



**A Merry Xmas and a Prosperous New Year to you all**

**A big Thank you for the information on apprenticeships.  
And a big bouquet goes to Exeter City Council for business recycling  
'Barriers' is coming!  
Public Procurement – is the Government playing fair with you?  
Help make 'Health & Safety' sensible  
Seasonal advice to help you keep warm!  
Pubco abuses need revisiting**

Firstly a big **Thank you** to all the members who fed back to me their experiences on apprenticeships. The bouquets and brickbats are equally valuable. The bouquets allow us to point to what members want and that it can be provided! All too often we get told that what we ask is not feasible – your successes tell us otherwise!

**And a big bouquet goes to Exeter City Council for business recycling**

Nigel Hillier, Exeter Branch Chairman has been very complimentary about the way Exeter City has made waste recycling accessible to small businesses in an affordable way. Full details are on the link below.  
<http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=7678>

If you think your council could be doing more, check out the link and if you like what is on offer in Exeter, push your council to offer the same.

**'Barriers' is coming!**

Please, please complete and return the survey when it arrives in the New Year.

'Barriers' is the short name for the FSB's incredibly influential survey 'Barriers to survival and growth in UK small firms'.

The biggest survey of its kind, the facts and figures produced from it are immensely valuable in putting the case for small businesses to 'the powers that be'.

Across the SW, it has given branches and regions the information they need to make a real difference on behalf of members.

One of the reasons it is so effective is the phenomenally high response. The proportion of members completing and return the survey is a major factor in the survey's credibility. So please, when the survey lands on your doorstep, fill it in and send it back!

**Public Procurement – is the Government playing fair with you?**

We have heard of one or two businesses almost brought to bankruptcy because of the way a Government Department has behaved.

In one case, a business was told that some business was coming their way, they increases staff levels in anticipation only to find out that the business had been given to a large international company.

If this or anything similar has happened, we need to know. We would also be very interested to hear of any contracts being lost to large companies which then end up costing the tax payer more than if they had stayed with the small business. And of course, if you know of a small business that has been able to save the tax payer money, we would really like to hear from you.

### **Help make 'Health & Safety' sensible**

The Government wants to hear your views on health and safety.

It's part of a review called "Improving Outcomes in Health & Safety: A Call for Evidence", which aims to make health and safety requirements on business **sensible**, so that everyone can enjoy a safer and healthier working environment.

Your views and experiences of the health and safety system will be fed in to the review, which will be looking at the system as a whole.

Mary Boughton, who looks after Health and Safety for the FSB nationally is delighted. She recently had a meeting with one of the people involved in running the review. She found him an amazingly down to earth and practical chap who fully understands the small business perspective.

Mary has great hopes that we may at last be able to bring about some reduction in the unnecessary and burdensome regulations in H&S which affect our members.

But to do that, we need your evidence please.




The deadline for contributions is 31 January 2008.

For further information please visit the link below.

[http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/health\\_safety/index.asp](http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/health_safety/index.asp)

### **Seasonal advice to help you keep warm!**

Make the Connection is a joint campaign by energywatch, the gas and electricity consumer watchdog, and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) that aims to ensure that small businesses:

-  are treated fairly by energy companies;
-  are given the protection they need; and
-  have the information necessary to get the best from the market.

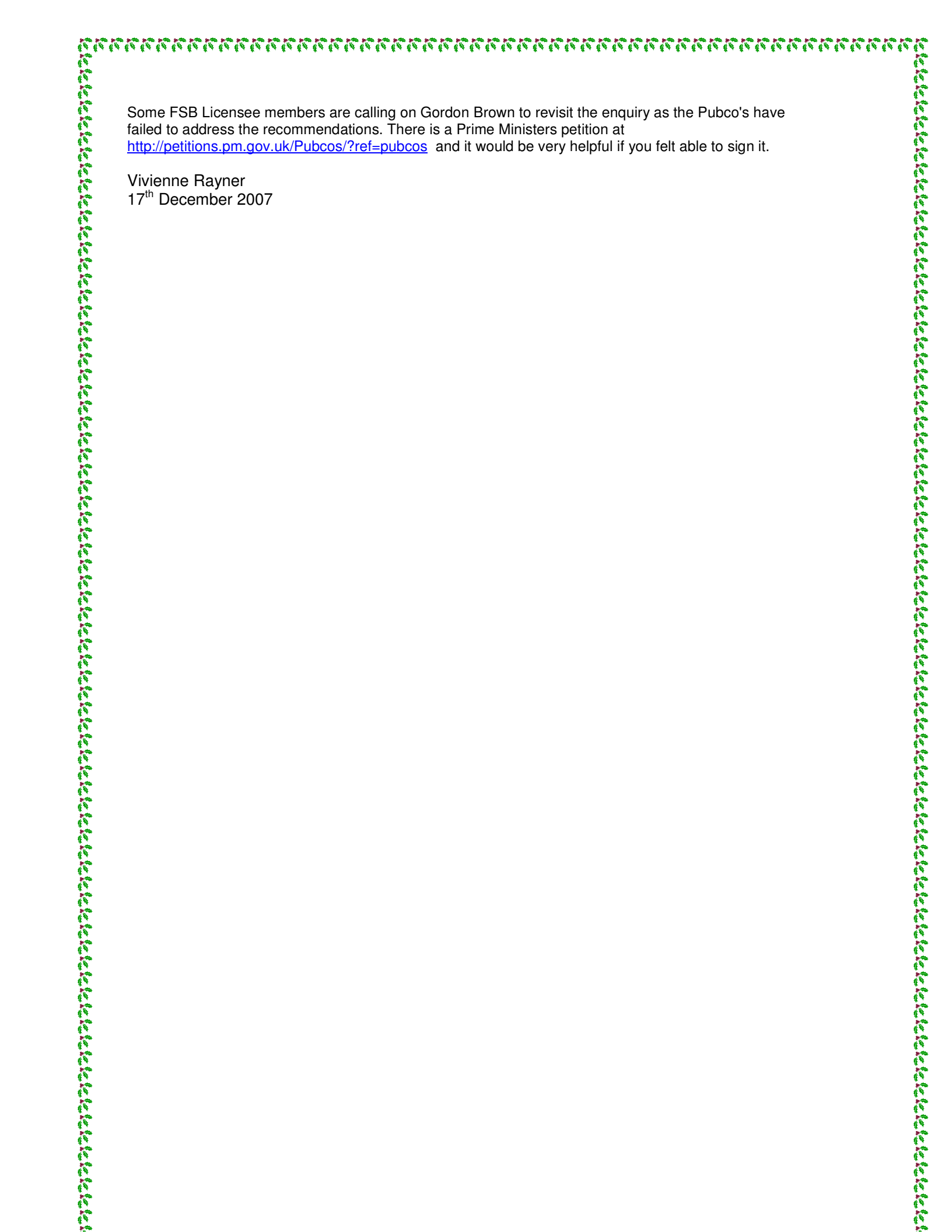
Although small businesses face many of the same issues faced by households, they don't have the same protection. As a result, we believe that small businesses can get a rough deal from energy companies. Hence the campaign outlined above.

Meanwhile, go to <http://www.smallbusinessenergy.org.uk/> for help, advice and guidance on some of the energy-related pitfalls that small businesses can encounter. Whether it's what to consider when you're starting up, mis-selling, bad billing, misleading contracts or negotiating the best payment terms, you'll find help here.

### **Pubco abuses need revisiting**

Members may recall some work the FSB did in 2004 about the relationship between Pub Landlords and the 'Pubcos'. Despite the report from a Select Committee of the House of Commons, it seems that matters have not improved.

There have been discussions on the 'Morning Advertiser' website at <http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/pubforums/page.aspx> E-mail [Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk) for a copy of the Select Committee report.



Some FSB Licensee members are calling on Gordon Brown to revisit the enquiry as the Pubco's have failed to address the recommendations. There is a Prime Ministers petition at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Pubcos/?ref=pubcos> and it would be very helpful if you felt able to sign it.

Vivienne Rayner  
17<sup>th</sup> December 2007