

Enterprise and Business Committee Inquiry into Town Centre Regeneration

Evidence from Simon Brogan

Hi, my name is Simon Brogan, having been made redundant three times over the last year I recently (8 weeks ago) opened up an antiques, arts and crafts centre in a place north of the town centre with has seen some serious decline over recent years in Merthyr Tydfil, purposely to generate local interest and local skills, presently I have people there with various skills regarding all forms of hand made crafts, some 14 people in all, these people where claiming some kind of support allowance before coming to the craft fare so have possibly saved local authority benefits money (of which all walks of life have become dependant upon - money that is) the building has been empty for two years so nothing (rates) have not been paid during this time. Surly I get get a 12 month rates relief, not just for me but for the people who enjoy what I have achieved so far, also visitors are now starting to come to Merthyr from far and wide just see what has been achieved and do start to purchase goods.

Upon opening the old Wesley Chapel (28th May 2011) with very much hard work in renovations and repairs with my own money and no support from the local council or any other political body, I have felt very dis-heartened with the local council as all I had from them was a rates demand letter as soon as I opened the door of which I have with immediate effect some £480.00 per month, this as all the communication I have had since starting this venture, I am not looking for support regarding free accountancy or business development information, I need financial help with the fact that I have to pay rates straight away, I need some one within the Welsh Assembly to take on board a serious issue regarding rates as I need help or I will have to close it down, I always supported the fact that the current government policy was to encourage people to start their own business so what incentive do I have, it seems that it the local government don't care if I do close down, why don't people come first instead of money coming first, this I thought was what Wales is all about, caring for the people. Wesley Chapel ha stood some 200 years, I have built it back up and people regard this place as very interesting and a place to go and buy goods such as arts and antique goods, I also have a demand for waste disposal straight away with a threat of taking me to court within 7 days, I have not yet established what kind of waste I will produce, I have asked the waste management control for a pricing index together with any 3rd party services but with no feedback, what kind of bullying tactic is that.

Could you please take on board this serious issue, forward to the correct department if need be

Best Regards

Simon Brogan Bsc Msc Eng