

The Economy and Business Workshop September 2017

A workshop/exhibition was held in the Town Hall and all businesses were invited to 'drop in' and find out about the NP from members of the NDP steering group and how important it is to hear their views on business now and how they would like to shape the future of business in Fowey Parish.

A number of businesses were able to attend from a representative of Imerys, (planning and estate management), Local Pubs, shops and holiday lets. They were all invited to complete a survey as well as contribute to our ideas boards.

A survey of local businesses was carried out, to consider the needs of business both now and in the future in Fowey Parish; the more accurate our understanding of business, the better our chances of producing a viable Neighbourhood Plan. Some of the results of the survey had recurring themes such as the importance of independent traders; 'Daphne du Maurier is our Shakespeare' our USP, we should have a Daphne du Maurier Centre; more out of season events as well as parking and drainage problems.

Fowey parish has an economy that depends on tourism and business. Tourists make use of a wide range of facilities – hotels, guest houses, cafés, restaurants, information centres, attractions, activity centres, the estuary and museums etc. all can be sources of valuable local employment.

The largest employment sector in Fowey is in Accommodation and food services (17% of people in employment), the second largest employment sector is Retail (13% of people in employment) Local Insight Data 2017. It is important to 'support employment especially quality, permanent work opportunities that break seasonal labour'. (Cornwall local Plan)

Public response from the Survey 2015:

Issue 1: 'How important do you think it is to create job opportunities in Fowey'

Issue 2: 'What sort of jobs/industry should be supported?' The community response was for small, local and independent businesses also marine and arts and crafts.

Issue 3: 'Where could these jobs/industries be placed?' The community response was supportive of small scale development with reuse of buildings/sites before green field development.

Business Response to the Employment and Business Survey 2017

Several respondents praised Fowey as a good place to live and work but concerns were raised (in order of frequency) by the challenges of seasonality, problems with parking and transport and the replacement of independent stores by chain stores.

What would make your business more profitable? (Q13)

Many of the answers to this question relate to the responses to Q9 Barriers to Success.

Issue 4: Seasonality is a major concern to several respondents.

Respondents were supportive of the events that are run in the town and agree that these bring in visitors.

Issue 5: However there was concern that Fowey has gone off the boil, that it is not well marketed and needs far better national coverage to attract visitors to the town at all times of the year.

It was also thought that the town would benefit from more special (themed) events, preferably out of season (e.g. The Big Gig or Mussel Fest).

In addition it was thought that the town needs to:

- promote itself more effectively
- improve facilities for visitors
- should consider a free bus service
- free toilets.

Issue 6: A proper park and ride service was suggested with parking at a new site where revenue could be retained by the town.

It was also thought that the Ports capacity could be better utilised.

Other Comments

“Fowey has so much to offer, a wonderful location, full of character & history, beautifully presented + with pride (things like Fowey in Bloom help)”.

Even though Fowey was described as having a “thriving community with a good mix of young, working and retired” it was thought that the town needs to be taking action to ensure its ongoing prosperity. In particular it must focus on out of season activities and support.

Several reported concerns about the traffic problems of the town. There was a plea for a proper town traffic plan. The idea of a coinless payment system that could be used for the car park, bus and toilets was floated. One respondent suggested a designated traffic officer.

Concerns were raised about AS Parking’s contract and the company’s overzealous action in enforcing parking restrictions.

Individual requests were received for a fine dining restaurant, a good wine bar (rather than a pub), a bank, more independent retailers rather than chains, no further loss of retail outlets, no more fashion shops or galleries, a tax of vacant retail properties, targeted tax relief on certain types and sizes of organisations, a business park.

The results from the Survey in 2015 and the Economy and business workshop and the Employment and Business Survey 2017 have all been published on the NDP website www.foweysfuture.co.uk and written up in the monthly parish newsletter Fowey News. This information has also been used by the steering group to write up the draft policies for the Employment and the Local Economy section of the NDP.