



Notes of the meeting of the South West APU at 6pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 at Hankridge Arms, Junction 25, Taunton.

Present : Peter Ashton, Sue Rawle, Carol Wells, Rob Mulliner, Mike Ethorne-Gibbons, Terry Morgan, Steve Birch, Pat Baker, Jane Chappell, Valerie Stevens, John Walker and Viv Rayner

1. Apologies were received from Bill Dedman, Chris Davey, Delia and Malcolm Colegate, Celwyn Richardson and Ken Moon.
2. John Walker, National Policy Chairman and SW Regional Officers were welcomed to the meeting
3. Terry Morgan reported on behalf of Bristol and Gloucestershire. They are publishing a Regional Diary on line to enable people to see what is happening. They are working on Crime, Education and skills and trying to get branches more actively involved with Local Councils on Local Strategic Partnership and with Local Area Agreements.
4. Recent issues have been charity shops and 'selling to the public sector'. Action on Charity shops was discussed under AoB. On 'selling to public sector', the APU was reminded that this is part of the APM's work plan for discussion in December. Members were asked what extra tools/help/support they required.
5. Carol Wells reported on behalf of Western region asking for the APU's assistance in getting them re-engaged with policy.
6. Valerie Stevens reporting on behalf of Wessex said they were working on Public procurement, on crime, on the multi area agreement on waste, energy and environment for whole of Dorset and on Skills and Education. They are working hard to ensure their policies enable them to buy locally while meeting Government's requirement for open tendering. This has clear links to the KTL campaign and charity shops. New regulations costing up to £1500 to implement are hitting the construction industry.
7. Reporting on behalf of Devon, Sue Rawle continued the common thread of Public Procurement, Waste, Transport and the cost of fuel. Nigel Hillier was doing sterling work getting businesses involved with schools and other aspects of education and skills. They are using the ideas from the Wessex report to establish a benchmark on public procurement in their local councils for use after reorganisation.
8. Rob Mulliner reported for Cornwall describing the FSB's involvement with the current council structure and how it is working to make sure the new structure makes some kind of sense and making sure the business voice is heard. Of most concern is the proposed Cornwall wide LSP with a small board and over 100 in the main meeting. This replaces the current District LSPs; losing their knowledge and

partnership expertise. In support of this work, Cornwall does a survey each month: - 3 questions, 2 choices and just 1 minute to do.

9. As part of the reorganisation, 'Cornwall Enterprise' is being replaced with the FSB very involved in deciding who the new body will be run by and what it should be doing. There has been the inevitable slippage, but the Company and its CEO should be in place by April 1.
10. Cornwall FSB facilitated a welcome, constructive and necessary meeting between the private and public sectors about tourism and its future direction.
11. John Walker advised SWAPU that the manifesto for the EU elections would be going to the national Policy Committee for approval in November. Any policy which is a major change is required to go to National Council. At the moment, there is nothing proposed for the manifesto that falls into that category. It is therefore unlikely that the manifesto will be delayed by requiring national Council approval.
12. It was confirmed that the APU Objectives for the EU elections are to develop good relations with new MEPs and in the SW; it looks likely that 3 or the 6 will be new.
13. During a valuable discussion on the 'Keep Trade Local' Campaign (KTL), members exchanged ideas and experiences on what worked best. These comments included:-
  - a. Cornwall are planning to use the national KTL photos at their launch in Truro. To get publicity they will be inviting Council staff and members, police and representatives from large business to show their support. They will use experience gained from the launch to improve the plan for the roll out through the rest of Cornwall.
  - b. Surrey gained good publicity by inviting the local MP to the KTL stand where signatures were being collected. The impact was improved with letter of congratulation on the local paper in subsequent weeks.
  - c. Devon had put the stickers and banners to good use. They particularly liked the tax disc stickers.
  - d. Br&Gl maintained that all their work was about KTL, it just wasn't branded as such.
14. John Walker thought people would be surprised with how long the campaign continued to be worth doing, particularly with the economic situation.
15. Jargon, acronyms and 'officialese' – APU members and regions were asked to feedback on what caused them problems and what they had found helpful.
16. The SW APM reported on objectives and plans for the FSB stand at Liberal Democrat Conference. Members were thanked for their support and asked to feed in any further suggestions or ideas.
17. John Walker thanked members for the work that is being done locally with MPs and councils, commenting that it was a big help at the national level.

18. He was keen to see the charity shops issue followed up, but that we needed to be sensitive to the way it could be misinterpreted.
19. There is pressure from council and policy to have more campaigns. It is the FSB's way of taking back the agenda and avoiding consultative document fatigue. He was delighted to report that the appointment of a campaigns Officer which has now been accepted as a permanent post. And feedback from ROs on support has been v good. The next plan is a KTL for Xmas.
20. John reported that the FSB has commissioned a major piece of external work on the activities of self financing regulatory authorities. Examples quoted included the Environment Agency which required a waste control licence to move materials which were in fact recycling.
21. January Strategy Weekend – it was agreed that
  - a. SWAPU would invite 3 people from each region to include an APU rep. SW APM to write to the regional secretaries asking for provisional names with confirmation following the December regional committee meeting.
  - b. That the subjects be EU, crime, education and skills and employment law
  - c. That the agenda be 4 90 minute topics
  - d. That the new RDA Chairman be invited to a working dinner on the Friday
  - e. That 2 PMEPs be invited from each of the 4 political parties currently representing the SW at the EU be invited to dinner on that Saturday
  - f. That the SW APU and Regions meeting be held on the Sunday morning
22. Bearing in mind the lessons learnt from the cancelled Employment Law Study day, it was agreed that the topics for the study days for 2009 be working with/lobbying local council, economic development, selling to the public Sector and LSPs – making indicators work in support of FSB policy. Study day timing and content to be agreed by e-mail.
23. The notes of the SWAPU teleconference meeting of July 14<sup>th</sup> were agreed proposed by Terry Morgan seconded Valerie Stevens
24. The 2009 meeting dates as sent out on July 29<sup>th</sup> were formally confirmed. It was agreed that the meeting with Regional officers should take place 16<sup>th</sup> June. (Full list of dates at the end of these notes.)
25. Charity shops – it was that the SW APM write a 'how to.....' paper to enable FSB Branches and regions to effectively lobby local councils to minimise the unfair competition from charity shops selling new goods. It was emphasised that the FSB is not against charity shops. It is concerned at the plight of members suffering unfair competition paid for by the council tax payer.
26. It was agreed to circulate to the APU the results of the checks on the status of SW Tourism, working with Pat Baker and being sensitive to the 'hot potato' nature of the issue.

27. Treasurer's Report – members were asked to get claims in as soon as possible as the year end is at the end of September.
28. John Walker reported that the budget round had been very difficult. Once the budget has been finalised, the SW APU Treasurer will be asked to resubmit the figures. However, even if we do not get all the money looked for, he considered we should be able to carry out the desired activities by making use of the Special Projects fund.
29. For Wessex, Valerie Stevens reported that Bill Dedman would be standing down from the APU. It was hoped that Paul Wiscombe should be coming in his place.
30. Carol Wells reported that the Professor of Small Businesses has now been appointed. He will be introduced to national Council in November.
31. Date of Next meeting has been previously agreed as October 27<sup>th</sup>. We will wait until closer to the date to see if it will be by teleconference.

Vivienne Rayner  
8<sup>th</sup> September 2008

### **Agreed dates for 2009**

Sunday January 18 <sup>th</sup>	meeting with regional officers as part of strategy weekend.
Tuesday March 10 <sup>th</sup>	
Tuesday May 5 <sup>th</sup>	
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> June	meeting with regional officers.
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> July	
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September	
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> October	
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	

Note : FSB National Conference is March 19 -21<sup>st</sup>  
Easter Friday is 10<sup>th</sup> April