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Torfaen ~ inspiring business innovation

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Torfaen Business Voice
Llais Busnes Torfaen



ONLINE

**NOVEMBER
2020**

**Next Virtual Meeting:
Thursday 26th November, 11am.**

As a business it is hard to be aware of what support, funding and regulations are in place, subscribe for free to view a short bulletin all in one place, and to receive regular, up to date Torfaen Economy & Enterprise information bulletins right to your email address.

www.southwalesbusiness.co.uk

SUBSCRIBE

Notes from our Chairman

Let's start with the good news. It was great to see and hear from so many of you who joined our recent online meeting. It's an excellent opportunity to talk about how your businesses are dealing with the current challenges and a forum to get support and advice or frankly just a chance to see familiar friendly faces and have a chat about the current unpleasantness.

We've had a steady stream of new members with over ninety businesses taking part. We are still offering free online membership until the end of the year. The next online meeting is on the 26th November so I hope to see many of you then.

There's no shortage of less-good news around. Let's start with COVID, fraudsters and Brexit. We aim to help as much as we can in the newsletter with features on funding during lockdown, cyber protection and Brexit for exporters. I hope you all find them helpful as I'm sure we'll be talking about these issues for a good while yet.

Finally, there's also a piece on Superfast online tools for business. If, like me you had no idea what the last one means and it made you think of a power drills ordered on Amazon Prime I'm sure the article will point you in the right direction. Apologies for the "joke". I'd get out more but I'm not allowed.



Ashley Harkus
Chairman,
Torfaen
Business
Voice

Become a Member

<http://bit.ly/TBV-membership-form>



Dates for your Diary Virtual Meetings

26/11/20 - Torfaen Business Voice - 11am Online

21/01/21 - Torfaen Business Voice - 4.30pm Online

25/02/21 - Torfaen Business Voice - 4.30pm Online



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A full Q&A can be found at here:
<http://bit.ly/firebreak-qanda>

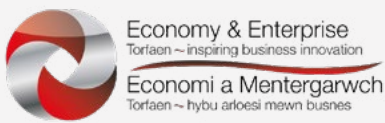
This is a fund to provide financial assistance to businesses that are facing operational and financial challenges caused by the national lockdown announced for Wales as a result of COVID-19.

The purpose of the fund is to support businesses with cash flow support to help them survive the economic consequences of the restrictions put in place.

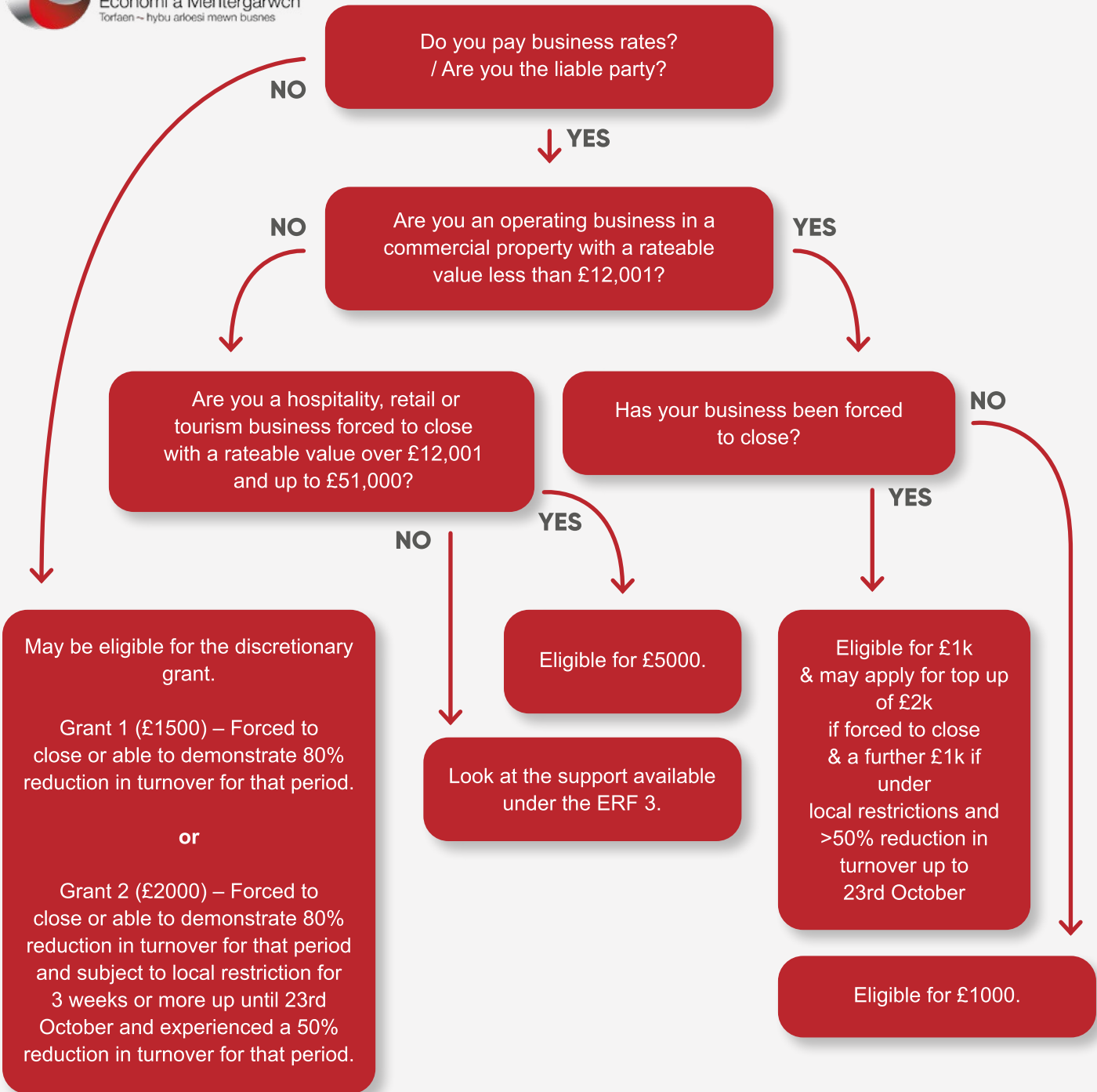
The fund will be open to applications from the **28th October and will close at 5pm on the 20th November** or when the fund is fully committed.

A short firebreak has been introduced across Wales to help regain control of the virus, a series of restrictive measures came into place at:

6pm Friday 23rd October and will run until 12:01am Monday 9th November 2020.



FIREBREAK GRANTS



The fund consists of **TWO** separate schemes:

1

LOCKDOWN NON DOMESTIC RATE GRANT

This grant is available to businesses liable for paying business rates.

GRANT 1

A grant of £5,000 is being made available for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses that have been **forced to close** (as defined by the regulations: <http://bit.ly/firebreak-regulations>) and occupy properties with a rateable value of between £12,001 and £51,000.

GRANT 2

A grant of £1,000 is being made available to all businesses eligible for small business rates relief (SBRR) in Wales with a rateable value of up to £12,000 (see guidance document for further detail).

- ✓ Businesses eligible for small business rates relief that have been subject to local restrictions for 3 weeks or more and have been materially impacted (>50% reduction in turnover) up to the 23rd October will be eligible for a further grant of £1,000.
- ✓ **AND** Businesses eligible for small business rates relief that have been **forced to close** (as defined by the regulations:) as a result of the national firebreak lockdown will also be eligible for a further top up grant of £2,000 from their local authority.

*You are **NOT** eligible for this grant if:*

- ✓ You are eligible for, or have received, the Lockdown Discretionary Grant from your Local Authority.

You will need to be on the NDR rating list for your local authority on 1 September 2020 and will need to complete a simple registration form to receive this grant.

For further information on this grant please read the Lockdown Non Domestic Rate Grant Guidance Document:

<http://bit.ly/non-domestic-rate-grant-guidance>

Enhanced Lockdown Non Domestic Rates Grant Application Form:

<http://bit.ly/lockdown-non-domestic-rates-grant>

2

LOCKDOWN DISCRETIONARY GRANT

This grant is **NOT** available if you qualify for the Non Domestic Rate Grant.

GRANT 1

A discretionary grant of £1,500 is available to assist businesses that have:

- ✓ Been forced to close (as defined by the regulations) as a result of the national firebreak lockdown.
- ✓ **OR** are able to demonstrate that the national firebreak lockdown will result in at least a 80% reduction in their turnover for that period.

GRANT 2

A discretionary grant of £2,000 is available to assist businesses that have:

- ✓ Been forced to close (as defined by the regulations) as a result of the national firebreak lockdown.
- ✓ **OR** are able to demonstrate that the national firebreak lockdown will result in at least a 80% reduction in their turnover for that period.
- ✓ **AND** have been subject to local restrictions for 3 weeks or more up to the 23rd October and experienced at least a 50% reduction in their turnover for that period.

YOU CANNOT APPLY FOR GRANT 1 & GRANT 2.

*You are **NOT** eligible for this grant if:*

- ✓ You are eligible for, or have received, the Lockdown Non-Domestic Rate Grant from your Local Authority.

For further information on this grant please read the Lockdown Discretionary Grant Guidance Document:

<http://bit.ly/lockdown-discretionary-grant>

Enhanced Lockdown Discretionary Grant Application Form:

<http://bit.ly/enhanced-lockdown-discretionary-grant>

Applications will be dealt with on a **first come first served** basis. This may lead to applications not being appraised after they have been submitted if the fund is fully committed.

The above information is subject to change.

Brexit Update

Minister for Economy, Transport & North Wales, Ken Skates urges welsh businesses to be ready for end of EU Transition period.

Minister for Economy, Transport & North Wales, Ken Skates has outlined the preparations businesses need to be making in readiness for the ending of the EU Transition period. In the attached communication piece to businesses (<http://bit.ly/EU-transition-email>) he focuses on key areas and resources including:

UK GOVERNMENT TRACKER (Obtain a personalised list of actions): <https://www.gov.uk/transition>

HMRC'S EMAIL UPDATES (Keep up to date): <http://bit.ly/hmrc-help-and-support>

BUSINESS WALES EU TRANSITION PORTAL
<https://businesswales.gov.wales/eu-transition-portal/home>

IMPORTS, EXPORTS & CUSTOMS GOVERNMENT LETTER
<http://bit.ly/government-letter>

DATA

<http://bit.ly/data-protection-transition-period>

PEOPLE

<https://www.gov.uk/staying-uk-eu-citizen>

BORDERS

<http://bit.ly/border-planning>



The Border Operating Model:

A guide to how the border with the European Union will work after the transition period.

On 1 January 2021 the transition period with the European Union will end, and the United Kingdom will operate a full, external border as a sovereign nation. This means that controls will be placed on the movement of goods between Great Britain and the EU.

To afford industry extra time to make necessary arrangements, the UK Government has taken the decision to introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021.

The Border Operating Model is UK Government's explanation of the new border processes which will be introduced for trade to/from the EU next year, most of which will be required whether or not a trade deal is agreed.

Anyone who trades with the EU needs to put these processes in place now or they will likely not be able to transport their goods to/from the EU next year.

Please follow the link below to the document 'The Border with the European Union: Importing and Exporting Goods'
<http://bit.ly/the-boarder-operating-model>

Are You Ready for our New Relationship with the EU?

Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy is urging businesses to prepare and know what to do as the UK starts a new relationship with the EU.

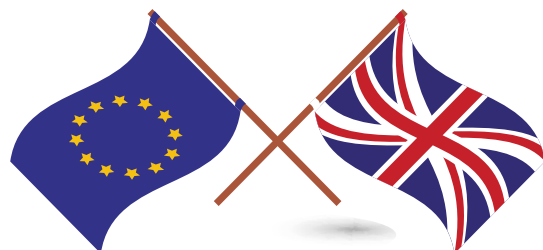
Guaranteed changes from 1st January will be in:

- ✓ The way businesses import and export goods;
- ✓ The process for hiring people from the EU;
- ✓ The way businesses provide services in EU markets.

Help is available. Check what actions you need to take: <https://www.gov.uk/transition>

Sign-up for updates: <http://bit.ly/email-updates-signup>

Sign up for webinars: <http://bit.ly/webinar-signup-page>



Have you Signed up to the Police Cyber Alarm?



This is a free government funded scheme that offers near real time monitoring of Cyber Threats to your business!

Benefits include:

- ✓ Near real-time monitoring with regular reporting
- ✓ Only metadata collected, no user data, content or Intellectual Property
- ✓ GDPR Compliant as no personal data involved

Police Cyber Alarm is government funded and easy to join, for all organisations including local businesses, schools, colleges, councils, utilities companies and any other organisation who would like to be part of the scheme.

Help Cyber Protect your business, sign up today!

Visit: <https://www.cyberalarm.police.uk/>



Dragons Rewards

Get your business noticed!

Dragons Rugby would like to offer the opportunity for businesses to advertise any offers or discounts they may be able to provide through the club. This will be distributed to Season ticket holders and staff (both playing and non-playing) as well as the wider Dragons fan base (Circa 20,000 people)

There is no cost associated with this, it is something we want to be able to offer to help businesses promote themselves during this tough economic climate.

We currently have our Dragons Rewards leaflets that offer various discounts to season ticket holders and

the businesses that utilise this have seen an uplift in customers as a result i.e. Nando's in Friars Walk and Bryn Meadows Hotel further into the region. While the leaflet has been a success, we are about to launch our Dragons Rugby App which offers will also feature on, as well as via emails and social media so we reach out to all our supporters.

We are looking to get as many businesses on board as we can before we send out the season ticket leaflets and launch the App so if you would like to be a part of the Dragons network, please let me know .

Tom Watkins - tom.watkins@dragonsrugby.wales



Redundancy Support Service for Businesses

TORFAEN
COUNTY
BOROUGH



BWRDEISTREF
SIROL
TORFAEN

Torfaen Council's Economy and Skills department are working with partners to support Torfaen employers, and their employees, who are experiencing redundancy as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

If you are an employer who is having to make staff redundant during these difficult times, there is free support available for you and your employees from our Redundancy Support Service.

The Redundancy Support Service is a **FREE** service available to Torfaen employers of all sizes to help your employees find alternative employment and access new opportunities.

Support on offer includes:

- ✓ Job matching to current local vacancies
- ✓ Job searching and help with online vacancies
- ✓ CV Development
- ✓ Free training
- ✓ Career Planning
- ✓ Starting a business

For further information please follow the link and complete our short online enquiry form:

<http://bit.ly/redundancy-support-form>

E-mail: employability@torfaen.gov.uk | 01633 647743



Why Digital is Now The 'New Normal' for Welsh Business

Cyflymu Cymru i Fusnesau

Superfast Business Wales

The pandemic has forced many Welsh businesses to dramatically change the way they work, with digital playing a key role. It has proven to offer a timely lifeline, helping small business owners to raise brand awareness, attract new customers, and convince previous ones to return.

Colman Kayman HR Services is one of over 6800 businesses to access free advice from Superfast Business Wales on how to use digital – read the full story: <http://bit.ly/Colman-Kayman-article>. Owner Charlene Flynn found online platforms Microsoft 365 and OneDrive helped her win the battle for a healthier work-life balance without compromising her business goals.

Charlene said: "My services are incredibly time-sensitive so having an instant response for clients is vital. I can reply to emails remotely and everything is stored and safely backed up in the cloud so I can access files from anywhere.

"I went on a Superfast Business Wales search engine optimisation (SEO) course and it paid dividends. Since making the recommended changes, enquiries through the website have flown in and I have doubled the number of clients, which helped me make a profit in my first year."

We're here for you. Digital support service Superfast Business Wales provides free support for businesses with a range of webinars and 1-1 advice, including a comprehensive website review.

Whether you want to tell customers you've reopened safely, or soon will be, and need to get cash flow moving again to stabilise your business – digital can help you secure your business for now and in the future.

To book onto any of our webinars and access free support visit our Events page.

<http://bit.ly/free-online-courses-SBW>

Attending a Virtual Event? Here's How to Network Successfully

Here are some tips to help you brush up on your virtual business networking skills and get the most out of online events.

✓ Do your Research

Familiarise yourself with the event schedule, do some background reading on the topic or theme that the event covers, and research any speakers. Take the time to go through the list of attendees, using social media to look people up if necessary, and identify potential networking targets. If a list isn't available beforehand, you can still think about the types of people you want to target.

✓ Establish your Networking Goals

What are you hoping to gain by attending this event? Outlining some specific goals early on will help keep you focused. Virtual events don't tend to offer the same potential for chance encounters that physical events do, so having a clearly-defined plan is even more important. Keep your goals in mind during the event and evaluate your success afterwards.

✓ Provide a Complete Profile

You might be asked on certain event apps or by the event organisers to fill out a professional profile. Clearly and concisely state what you do and include details that are relevant to the audience of that particular event. Links to social media or your website, will also help to ensure that people can easily find and reach out to you. You can also use what you've written as your introduction during the meeting.

✓ Make use of Social Media

Leveraging social media before and after the event can help you to make and strengthen connections with other attendees. Post on your social channels that you'll be attending and say what you're looking forward to. Social media is a valuable tool to find out more about speakers, presenters and other attendees, and to start interacting and building relationships before the event even begins.

✓ Engage in the Discussion

When you're at the event, you should indicate to people that you're there to network by actively getting involved. As well as contributing to the main conversation, you can also use the private messaging tool to initiate one-on-one chats with networking targets and schedule follow-up meetings.

✓ Follow up

Just like you would after an in-person event, make sure you follow up with your new connections in a timely manner (ideally within 24 hours) by reaching out to them via social media or email. Make your message unique by making reference to something you talked about with the particular individual, or mention a topic that was discussed at the event.

While it's hard to exactly replicate the excitement and interpersonal interaction that you find at a physical event, virtual events can still provide valuable networking opportunities and have advantages of their own. By being well prepared and having a clear plan, you can get the most out of them and achieve the networking outcomes you want.



www.developmentbank.wales

The Development Bank of Wales has finance to help businesses start up, strengthen and grow. To find out more about the loans we can offer contact Claire in our micro loan team.

Claire.vokes@developmentbank.wales



Kickstart Scheme: Information for Torfaen Businesses

The Kickstart Scheme provides funding to create new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. Employers of all sizes can apply for funding which covers:

- ✓ 100% of the National Minimum Wage (or the National Living Wage depending on the age of the participant) for 25 hours per week for a total of 6 months
- ✓ Associated employer National Insurance contributions
- ✓ Employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions

A Kickstart Scheme application must be for a minimum of 30 job placements and there are 2 ways to make an application:

- ✓ If you're creating more than 30 job placements you can apply directly by submitting an online application yourself. <http://bit.ly/kickstart-scheme>
- ✓ If you're creating fewer than 30 job placements, Torfaen Council, Economy & Skills department can act on your behalf and apply for a Kickstart Scheme grant for you. For an informal discussion, please contact: 01633 647743 or email: employability@torfaen.gov.uk



They will:

- ✓ Gather information from you about the job placements you'd like to offer
- ✓ Use this information to submit an online application on behalf of a group of employers
- ✓ Pass on the relevant payments made by DWP to you (for example the young person's salary)

Further information about the Kickstart scheme can also be found at: <http://bit.ly/kickstart-scheme>



Project Extended to Benefit all of Wales



The AgorIP Project which has helped the Welsh economy and innovation in west Wales to prosper over the last four years, has been extended to benefit all of Wales, with a total investment of more than £20m.

AgorIP brings academics, clinicians and businesses together to pioneer research into cutting-edge technologies and drive commercial success with the support of Swansea University, and the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government.

Since the AgorIP Project was launched, the team working in West Wales and the Valleys, including North Wales, has assisted more than 200 opportunities; helping to create jobs, protect Intellectual Property (IP) and bring innovation to the marketplace. The Project has also helped companies to spin out of Swansea University by securing private investments.

AgorIP has helped to bring a range of innovation to the marketplace; including novel collagen production, mountain bikes accessible to wheelchair users, innovation bringing virtual reality to classrooms, nutrition bars using locally sourced seaweed in north Wales, novel protective face masks in response to the Covid-19 crisis, and metal coatings to name but a few.

The extension means that funding of more than £5m has been assigned to east Wales to support businesses looking to take their innovations to the marketplace. Get in touch with our team:

Email: info@agorip.com/ Web: www.agorip.com

Twitter: @AgorIP_Swan

LinkedIn: AgorIP

Instagram: [agorip_swan](https://www.instagram.com/agorip_swan)