

Wales Monthly Update

1 July 2024

Summer is here (although the weather isn't always agreeing!) and it's time to let you know what we've been up to recently in our next Wales Monthly Update! Stay up-to-date and informed with this monthly review, featuring an overview of all our June activities as well as a look ahead into July.

Campaigning and Policy Activity

At the beginning of June, FSB hosted the Welsh Government's new Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Welsh Language, Jeremy Miles MS, for a roundtable with members. The discussion focused on key issues facing small businesses and explored how the Welsh Government can best support their growth and contribution to the economy.

The roundtable with the Cabinet Secretary was also an opportunity to learn more about his upcoming review on SME productivity and emphasise the importance of ensuring that the voices of small business are heard during this process. We look forward to working with the new Cabinet Secretary to support the small business community.



FSB also hosted the Welsh Government's new Minister for Social Partnership, Sarah Murphy MS, at our offices for the latest meeting of the Retail Forum. The forum discussed boosting town centres and staff recruitment. As an essential part of the economy in every community of Wales, FSB made the case for smaller retailers and the support they and their employees need.

The FSB Wales policy team concluded a series of roundtable discussions with SMEs working in the creative industries. The discussions spanned a range of important topics, including access to finance, skills availability and the evolving impact of AI on the sector. The insights will feed into an FSB report on the creative economy in Wales, aiming to identify policy levers which can be used to support the ambitions of small businesses in the sector.



Following the announcement at the end of May that a General Election would be held on July 4th, FSB published a manifesto setting out how the next UK Government can support small business and the self-employed to thrive. This includes using levers, such as VAT thresholds and legal protections, to drive growth for small businesses. The manifesto also stresses the importance of supporting economic development by returning decision-making on shared prosperity funds to the Welsh Government.

The FSB team have reached out to every candidate standing in Wales to share a copy of the manifesto.

FSB Wales Head of Policy, Llyr ap Gareth, gave evidence to the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee on the subject of waste policy and its impact on small businesses. He made the case that small businesses in Wales should have support to transition to the Welsh Government's circular economy strategy. This support includes providing SMEs with a detailed timeline to help them adapt, and for the Welsh Government to offer targeted support for those most impacted - ensuring that the guidance provided is clear and easily accessible for all small firms.

North Wales Update: Mike Learmond

The highlight of June was, of course, our annual FSB North Wales Small Business Conference. As we were marking both the 50th anniversary of FSB and the tenth anniversary of the North Wales conference, we wanted somewhere special to hold the event. We found it in the iconic Prichard Jones Hall at Bangor University and it was great to welcome over 120 delegates for a day packed with information about financial wellbeing, funding for business and how to utilise Artificial Intelligence in a small business context. We are already planning next year's event!



With energy prices still a concern for many businesses, it was really interesting to visit [Ynni Ogwen](#), near Bethesda, organised by the North Wales Business Council. Their hydroelectric project has been profitable and money raised has helped fund a range of community projects, including being able to offer cheaper energy to local organisations and businesses via their Heuldro solar panel scheme.



Other activity in June included our popular virtual networking, the FSB business breakfast in Northop Business School and lots of other events throughout the month. See below for what's happening in July!

South Wales Update: Rob Basini

June was an extremely busy month, with FSB South & Mid Wales exhibiting at various business expos, including those in Caerphilly and Newtown. We were really pleased to support the Pembrokeshire business drop-in event and particularly pleased to host our South East Wales Business Networking event this month which celebrated Pride month. Our speaker at this event, Ian Timbrell of Timbrell Education Ltd, talked about 'The Legal and Moral Reasons for LGBTQ+ Inclusion'. Ian's talk was both insightful and of real practical assistance to those in attendance.



As well as confirming a variety of other events across the region, in July we are really looking forward to attending the Royal Welsh Show later in the month, as well as both our ongoing Wales Virtual Networking sessions and our Cardiff Area Business Networking on July 18. We are also exhibiting at a number of events across the region, including at the Welsh Business Show in Carmarthenshire and the Moneyworks Wales Networking Breakfast in Merthyr Tydfil.

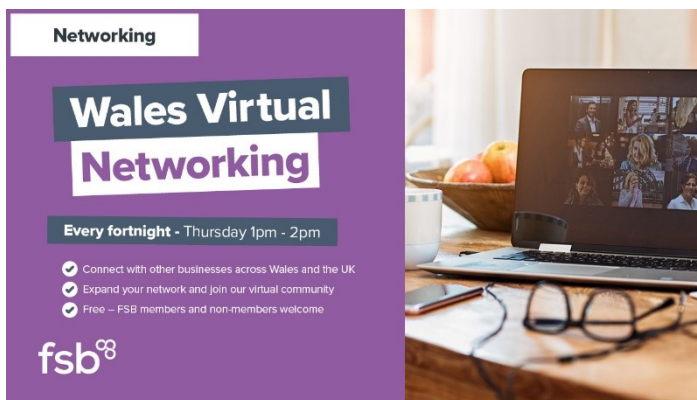
Upcoming Events

[FSB North Wales Business Breakfast, Tuesday 9 July, 9.30am – 11am](#)

Our in-person networking in North Wales has made a comeback with our regular monthly North Wales Business Breakfast events. This monthly networking meet-up 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 11 July, 1pm – 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 chance 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.

[The Business Network – Chester and North Wales Networking, Wednesday 17 July, 9.30am - 11.30am](#)

Having run their less formal networking sessions for the past seven years, The Business Network are back with their next monthly networking in Wales. Taking place at Vista in Ewloe, these events have open networking with guest presentations, allowing attendees to meet companies from all across the area. FSB support these events and members receive a 50% discount when booking using code 'TBNSM'

[Cardiff Business Networking, Thursday 18 July, 9am – 11.15am](#)

Join us at the Cardiff Business Networking event and connect with other businesses across the Cardiff area and hear from guest speaker, Debbie Basden from Balance Your Outlook. Debbie will be explaining **'Havening – A Technique To Reduce Stress and Improve Performance in Business'**, and will demonstrate an easy, soothing technique that enhances oxytocin and serotonin, reducing stress hormones, blood pressure and heart rate levels. Both FSB members and non-members are welcome to attend.



Both FSB members and non-members are welcome to attend.

[Wales Virtual Networking, Thursday 25 July, 1pm – 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 chance 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.

[South Wales Small Business Conference, Wednesday 4 September, 9am – 3.30pm](#)

Our popular annual FSB South Wales Small Business Conference is back and, in FSB's 50th anniversary year, returns to Village Hotel Cardiff. This is an event filled with a collection of brilliant speakers, plenty of networking opportunities and lots of useful information to help you and your business gain valuable tools to flourish. Hosted by broadcaster Sian Lloyd, topics including the importance of wellbeing in business, business growth and accessing finance, will be discussed throughout the day with a selection of business trade stands also in attendance. Both FSB members and non-members are welcome to attend.

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 \(Wales\)](#)

