



Lots going on at the moment as the list of contents shows - including the projects using your feedback from the last newsletter.

That prompts a special thank you.

Last year I asked for volunteers to help with the 'A day in the Life' presentation. Your response was overwhelming! Dave Stallon, Nigel Hiller, Jane Armour and Cathy Gillard gave up valuable time to talk about a typical day running their business and the challenges it brings. **They were brilliant.**

It was part of an on going programme to educate 'the powers that be' in the realities of running a small business and the real problems raised by regulation etc.

The meeting was so successful, Juliet Williams of RDA fame, recently quoted the event and the message to senior civil servants in London and her colleagues.

It's taking time but we are getting there! And it's your help and feedback that makes it happen.

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#### **New Chairman for FSB's SW Policy Unit**

Peter Ashton from Devon has taken over from David Ramsden as the Chairman of the FSB's SW Policy Unit.

During his period as Chairman, David oversaw changes in the way the Policy works trying to include more FSB Members. Peter plans to build on this work, starting with a series of 'mini study days'.

Peter's own background is catering. At one stage he ran a kitchen catering for 2000 meals per sitting. Now he runs a network marketing business and occasionally provides consultancy support for restaurants and hotels.

#### **Study Day success or new alphabet soup explained!**

FSB Members involved with their local council have been coming across a new kind of alphabet soup. The study day was aimed at explaining what the alphabet soup meant and how members could use it to improve the position of small businesses in their localities.

Specifically members were looking at Local Strategic partnerships, Local Area Agreements and Multi Area Agreements – otherwise known as LSPs, LAAs and MAAs. Senior civil servants came out on a Sunday to explain what they wanted to achieve and how it worked. Naturally we had an FSB member on hand to tell how it worked in practice in his neck of the woods. Thank you Celwyn!



One member said 'I keep hearing these terms at meetings, but we never had time to find out what they really meant. Now I know. It's as if a light has been switched on'. If any Region of Branch would like to see what has been going on, there are DVDs of the study day available.

Given the success of this format, the SW Policy unit will be working with local FSB regions to see how it can help with more local policy work.

### **Credit crunch**

The breakfast cereal-sounding media storm continues unabated. The FSB's Financial Affairs Committee is hoping to find out some home truths about what's actually happening out there for small businesses and would appreciate FSB members getting in touch. The contact on this one is [simon.briault@fsb.org.uk](mailto:simon.briault@fsb.org.uk)

One example of how members might be affected by the credit crunch is with CCJs that are paid but not yet expired. Last year lenders paid little or no attention to CCJs. This attitude seems to have changed and they are now very reluctant to lend to anyone with CCJs. If this is your experience or you have had other problems with credit, please let [simon.briault@fsb.org.uk](mailto:simon.briault@fsb.org.uk) know.

### **Public sector procurement boost**

At last some cheering news: the small business procurement portal [www.supply2.gov.uk](http://www.supply2.gov.uk) has been made free for a three-month period. Small businesses could always register free to tender for local contracts but had to pay if they wanted to be considered for contracts further afield. As of May 1, it's free for three months for public sector contracts valued under £100,000 for the UK and Northern Ireland.

Just go to <http://www.supply2.gov.uk>

New registrants after July 31st will only benefit from the free local location.

### **Educate a civil servant – Can you help?**

The Week in Business (WIB) programme aims to offer a better understanding of the issues that specifically concern your business and small businesses generally. Basically the EU or government civil servant spends time shadowing you in your business.

You can show them the delights of PAYE or Employment Law or how Health and Safety is becoming less and less reasonable. To help us educate the civil servants please let James Holtum, FSB EU Policy Advisor, know. He can be found at [james.holtum@fsb.org.uk](mailto:james.holtum@fsb.org.uk).

### **Business Support – what do you use?**

What business support services have you used and would recommend to others?

Government is trying to reduce the number of schemes from an overwhelming 3000+ to around 35. As always the FSB both locally and nationally is involved in the process. We are using the work done to develop the SW Business Support Policies in our discussion – but as we would very much like to hear about good and bad business support that you have experienced in the last few months.

### **Every Crime Every Time – metal thefts**

Newspaper reports of metal thefts are increasing – is this newspaper hype, or are real thefts affecting FSB members?

Russ Martin, the FSB's SW Action on Crime expert is looking for feedback.

Russ has been leading the way for the FSB in establishing a SW Business Crime Forum, as well as working on the FSB's national Home Office Committee. As part of that work, theft of metal is under the microscope both at SW and at national level.

So if you have direct experience of metal theft, or your business has been affected by metal thefts from others, please let Russ know at [sales@leornian.uk.com](mailto:sales@leornian.uk.com)

### **Grants for business to reduce energy costs!**

The Green Grants Machine [www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk](http://www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk) has just been launched featuring more than £1.2 billion-worth of environmental funding programmes on its FREE online searchable database. It is the UK's first green funding website aimed exclusively at businesses and provides access to the latest information on funding available to improve their environmental performance and reduce their energy costs.

The information on the Green Grants Machine website is delivered by an expert team of green funding researchers. The site is updated daily and features more than 350 funding schemes available from local, regional, national and European sources. The website also includes plain English advice about how any organisation can take simple actions to go green.

Users of the website will also benefit from a regular e-newsletter and grant alert service through which they will be kept up to date with all the latest changes in green funding and policy.

Registration and use of the website is completely free, so why not visit [www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk](http://www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk) to find green business funding now. As always, your comments and feedback will be very welcome to [vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

### **Adapting your Business to Climate Change**

There is a free workshop on adapting your business at the Environment Agency, Manley House, Exeter on Friday 6th June 08 (9.30 - 1pm)

This free workshop will give you the opportunity to hear about a range of issues to help businesses adapt to the impacts of climate change. A buffet lunch will also be provided.

Contact SWCCIP Manager, Alex Webb, on [swccip@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:swccip@environment-agency.gov.uk) or call Emily O'Connor on: 01392 352230 should you like to attend.

As always your comments and feedback is very welcome and much appreciated. Please e-mail me direct using [vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk](mailto:vivienne.rayner@fsb.org.uk)

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