

Welsh Cross Party Group for Small Shops: What Small Shops Need from the Next Welsh Government

Wednesday 10th December, 12:15 – 13:15 Microsoft Teams (Online)

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Name	Organisation	Minutes
Edward Woodall	ACS	EW
Daniel Askew	ACS	DA
Vince Malone	Tenby Stores Retailer	VM
Russell George	MS for Montgomeryshire	RG
Gwyneth Millington	Postmaster and non-executive director for NFSP Wales	GM
Gwen Patterson	National Federation Retail Newsagents	GP
Ruth Buckley-Salmon	National Federation Sub-postmasters	RBS
Matthew Hunt	Owner of Filco Supermarkets	MH
John Halliday	Bira	JH
Emma Corfield-Walters	Owner of Bookish, Bookshops	ECW
Douglas Oliver	National Federation Retail Newsagents	DO
Ben Massey	National Association of Jewellers	BM
Xavier Turner	Support Staff for Russell George MS	XT
Carolyn Thomas	MS for North Wales	CT
Robin Lewis	Support Staff for Vikki Howells MS	RL
Andrew Jenkins	Support Staff for Sioned Williams	AJ

1. Apologies

Samuel Kurtz MS
Vikki Howells MS
Mark Drakeford MS
Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Natasha Asghar MS
Llyr Gruffydd MS
Jane Dodds MS
Sioned Williams MS
Hannah Blythyn MS

Heledd Fychan MS
Samuel Kurtz MS
Delyth Jewell MS

2. Welcome and Introductions

RG welcomed IRC Members and MSs to the CPG on Small Shops and outlined the agenda for the session.

3. Key Policy Priorities for Small Shops in Wales

EW outlined ACS' perspective of the issues impacting small shops and policy priorities for them in the next Senedd Term.

EW covered retail crime, Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) and business rates as key issues impacting small shops and set out policy recommendations for addressing them.

EW's policy recommendations for addressing them included strengthening operational policing capacity and improve reporting systems; reform business rates to support investment in small shops; and implementing a simple, consistent and cost-effective DRS.

4. Small Shop Owner Panel Discussion

RG welcomed the panel of small shop owners and asked them to introduce themselves and what support they need from the next Welsh Government.

MH outlined key issues impacting his convenience stores covering the cumulative impact of retail crime on his business and colleagues, concern over practical implementation of DRS and the financial impact of business rates on his store's ability to deliver value, goods and services.

MH also outlined the impact of developers and local planning issues on the ability for his store to trade competitively.

ECW outlined the impact of business rates on their business and the desire to see tax re-invested locally to support businesses, using the example of improving road infrastructure to make their business more accessible for customers travelling via car or public transport.

ECW highlighted issues the issue of incorrect business rates valuations and the financial impact this can cost stores.

ECW recommended a three year business rates exemption for small shops that have just opened.

5. Open Floor to MSs and other attendees

RG opened the floor to MSs and other attendees to provide questions and feedback on the content being discussed.

VM reiterated the points made by ECW and called for the next Welsh Government to expand local infrastructure, make businesses more accessible, easier and attractive to visit.

GM said the next Welsh Government should make more grants available for business investment as an effective mechanism to encourage growth and more services available to local communities.

CT highlighted some concern over the implementation of DRS and reflected on the current success of household recycling in Wales.

EW indicated the types of businesses that may be required to implement DRS based indications from the exemption criteria.

RG closed the discussion by highlighting the need for the Welsh Government to create the right type of environment for businesses, summarising that the main key asks from small shops is to address the issue of retail crime; to consider the practical implementation of DRS; to ensure business rates reflect fairly on small shops; and for the Welsh Government to invest locally in infrastructure to incentivise investment.

6. Closing Remarks

RG closed the session by thanking MSs and IRC members.