

Welcome to our latest Small Business Fortnight – the e-bulletin about what the FSB Cardiff Office has been doing which aims to keep you on top of key small business issues and what the FSB in Wales has been saying about them.

The green light

The FSB has been working with the Welsh Assembly Government in the design of a new package of support to help Welsh small businesses profit from the renewable energy sector. The package aims to assist small businesses in gaining the accreditation necessary to install microgeneration technologies such as solar panels and heat pumps. Through the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS), small and medium sized renewable energy installation companies will be able to access interest free loans to cover the cost of gaining MCS accreditation. Eligible companies will also be able to access the services of a development officer who will provide free and impartial advice to steer them through the accreditation process. The programme will allow Welsh companies to benefit from the growth in the renewable industry stimulated by Feed-in Tariffs which were introduced by the UK Government in April. The Feed-in Tariff will enable businesses, communities or individuals to be paid for the renewable electricity they generate and export to the grid.

Great start for Bridgend

There was good news for our members in Bridgend as a £9m regeneration package for the town centre was announced, with funding coming from the Convergence European Regional Development Fund, the Targeted Match Fund, Bridgend County Borough Council, who will deliver the scheme, and the Heritage Lottery Fund. Much of the work will be spent on the physical look of the town centre, preserving and enhancing historic and key buildings and upgrading properties to provide positive and attractive floorspace. But Bridgend County Council have also asked the FSB to help them work alongside our members to make Bridgend a destination of choice.

Carwyn's Webb

The First Minister, Carwyn Jones, has agreed to the reappointment of Sir Adrian Webb as Chair of the Wales Employment and Skills Board and as the Wales Commissioner for the UK Commission of Employment and Skills for a second term of 8 months to be effective from 1 May 2011 until the 31 December 2011. This is great news for us as Sir Adrian has been a very vocal supporter of the FSB over the past few years and has always ensured our input on all matters to do with skills. We look forward to a continued fruitful relationship and send him our heartiest congratulations.

Food for thought

The Welsh Assembly Government is currently seeking consultation responses to its draft 'Food Strategy for Wales', and consultation events take place at the following venues:

Mid Region Consultation: 7th September, 1:00 – 4:00pm, IBERS, Aberystwyth University, Gogerddan, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3EB

South East Region Consultation: 8th September, 1:00 – 4:00pm, Wales Millennium Centre, Bute Place, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF10 5AL

South West Region Consultation: 14th September, 6:00 – 10:00pm, Nant y Ffin Hotel, Llandissilio, Clynderwen, Pembrokeshire, SA66 7SU

North Region Consultation: 16th September, 1:00pm – 4:00pm, Glasdir, Plas yn Dre, Llanrwst, Conwy, LL26 0DF

The consultation documents are available [here](#)

FSB newsround

[MP attacks national park over green-energy decision](#); [Delayed letters cost Royal Mail £115,000](#); [There is work in England with the Olympics - but that is not filtering through to Wales](#); [Royal Mail attacked over bill for lost post](#); [Hotel opening is good for some - but not for others](#); ['Time to re-think snow strategy'](#); [Snow strategy rethink planned](#); [Helping firms thrive](#); [Why the voucher is a vital technological breakthrough](#).

Press releases

Over the last fortnight the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) outlined the measures that Government must look at in order to achieve the our tough carbon emission reduction targets, according to a new report (see the release [here](#)), and said that the Welsh Assembly Government is continuing to ignore the needs of small businesses when laws come in to start charging the public for single use carrier bags (see the release [here](#)).

Assembly doings

The Assembly is still in recess, but significantly the Office for National Statistics released key economic statistics for the three months to June 2010, and the headline figures were: the employment rate for those aged from 16 - 64 in Wales was 66.7 per cent, down from 67.7 per cent in the same period a year earlier (the UK average was 70.5 per cent); the unemployment rate in Wales was 9.0 per cent of the economically active, up from 7.8 per cent in the same period a year earlier (for the UK as a whole it was 7.8 per cent); and the rate of economic inactivity for those aged from 16 - 64 in Wales was 26.5 per cent, unchanged from the same period a year earlier (the UK average was 23.4 per cent). Also, the Public Service Ombudsman's accounts were laid before the National Assembly – these can be seen [here](#).

For daily summaries of all news Assembly-related, [click here](#).

FSB Events

For a list of events in the FSB South Wales Region [click here](#), and for events in the FSB North Wales & Chester Region [click here](#).