's Report was received. Members reported that; the on line 'barriers' questionnaire was far too long; the first question did not apply to many; many members only completed it because of their position; they need to be able to complete a section and come back later; key answers did not direct to appropriate next questions.
5. The Treasurer's Report was received. It was agreed to consider Agenda Item – 13 – Russ Martin – Launch of SW Crime against Business Forum at the same time.
6. It was agreed that up to £250 be committed for refreshments at the formal Launch of the SW Business Crime Forum to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> June on a proposal from Chris Davey, seconded by Peter Ashton. Monies to be paid against invoice.
7. It was agreed to formally minute the thanks and appreciation of the SW Policy Unit for the work done by Russ Martin with developing the Regional Business Crime Forum.
8. Report on SWAPU Presentation to Regional Skills Partnership - The presentation had been extremely well received. Jim Nielsen had reported to the RSP Board that it was the best Alliance event they had had. Juliet Williams was reporting its value to senior civil servants at the major skills meeting held 29/30 April in London. A formal report will be produced.
9. To consider the possible role of a SW Business Group in scrutinising the RDA following the end of the Regional Assembly in 2010. The Policy unit discussed this at some length including the proposal to this effect from the Chambers, how the SEEPs were trying to extend their operating life and the benefits of increasing our influence by working with others. Concerns were expressed about the inclusion of trade unions and how the social and environmental 'SEEPS' were tagging on the coat tails of the economy sector.
10. It was agreed to go back to Malcolm Colegate, seeking more information about the Chambers/DCBC proposal. It would be agreed that the SW Policy Unit would be supportive of a SW business group to act as scruinteer, but emphasised the need to be talking to **all sw** business organisations. In the light of these discussions, it was agreed to move forward with the concept of a regional business forum.
  
11. Report back on SWAPU study day on April 27<sup>th</sup> - a verbal report was given with a written report to follow. The day was a real success. There were lots of new faces and the day made people hungry to do things.
12. In the follow up discussion, members were keen to see the format used for other topics on a regional basis describing the events as 'mini study days'. Members viewed this activity as a way of involving additional members in policy activity. It was agreed that the budget for this could be covered by changing the budget heading from 'policy promotional dinners' to 'policy promotional events'. Valerie Stevens agreed to organise a meeting with Norman Mackel and Chris Davey to resolve this and other budgetary issues.
13. It was agreed to put a figure of £15k in the draft budget to cover this activity. Meanwhile, Chris Davey, Valerie Stevens, Peter Ashton and Viv Rayner would put together an outline for more discussion at the June APU meeting to enable the creation of the firm plan required to justify the figure.
14. Members agreed the SWAPU stand at conference was very successful. Not only did it enable SW APU to engage with SW members, but even in the stand's bad position,

many members from other areas were very interested to find out what we as policy were doing.

15. Members took the view that more policy at conference would make it less of a 'jolly' and encourage more delegates to really think about what the FSB is about. To this end, the report needs tabling, either at the English Regions meeting or at the next National Policy meeting.
16. To consider future APU membership and meetings. After much discussion members agreed to continue with the current system of a main member and a deputy. However, it was agreed that next year's budget be amended to enable travel costs for deputies to be covered by the APU, and that they be encouraged to attend.
17. It was agreed that Vivienne Rayner should research the costs of telephone conferencing and report back.
18. Following a discussion about our links with MEPs and with the EU, as well as considering advice from the Senior Policy Advisor on International Affairs, it was agreed not to go to Week of the Regions. It was agreed to keep a watching brief on DG Enterprise and the proposed small business week with a view to playing a full part in any such event.
19. It was further agreed that Peter Ashton should go to Gibraltar with the objective of renewing contacts with the FSB in Gibraltar and Tom Holiday. Ideally this should take place in September and contribute towards preparations for the EU elections.
20. Re the forthcoming EU Elections it was agreed that
  - a) We need to get bullet policy points from national FSB now so we can talk to MEPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs)
  - b) Add the EU PPCs to list of newsletters
  - c) Peter Ashton to ask for the EU elections on the agenda for the next policy committee because we need the position paper out by the autumn so we can work with it.
21. It was agreed to progress the organisation of a weekend event in January. Peter Ashton quoted prices ranging from £319 to £121.95 for Friday evening to Sunday morning including accommodation. He declared an interest in the Wessex at Street, which gave the lowest quote. To this end, Vivienne Rayner is to do a one pager outlining ideas; timing, who, what policy areas and the general format. Topics preferred included EU, Transport, Local Government, Skills and Crime. It was suggested that we try and get the new RDA Chairman as the speaker on the Saturday night.
22. 'Welfare in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' policy discussion - as only one person had returned the papers there was no discussion.
23. It was agreed that Vivienne Rayner go direct to Bill Knox and Alan Tyrell about NMW and the NI threshold.
24. It was agreed to get Paul Valente from head office down to talk about the EU and the FSB's position/situation.
25. Date of Next meeting – June 16th  
Vivienne Rayner

13<sup>th</sup> May 2008