



Wales Monthly Update


2 December 2024


And just like that, December is here, the final month of 2024! We have had another busy year and plans are already forming for 2025 to continue in the same way. Make sure you keep up-to-date with our latest Wales Monthly Update, here to keep you in the loop, providing an overview of our November activities, as well as looking forward to what is coming up in the New Year.


Campaigning and Policy Activity

 Have you accessed business support services? We need your input! We want to hear from Welsh SMEs about your experiences of accessing these services, including advice on skills, export support, financial advice, support with writing tenders and enhancing your digital capacity. Take the survey now: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZS2YBBB>. Your feedback will help us advocate for improvements and shape the future of business support in Wales to better meet your needs.

 There is no doubt that the October 2024 Budget was difficult for businesses. While delivery on the FSB's long-standing call to increase the Employment Allowance will protect the smallest firms from the increases in employer NICs, for those who will be impacted it will be substantial.

 FSB Wales have made the case that the Welsh Government must now utilise the consequential funding it will receive from the UK Budget to deliver measures that will support SME growth and prosperity. These measures include retaining the relief for hospitality, retail and leisure at least at 40%, freezing the multiplier used to calculate Business Rates, and matching strategic investment in our critical infrastructure, including improving transport networks and boosting digital connectivity.

 FSB Wales held the first in our new series of biannual Small Business Briefings in collaboration with the Development Bank of Wales. The event, sponsored by Paul Davies MS, brought together small business owners, Members of the Senedd and other stakeholders to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing SMEs in Wales. The briefing focused on addressing Wales' productivity gap and the policy measures needed to create the right conditions for small business growth and increased productivity. Betina Skovbro, founder of The Danish Bakery Ltd, shared her entrepreneurial journey and the vital role of skills in building a successful business.

 We also held an event at Tramshed Tech to discuss our latest [report on the creative industries](#). Creative small businesses and other stakeholders working in the industry had an opportunity to hear about our package of proposed measures, designed to help unlock the full potential of Wales's creative SMEs. These include improving access to finance, the further development of microclusters and ensuring that careers guidance recognises the creative industries as a key growth sector.

North Wales Update: Mike Learmond

Tourism businesses in North Wales have suffered more than most in recent times due to soaring energy costs, lack of skilled staff, falling consumer demand due to the cost of living and the general rising cost of doing business. And of course, the weather doesn't help either!

So when I received an invitation to attend the Go North Wales Tourism Awards annual ceremony, I half expected a rather more muted affair than usual. Again the weather wasn't kind, with heavy snow and freezing temperatures on the night of the event. However, once I stepped inside Venue Cymru I realised how vibrant and resilient the industry really is. An amazing 425 business owners,



managers and employees were inside and determined to celebrate and showcase the visitor economy of North Wales. Across eighteen categories, winners and finalists took to the stage and gave the audience of their peers a glimpse of the innovation, investment and passion they have for their businesses. It was brilliant to see such a display of entrepreneurship and I am convinced that North Wales will continue to thrive as a global tourist destination.

Talking of innovation, we also attended the Local Innovation Conference in Wrexham, where again business owners had the opportunity to describe their journeys developing and refining their products. If you have an idea for a new product or service, there is lots of help available to assist you. Feel free to contact me for more information – mike.learmond@fsb.org.uk

Other activity during the month included our regular virtual and in-person networking, feeding into the Regional Skills Partnership on future skills needs by employers and attending the Denbighshire Business Club Expo in Llangollen.

We're looking forward to further events in December – details below!



South Wales Update: Rob Basini

November was once again a busy month. Meeting with the Llandeilo Business Forum to discuss business activity in the area was a pleasure, and felt by those attending to be productive, and it was also good to meet so many members and small businesses at the Zokit Business Expo in Cardiff.

Our joint briefing event with Cardiff University gave real insight to those attending on the links between business culture, leadership and cyber security, and also on the importance of ensuring a positive customer experience. Both our speakers, Andy Dodge of Cardiff University and Miles Courtney-Thomas of Customer Start, delivered captivating presentations which while on very different subjects, were both of vital importance to small business success.



Our Swansea Area Networking event again received really positive feedback from those attending, and we again had a fantastic presentation from Nicola Ankin of Inexclusion on the benefits of disability inclusion for small businesses.

We're looking forward to enjoying more of our in-person networking events in South East and West Wales in very early December, and as we move towards the Christmas break, we are now planning and finalising our activity across the area in 2025.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year everyone!

Upcoming Events

[West Wales Business Networking, Wednesday 4 December, 9am – 11.30am](#)

Kick off December with our West Wales Business Networking in-person networking event, being held at The Queens Hall in Narberth. This valuable event presents the opportunity to connect with businesses from across the area, alongside hearing from a guest speaker discussing a key subject to help you and your business flourish. Build your connections within this relaxed and informal environment, whilst enjoying delicious breakfast pastries too! Don't delay and book your spot now!

[South East Wales Business Networking, Friday 6 December, 9am – 11.30am](#)

Always a popular one, our in-person networking event returns so come and expand your network within the local area and hear from our guest speaker. Tomas Phillips, from Welsh ICE (Innovation Centre for Enterprise in Wales Ltd), will be discussing ‘The Secret to Idea Generation’ at this fast-paced, fun session unveiling the real secrets to generating brilliant ideas for your business. Both FSB members and non-members are welcome to attend, tickets selling fast so don’t miss out!



[North Wales Business Breakfast, Tuesday 10 December, 9.30am – 11am](#)

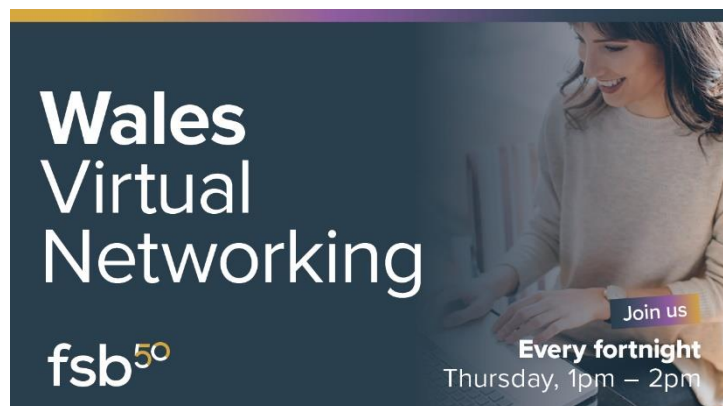
Our in-person networking in North Wales returns with our regular monthly North Wales Business Breakfast events. This monthly networking meet-up, this month taking place in Coleg Cambria Business School, Northop, offers a prime opportunity to forge meaningful business connections, in a professional environment. Come and network, collaborate, promote your services and support each other. Open to all, both FSB members and non-members.

[Wales Virtual Networking, Thursday 12 December, 1-2pm](#)

Embrace the virtual networking scene with us at our Wales Virtual Networking sessions, the perfect dynamic and engaging setting to grow and diversify your business connections. Held fortnightly on a Thursday afternoon, this is your last chance in 2024 to expand your network, share valuable insights and collaborate with our diverse virtual community of business professionals from Wales and across the UK. The event is open to all and FREE to attend.

[Wales Virtual Networking, Thursday 9 January, 1-2pm](#)

Join us for our first virtual networking event of 2025 and become part of our wonderful online networking community at our Wales Virtual



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Meet The Team

If you need any further information about any of the information or events covered here, your Wales contacts are:

[Mike Learmond, Senior Development Manager \(North Wales\)](#)

[Rob Basini, Development Manager \(South & Mid Wales\)](#)

[Shona Holmes-Berry, Operational Support Co-Ordinator \(Wales\)](#)

North Wales social media pages

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South Wales social media pages

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