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**Business Rates Update**

A number of FSB members in this region contacted us expressing their concerns over the recent business rates revaluations, with some reporting they faced massive increases. We contacted many of our MPs about this and helped lobby both locally and nationally to raise awareness of the fact that 500,000 small businesses in the country were facing difficulties.  We therefore welcomed the announcement in the Budget of the £435m package of measures to alleviate some of the problems in the short to medium term but long-term FSB is looking to see a replacement of the current business rates system which we feel is outdated and inconsistent.

**Metro Mayor Elections for West of England**

We are now actively encouraging our members in the West of England to take an interest in the Metro Mayor elections for the new Combined Authority and to try and ensure the small business voice is heard by those seeking the office. To this end we have produced our own short FSB manifesto raising some of the issues we believe the new Mayor should look at from a small business perspective including transport, procurement, broadband/connectivity and business rates. We are endeavouring to meet all  the candidates to share our manifesto with them.

**FSB Brexit Report**

We recently published an extensive report on what our members are looking for in the post-Brexit trading environment. The report entitled ‘*Keep Trade Easy: what small firms want from Brexit’*  calls for the Government to ensure that during the current negotiations there is as smooth a transition as possible and any future trade deal focusses on ‘ease, cost and value’ for business trading. You can read the full report [here](http://www.fsb.org.uk/docs/default-source/fsb-org-uk/keep-trade-easy_-what-small-firms-want-from-brexit-21-march-2017.pdf?sfvrsn=0).

**Cyber Security high on FSB agenda**

The subject of cyber security and its impact on small businesses is one of the biggest focusses of FSB members at the moment. Recently we held a seminar on the subject in the Forest of Dean which attracted more than 50 people and it is clear many small businesses are worried by a variety of cyber-attacks. Our 2016 survey on the subject revealed that as many as two thirds of our members had been victims of cybercrime in the previous two years and clearly this is a growing problem. To try and give our members some degree of extra security we have just added a free ‘Cyber Protection’ benefit to our membership package.

**How to find out about local FSB events and activity**

We will be sending out this short ‘Brief’ every month but in the meantime if you wish to find out what is happening with FSB locally please see our weekly email newsletter, Bytesize, which is available online on a Thursday [here](http://www.fsb.org.uk/regions/gloucestershire-west-of-england). This page also includes a calendar of our future local events throughout Gloucestershire, Bath, Bristol, Weston-super-Mare and South Gloucestershire.. You can also follow us on Twitter at @FSBGlosandWoE and see what our national policy team is working on by following their feed which is @FSB\_Policy.

**Thank you for reading….**

**CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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