

Federation of Small Businesses



Rural small businesses – what **DOES** the future hold?

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Britain's
Leading
Business
Organisation



- Small businesses are the life blood of the economy with 99.3% of businesses employing fewer than 49 people
- Between them the 4.3 million small businesses employ 12 million people - 58% of private sector workforce
- Turnover totals £1,200 billion – half of the UK's Gross Domestic Product
- More than 60% of all commercial innovations come from small businesses
- In Essex situation is even more small business orientated
- A significant number are based in rural areas, either in a village (16%) or on a farm (15%).



The FSB is a Membership Organisation

- To promote and to protect the interests of the self-employed and owners of small businesses
- Dependent solely upon members' subscriptions for income with no corporate or public sector sponsorship
- Add together CBI, IOD and Chamber memberships and we have still have more businesses in membership

There are three aspects to the FSB

- Lobbying and Campaigning
- Events
- Member Benefits



Lobbying/Campaigning

- Founded in 1974 to campaign against the introduction of a new type of National Insurance
- Continues to lobby government at local, regional and national level on behalf of over 215,000 members
- More members = stronger voice
e.g. Music Licences



Events

- Business Briefings – with partners sharing latest news and information
- Seminars – practical help for small businesses
- Networking – opportunity to meet and share experiences and make new contacts
- Social – Thames Barge, Annual Dinner



Member Benefits

- Some are included for free within the membership fee
- Others take the form of discounts or preferential terms for members
- Some are designed to be used all the time
- Others are there just in case



Benefits of FSB Membership

FSB Legal Benefits Package	Abbey Legal
FSB Care	Red Arc
FSB Medical	Health and Medical Care Association
FSB Business Banking	The Cooperative Bank
FSB Deposit Account	Close Brothers
FSB Independent Financial Advisers	IFS Ltd
FSB Finance for Business	ASC Finance for Business
FSB Credit Card	MBNA
FSB Merchant Services (Card Processing)	Streamline
FSB Mobile Card Payment Terminals	123 Send
FSB Factors	RBS Invoice Finance
FSB Insurance Services	Towergate Insurance
FSB Telecom	Redstone
FSB Fuel	Keyfuels
FSB On-Line Directory	www.fsbonline.com
FSB Directory Enquiries	118455



Small businesses need:

- The right environment in which to work – that means
 - Good broadband connections which are fast and reliable
 - Incubation and start up units with easy in, easy out terms – converted farm buildings are often ideal
 - Low costs
 - Reliable cash flow and reliable contracts
- The right staff to work with them – that means
 - good standards of numeracy and literacy
 - good work ethic – punctuality, enthusiasm and commitment
 - willingness to learn
- The right support services – that means
 - good support from Councils, Business Link and Enterprise Agencies
 - access to funding – Banking on Essex a good initiative
 - sympathetic attitude from local authorities
 - access to training on site and at flexible times – Abby Couriers



Provide that combination and the future looks bright for small businesses and hence for the economy

Essex FSB is working closely with partners to achieve the above conditions on behalf of our members

At times it will seem as if we are 'nagging' but we know what works for small businesses and we want to share good practice from around the country but we are practical too!



Some specific issues:

- Keep Trade Local
 - Post Office campaign – Post Bank
 - Parking charges
 - Market Towns initiative
 - Rural Manifesto being launched in July
- Rural Affairs and Tourism Policy Unit
 - newly launched
 - Chairman is Linda Walton who used to run a business in Clacton-on-Sea and is now running one in Oxfordshire
 - Essex FSB Chairman Iain Wicks a key member
 - regular surveys of rural issues



Surveys

- In a survey of members based in rural communities nearly one in three said the next six months will be difficult for their business.
- More than 80 per cent of small businesses are already suffering with rising costs coupled with 46 per cent which are seeing trade decreasing.
- Small firms are crucial for the survival of village communities and the death of one small firm can have a devastating impact on the local area.
- More than 40 per cent of all businesses surveyed depend on one or more sole food shop, general store, petrol station, post office or pub in their local community



Campaign Issues

- The FSB is calling for a rural recession rate relief scheme: a top up from the Treasury of the non domestic rates pool so local authorities can give 100 per cent rate relief to vital small, rural businesses in towns and villages
- The FSB is calling for the rural recession rate relief scheme to run for a fixed period of 12 months. The Government should review the scheme after this time and assess if the measure needs to be extended.
- The third largest expenditure to small businesses is their business rates bill. The FSB is also calling for business rate relief to be made automatic. More than £400 million goes unclaimed every year because small firms are unaware they are entitled to rate relief.
- Some Essex councils do well – Braintree for example now has 86 per cent of eligible businesses claiming £897,000 between them



Thank you for listening
Any questions?

www.fsb.org.uk/essex

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