

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SMALL SHOPS

Minutes of the meeting held at 11:30am on 29th January 2014 at Ty Hywel

PRESENT:

Janet Finch-Saunders AM (JFS)	Chair
Keith Davies AM (KD)	Member
Mark Isherwood AM (MI)	
Tom Evans (TE)	Newport BID
Alan Edwards (AE)	Newport Chamber Trade
Adrian Roper (AR)	National Federation of Retail Newsagents
Mair Roberts (MRR)	Secretary
Shane Brennan (SB)	ACS
Neil Moss (NM)	National Skills Academy for Retail
William Lloyd Williams (WLW)	National Federation of Meat and Food Traders
Nathan Walmsley	Filco Supermarkets
Mark Roberts (MR)	The Co-operative Group
Michael Weedon	British Independent Retailers Association
Craig Lawson (CL)	Suzy Davies AM
Sophie Traherne (ST)	Conservative Group Office
Owen Davies (OD)	Owen Davies Consulting
Chris Jones (CJ)	Chris Jones Regeneration
Chris Wade (CW)	Action for Market Towns
Mike Cisuelo (MC)	Booker Wholesale

1.INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed attendees to the second meeting of the Cross Party Group (CPG) and introduced CW, OD and CJ, who would present on experiences of regeneration projects across Wales.

2.PRESENTATIONS FROM ACTION FOR MARKET TOWNS

CW from Action for Market Towns and regeneration consultants OD and CJ gave presentations on regeneration projects across Wales.

CW began the presentation through giving a general overview of the importance of partnership working in high street regeneration projects in Wales and of placing an emphasis on growth. He also highlighted the need to understand the particular needs of a given town or city when undertaking regeneration. Parking was emphasised as a problem facing many independent businesses in Welsh towns.

OD and CJ then gave specific examples of successful town centre partnerships in Wales. The case studies used were: Dolgellau, Bangor, Neath and Ystradgynlais. It was highlighted that in some cases, a number of business and regeneration groups existed in a given town but failed to

work together. It was recommended that these groups should collaborate in order to achieve consistent results.

Discussion

Following the presentation, a number of issues arising from it were discussed:

Business Improvement Districts

A brief discussion was held on the purpose of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and what they are able to achieve. TE from Newport BID shared his observation that prior to the creation of the Newport BID, there were many groups trying to achieve the same outcomes for regenerating the city; it was his conclusion that the BID was a constructive way of bringing different stakeholders together to achieve the same goal.

Time and Resources

It was highlighted by WLW that a number of retailers find it difficult to be able to take time away from running their business to attend meetings, such as BID meetings. He also feared that there was apathy among some independent retailers on these issues.

Leadership

The importance of the role of an effective leader in town centre partnerships was highlighted by several members of the Group.

Ultimately, it was agreed that the success of a partnership was dependent on uniting pre-existing groups in a given area; this would achieve cohesion in the goals necessary to revitalise the town centre in question.

Future Meetings

It was **AGREED** that the topic of the next meeting in spring would be planning, given that the Welsh Government is currently consulting on the Planning Bill.

It was also **AGREED** that a reception will be held in the Senedd in July to celebrate the contribution of small shops to the Welsh economy. The reception will be attended by Assembly Members, representatives from small retail trade bodies and their members who operate in Wales.

The meeting was closed by JFS.