



Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum

Research into the impact of the recession on the high streets of GMTF's 16 member communities



For OS 759934: 14.2.96
A LOVE POEM

SHE is my Corinna, my Lucasta,
Whose name, for courtesy, I will not say.

Like a tumbler, she sprawls among sharp small hills,
Like a sibil, she drifts into silences and fog.

She has her own way with birds and flowers;
Is given to minor fierce festivals without
much notice.

Her speech is like a mouthful of hot chestnuts.
Extra hs and ls give her vowels grace.

Her lovely highborn sisters over the hill
With their suitsors and reputations look
down on her.

She doesn't care, preferring her laidback cronies,
Synn, Bradley, Haw, Bear, Ragdoll and Shilbone.

Her favourite scent: a dab of woodsmoke
behind the ears.
Haute couture and haute cuisine are not her style.

She is an early riser, watery and echoing,
I love her then. And in the evening, when
blackbirds call it a day.

In all the seasons of every year I love her
And this seems as good a day as any.

U. A. Fanshawe

Mixed Sources
www.clarendonpress.com

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'We love Wotton' Celebrations

PROGRAMME

Saturday 25th April, 2009
10 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

A Celebration Day
to show the best that Wotton can offer

Communities and Local Government

Refreshments



May 2009

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COMMUNITY LIST

Survey results in detail, by community:

1. **Chipping Campden**
2. **Churchdown**
3. **Cinderford**
4. **Cirencester**
5. **Coleford**
6. **Fairford**
7. **Lechlade**
8. **Nailsworth**
9. **Newent**
10. **Northleach**
11. **Stonehouse**
12. **Stow-on-the-Wold**
13. **Tetbury**
14. **Tewkesbury**
15. **Winchcombe**
16. **Wotton-under-Edge**

Background

The Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum was keen to find out how the recession was impacting on the high streets of its 16 member communities.

As a result, it commissioned research and, between May 5 and May 20 2009, contact was made with all the communities via District and Town Councils, Chambers of Commerce and/or Business Clubs or groups.

The contacts were asked to complete a brief questionnaire; some were completed by telephone interview, while others returned their information by e-mail. Some of the figures relating to shop closures come from official sources, others are estimates made by town council clerks or chairs of chambers of trade or commerce.

This survey does not take into account normal 'ebb and flow' of shops opening and closing, with no comparison with business closures and openings in previous years. It is very much a snapshot of how the recession is affecting Gloucestershire's market towns.

The Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce and Industry also surveyed its members as part of this fact finding exercise – thank you to the Chamber.

We would like to thank all those who took the time to provide information, despite busy workloads, especially those individuals who went out into their high streets and counted the empty shops!

Martin Whittaker
Viva Communications Limited
www.viva-communications.co.uk

Headline findings

The findings indicate that, while the economic downturn is affecting our market towns – and it seems to be hitting some harder than others – in many cases, communities are fighting back.

By working together, district, town and parish councils, chambers of commerce, business associations and other organisations, are developing innovative ways of attracting visitors and supporting retailers through difficult times. We hope some of the examples of good practice highlighted in some of the town reports and in the case studies will be shared by communities throughout Gloucestershire.

- Throughout Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum's member towns, **at least 70 town centre shops or businesses have closed since July 2008**. During the same period **at least 49 new shops have opened**
- Of the 70 shops and businesses which had closed, 54 (77%) were identified as independents and 16 were part of a national chain (23%)
- Of the 70 shops and businesses which had closed, 50 gave a reason for closure – and of those, 39 (78%) were attributed to the **economic downturn/lack of business**. Other reasons given include retirement, relocation or personal reasons.

Types of shop/business most hit by closure across the 16 communities

1.	Estate agents	7 closures
2.	Antiques shops	5 closures
3.	Off licences	5 closures
4.	Grocers/convenience stores	4 closures
5.	Gift shops	4 closures

Click [here](#) for the full list, by community.

How towns are helping businesses beat the downturn – a snapshot

- **Wotton-under-Edge** was among the first towns to use empty shop windows for displays – at Christmas they were used to display goods from other shops, with goods labelled showing where you could buy them, and the initiative was very effective. Wotton also held a very successful ‘We Love Wotton’ Day on Saturday April 25.
- The **Forest of Dean** towns are working with Forest of Dean District Council to develop a scheme to increase opportunities for arts, signposting and community learning in vacant shops to avoid the ‘broken window effect’ in town centres.
- **Cirencester** is developing its Community Plan, ‘Our Future Cirencester’, whose themes include economic development – one of its initiatives is a Shop Local campaign. An event has been organised by New Brewery Arts to celebrate Cirencester’s wool town tradition on June 20/21 – latterly the Chamber of Commerce have become involved, planning an ‘I love Cirencester’ day to coincide.
- In Stonehouse the Town Council is involved in Stonehouse Partnership's High Street Working Group. The aim is to introduce schemes encouraging people to use Stonehouse as a shopping centre, to deter drivers from using it as a short-cut to the M5, introduce areas where people can stop and park more easily, and introduce a cafe culture. Stonehouse Partnership has also been discussing the feasibility of using empty shop windows for displays.
- **Tetbury** Chamber of Commerce has supported and worked with local councils on a number of initiatives, including a Food Festival in September, the Tetbury bag – a jute carrier bag produced for the town – and the Tetbury Passport, encouraging people to ‘buy local’. Other measures include writing to touring coach companies telling them about the town and where car/coach parking can be found, and inviting a French Market to town. A new Town Guide is being produced.
- **Tewkesbury** Borough Council has established a small fund to help businesses across the Borough during the current economic downturn. A flexible range of initiatives is available, including a ‘buy local’ campaign, business networking and conference events, training initiatives and help with marketing. It has also undertaken a short survey to help understand the effects of the current economic downturn on local businesses.

For more detailed case studies, click [here](#).

Overview of the 16 GMTF member communities

TOWNS	Total town centre capacity shops/businesses	Shops/businesses closed since July '08	Shops/businesses opened since July '08	Closures attributed to economic downturn*
Chipping Campden	60-70	2	2	
Churchdown	19	2	1	
Cinderford	117	8	2	7
Cirencester	255	11	10	4
Coleford	145	3	1	3
Fairford	21	0	1	
Lechlade	27	1	1	
Nailsworth	+/- 50	1	0	
Newent	93	5	3	5
Northleach	14	1	1	1
Stonehouse	78	3	2	3
Stow-on-the-Wold	100+	5	3	3
Tetbury	130-150	9	3	4
Tewkesbury ⁺	255	11	15	5
Winchcombe	+/-55	2	1	1
Wotton-under-Edge	93-94	6	3	3

* The figures relating to closures being attributed to the economic downturn only give a limited picture as they are based on responses given and may, in fact, be higher. For 20 closed businesses covered by the survey, reasons for closure are not known.

+ Figures updated since the report was initially published for a GMTF meeting on May 21st.

Case studies

SHOP FRONTS GET A MAKEOVER

Towns throughout Gloucestershire are looking at innovative ways to turn vacant shops into new opportunities for their communities.

To avoid the sight of boarded-up shop fronts, town and district councils are joining forces with chambers of trade to use shop windows as displays for local artists and community groups.

Government Ministers have urged town centres to temporarily use vacant premises for their communities. Four out of five councils have reported an increase in empty shop premises, according to the Local Government Association.

Dursley (not currently a GMTF member community) made national headlines after local artists turned disused shops into a gallery for their paintings, photographs and ceramics. Similar plans are afoot in Stroud.

Other county towns are adopting or planning similar innovative schemes. Wotton-under-Edge was among the first to use vacant shops for displays. At Christmas empty shops were used to advertise goods available from other retailers.

Stonehouse, Tewkesbury and Winchcombe are also considering using empty shops as displays.

And Forest of Dean District Council is working with town councils and other partners in Cinderford, Coleford and Newent to use vacant shops for arts, signposting and community learning.

WE LOVE WOTTON

Staging a 'We love Wotton' day in Wotton-under-Edge breathed new life into the town, raising its profile as a great place to visit and shop.

The event was the brainchild of celebrated local poet U A Fanthorpe (who sadly died in April 2009) and her partner Dr Rosie Bailey, who envisaged their beloved town decorated with red hearts and a 'We love Wotton' banner.

"It was put to the Town Regeneration Partnership that we should have a day celebrating Wotton and all that we love about it," says town clerk, Glenys Sykes.

"We decided to try it out and made it Saturday April 25th, part of our Spring Arts Festival. A local graphic design company offered to make the red hearts and banner and we were off."

Parts of the town centre were closed to traffic, and tables and chairs were put out in the street. Attractions included the Town Band and a local morris dancing group, there was a photographic competition, and an 'I love Wotton because...' postcard competition which attracted over 500 entries.

Local churches held a flower festival, the Tennis Club ran a tournament and the Bowls Club held an open day. All the town's cafes were run off their feet and there were even some decorated models of sheep to celebrate Wotton's wool town past.

Because the town bucked the trend and refused to be downcast about the recession, the event gained much publicity – even some national media coverage – and attracted hundreds of people.

"The day raised the profile of the town as a good venue for shopping and visiting, made everyone feel good about living here and gave the impression of a lively, enjoyable place to run a business," says Glenys Sykes. "And it gave everyone a fun day at remarkably little cost."

SPOTLIGHT ON TEWKESBURY

Tewkesbury's town centre has been put under the spotlight by TV retail guru Mary Portas.

The straight-talking star of BBC's Mary Queen of Shops visited the town in April to film for an edition of The Money Programme, looking at how Britain's retailers are coping with the downturn.

The programme, shown in June 2009, compares high streets in London's Marylebone area, Dunstable in Bedfordshire, and Tewkesbury.

During her visit she warned that the Tewkesbury was in danger of becoming a ghost town and said it really needs a solution to take it forward.

But she described it as "absolutely delightful" and added: "We have big opportunities. It's about being focused together."

The town was also given further a welcome boost with a recent champagne reception at Parliament, hosted by Tewkesbury MP Laurence Robertson, to 'sell' the area to major businesses as a good location.

Bruce Keen, chairman of Tewkesbury Chamber of Commerce, said the town has worked hard to move on from its association with the 2007 floods.

"One of the good things to come out of this is that everybody's working together now to show just how much Tewkesbury has to offer," he said.

SHOP LOCAL SCHEMES

Initiatives encouraging people to support their local shops are catching on in Gloucestershire – and are becoming increasingly important as the recession bites.

The First Stop Local Shop Campaign in the Forest of Dean's market towns pioneered this approach in the county.

Research found that around £100 million a year was being spent outside the Forest by district residents each year, and this combined with the growth of supermarkets and online shopping made it increasingly difficult for market town shops to thrive.

The £500,000 scheme which began in 2005, actively promotes the qualities local shops have over their out-of-town competitors. It also introduced Forest Gift Vouchers to buy as presents and the Forest Rewards Card, a loyalty card giving money off thousands of local products and services.

Despite funding for the campaign coming to an end in March 2008, the project continues and has now been extended to Forest villages. Ownership of the schemes is being transferred to retailers themselves, and the reward cards opened up to non-retail businesses. See www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk for more details.

A similar Local Shop Campaign was also set up for Tewkesbury, Winchcombe and Bishop's Cleeve following the Forest model, to help retailers in the aftermath of the 2007 floods.

As well as a local gift voucher scheme, a retail support officer was employed to manage the campaign, and shopping guides were produced for the three towns. See www.localshopcampaign.co.uk

Meanwhile in Tetbury, the new Tetbury Passport reward scheme has been launched in collaboration with local food producers to encourage visitors to buy fresh local produce.

Survey results in detail

CHIPPING CAMPDEN

Organisation/contact

James Keitley, chair of Chipping Campden Chamber of Trade 01386 841050 info@chippingcampden.info

Town population

2,300

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 60-70 (estimate)

Number currently empty

2

Closures since July 08

2

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
baker	independent	3 part time	less than 2 years	
gift shop	independent		5 years	personal

Openings since July 08

2

Types of shop/business opened

- kitchen/bathroom
- women's clothing

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

"I have been in touch with Businesslink as a business, but there is no help for small businesses. It's financial help we need. There isn't any."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

"Nothing."

Survey results in detail

CHURCHDOWN

Organisation/contact

Ruth Warne, clerk, Churchdown Parish Council 01452 713528 churchdownnpc-clerk@wwmail.co.uk

Town population

11,739

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 19

Number currently empty 2

Closures since July 08 2

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
DIY	independent	4 part time	approx 30 years	retired/lack of trade
food store	chain			

(Other businesses to close, not in main shopping area, are Indian takeaway, and Hurrans Garden Centre. Major loss – employed 30)

Openings since July 08 1

Types of shop/business opened

- Takeaway

(An empty unit is also being converted into a coffee shop and hairdressers)

Was the Town Council/retailers’ organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

“No we’re not aware. Churchdown does not have a Chamber of Commerce, so our links with business are informal and information exchange takes place on an informal basis.”

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

“We are not aware of any initiatives by the Borough Council to support business in Churchdown, but I note the very attractive Shopping Guides (sponsored by Gloucestershire First, Borough Council, Rural Renaissance, and Severn Trent) which have been produced for Winchcombe, Tewkesbury and Bishops Cleeve. It would be good to have something similar for Churchdown especially given the size of our population of around 12,000, which is the largest Parish/Town in Tewkesbury Borough.

“It would be good to have a display of some kind in the empty unit at St John’s Avenue as this has been empty for some time.”

Survey results in detail

CINDERFORD (1 OF 2)

Organisation/contact

Richard Morgan, Forest of Dean District Council 01594 812642 Richard.Morgan@fdean.gov.uk

Town population

8,489

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 117

Number currently empty 18

Closures since July 08 8

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
clothes store	independent			lack of business
employment agency	chain			Woolworths
convenience store	independent			lack of business
gifts	independent			lack of business
dry cleaning	independent			lack of business
window cleaner	independent			lack of business
office services	independent			lack of business

Openings since July 08 2

Types of shop/business opened

- alternative therapy/gift shop
- clothes shop (since closed)

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

Response from Forest of Dean District Council: "Difficult to answer – the Town Councils may or may not be aware of the type of business support organisations but a better understanding of their services is almost certainly needed. Cinderford has no active retailers' organisation."

No response from Town Council

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Survey results in detail

CINDERFORD (2 OF 2)

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

First Stop Local Shop: Award-winning local shopping scheme. FoDDC received a large amount of RDA funding back in 2005 to develop this scheme and are now taking it on to the next level by transferring ownership of the schemes to businesses (encouraging businesses to publicise their offers in windows and online etc), widening the offer to include non-retail businesses in order to add value to the scheme and increasing the numbers of Rewards Card holders. ([see case studies](#))

Tackling vacancies: We are putting together a scheme to develop opportunities for arts, signposting and community learning in vacant town centre shops in order to avoid the 'broken window effect' in town centres. We will be working in partnership with town councils and community partners on these.

Encouraging markets: Particularly at weekends, markets can offer opportunities to increase footfall and trade in existing shops, widen the retail offer of small towns and offer opportunities for micro and start-up businesses. We will be working in partnership with a range of organisations to create opportunities to improve our markets.

Supporting business groups: We are offering capacity building training and small start up funding for business groups to ensure that businesses within each town have a strong voice with which to communicate their experiences and needs during recession in order that we can better respond as a council.

Creating long-term infrastructure plans: It is important during recession not to just drop everything and attend to the present. We are developing an Area Action Plan for Lydney and have in place enhancement schemes for Cinderford and Newent. There is currently nothing in place for Coleford because drainage issues have not yet been resolved that will open up the town for development.

General comment: The recession has been a factor in several businesses closing (our fourth town, Lydney, has also suffered quite badly). Woolworths' closure has had a dramatic impact on Cinderford and Lydney – those shoppers who might have used Woolworths and a number of smaller town shops are now heading to larger retail centres where there is more diversity. Neighbouring centres such as Monmouth town has certainly benefited from the above.

Survey results in detail

CIRENCESTER (1 OF 2)

Organisation/contact

Jonathan Davies - Cirencester Chamber of Commerce 01285 642614 jsjdavies@yahoo.com

Andrea Pellegram
project manager, Our Future Cirencester (community partnership) 01285 652304 andrea.pellegram@sky.com

Town population 19,342

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 255 (estimate)

Number currently empty Approx 10

Closures since July 08 11

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
café	independent			
women's clothes	chain			
children's clothes	chain			Adams
store	chain			Woolworths
antiques	independent			personal
off licence	chain			recession
coffee retailer	chain			recession
wholefoods	independent			
household items	chain			
petrol stations	independent			
petrol station	independent			

Openings since July 08 10

Types of shop/business opened

- Café
- 3 x women's clothing
- baker
- convenience store
- 2 x hairdressers
- Body Shop
- shoes

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Survey results in detail

CIRENCESTER (2 OF 2)

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

Response from Chamber of Commerce: "Yes, although very bureaucratic to get any financial support."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from Chamber of Commerce: "Yes. The Chamber of Commerce is leading an initiative around Shop Local and is also leading the business stream of 'Our Future Cirencester' community plan"

Response from Andrea Pellegram: "Cirencester has been developing a Community Plan called 'Our Future Cirencester', with one of its themes being economic development. It involves organisations including the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce and local groups and volunteers, and is working very closely with Parklife to get a whole raft of improvement projects in place. We are now looking for funding for our projects but there is none readily available. Now Rural Renaissance is finished there's absolutely nothing. There's no longer any money for economic development, and this is when we need it most.

"What businesses are most commonly offered is training – but they don't want training on how to do HR. They want real help with things like producing a town logo, helping to promote the town, town centre management and encouraging people to shop local. There's a real mismatch between what's been offered by service providers and what we need.

"A 'shop local' campaign is part of the community plan. There's an event planned for June 20/21– Brewery Arts are organising an event based around sheep, because of Cirencester's tradition as a wool town. As part of their 'Sheep – from Lamb to Loom' exhibition, they will be going from shearing a sheep to creating a coat in a day. After a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting traders also agreed to get involved, turning it into an 'I love Cirencester' day.

"The community plan has given people the confidence to go out and help themselves. In the current climate, if you want something you're just going to have to go out there and do it yourself. Cirencester gets meagre funding or support, because we are seen as wealthy. But the town does need help. The Forest towns get millions, but we have deprived communities and businesses that are struggling too."

Survey results in detail

COLEFORD

Organisation/contact

Richard Morgan, Forest of Dean District Council 01594 812642 Richard.Morgan@fdean.gov.uk

Town population 8,567

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 145

Number currently empty 11

Closures since July 08 3

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
charity shop	independent			loss of business
books	independent			loss of business
discount store	independent			loss of business

Openings since July 08 1

Types of shop/business opened

- hairdresser

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

See Cinderford

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

See Cinderford

Survey results in detail

FAIRFORD

Organisation/contact

Kevin Symons or Chris Roberts, Fairford & Lechlade Business Club 0844 826 0535 kevin@flbizclub.co.uk
chris@flbizclub.co.uk

Town population

3,321

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area

21

Number currently empty

None

Closures since July 08

Not aware of any

Types of shop/business closed

None given

Openings since July 08

1

Types of shop/business opened

- charity shop

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

"I think there's some awareness through the Business Club. If you're pro-active to a degree you're likely to know there are services out there."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from business club: "The Business Club has tried to do a few things, but it is still in its infancy. On the recession in general: From my own analysis, sales for the first quarter of this year were very flat. (runs a convenience store) But I don't think we (the town) are badly affected like communities where there are lots of big chains. We are mostly independents..."

Survey results in detail

LECHLADE

Organisation/contact

Kevin Symons or Chris Roberts, Fairford & Lechlade Business Club 0844 826 0535 kevin@flbizclub.co.uk
 chris@flbizclub.co.uk

Town population 2,998

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 27

Number currently empty no more than 2 (estimate)

Closures since July 08 1 (estimate)

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
tattoo parlour	independent	2-3		

Openings since July 08 1

Types of shop/business opened

- bookshop

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

See Fairford

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

See Fairford

Survey results in detail

NAILSWORTH

Organisation/contact

Peter Blackwell, chairman Nailsworth Chamber of Trade 01453 835222

Town population

5,719

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area approx 50 (estimate)

Number currently empty 3

Closures since July 08 1

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
Office supplies	independent			personal

Note - Somerfields has also closed, but is being redeveloped as Morrisons

Openings since July 08 None – there are not enough shop premises. “We have people waiting for shops”

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

Response from Chamber of Trade: “Yes, we're aware of Businesslink and FSB. Sometimes we have people coming to Chamber of Trade meetings, telling us how they do this and that, and everyone's looking at each other. It's like they're trying to teach us to suck eggs. And when we tell them something we do need, they say they can't supply it. That's happened more than once.”

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from clerk of Nailsworth Town Council: “Nailsworth Town Council does not involve itself in the detail of commercial life in Nailsworth... Stroud District Council has initiated a Shop Local campaign in the main market towns but this was started months ago. Its launch was delayed I believe because of problems sourcing bags. NTC has not participated because it was not convinced that it would be effective – it seemed to Councillors that the towns would be competing against each other for customers. Also latterly the campaign became linked to progressing plastic bag-free towns – something my council certainly supports but it was unable to commit the effort required at this time.”

Response from Chamber of Trade: “We do a street fair every three months and a farmers' market every month. We also have a Christkindl evening – in December that brought thousands of people into the town. Nailsworth may seem like a sleepy Cotswold town, but it's not asleep. Organisations like the Chamber of Trade and the Rotary Club are very active in trying to keep the town vibrant. Chamber of Trade is very active through its website:

www.nailsworthchamberoftrade.co.uk People tend to come to Nailsworth to shop because it's all there for them. For example, we have two ironmongers in the town and they're always busy.”

Survey results in detail

NEWENT

Organisation/contact

Richard Morgan, Forest of Dean District Council 01594 812642 Richard.Morgan@fdean.gov.uk

Town population 5,231

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 93

Number currently empty 7

Closures since July 08 5

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
accountant	independent			Loss of business
café/Restaurant	independent			Loss of business
museum	independent			Loss of business
estate agency	independent			Loss of business
grocer	independent			Loss of business

Openings since July 08 3

Types of shop/business opened

- hairdresser
- takeaway
- café

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

See Cinderford

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

See Cinderford

Survey results in detail

NORTHLEACH

Organisation/contact

Caroline Braidwood, Northleach Town Council clerk
Chris Hancock, Mayor

01451 861499
01451 861284

clerk@northleach.gov.uk
chris.hancock@northleach.gov.uk

Town population 1,551

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 14

Number currently empty 1

Closures since July 08 1

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
estate agency	independent	1		loss of business

Openings since July 08 1

Types of shop/business opened

- stamp auctioneer

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

No

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

No

Survey results in detail

STONEHOUSE

Organisation/contact

Liz Lawrence, deputy clerk

01453 822070

deputyclerk@stonehousetowncouncil.com

Town population

8,126

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 78

Number currently empty 7

Closures since July 08 3

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
estate agency	chain	2 full time 2 part time	20+ years	Economic downturn
off licence	chain	4	20+ years	Economic downturn
gifts	independent	1	20+ years	Economic downturn

Openings since July 08 2

Types of shop/business opened

- barber
- café

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

"We are certainly aware of Businesslink and FSB. Richard Lacey (town clerk) used to have his own business, so is well informed."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from Stroud District Council:

- SDC released funding to finalise their Community Plan and released 'shop local' bags to the business traders.
- Businesses in the retail town centre are eligible for shop front grants. There is guidance on eligibility.
- SDC assisted with the establishment of the CAB outreach centre in the Town Council office. Stroud District Council through its partners also helps start-up businesses throughout the district through Gloucestershire Enterprise Business Services

Response from Stonehouse Town Council: "There are those out there expressing concern, but it's not doing too badly. At the moment Stonehouse Town Council is involved in Stonehouse Partnership's High St Working Group. There's been a lot of public consultation and a huge amount of interest. Trying to introduce schemes to slow down traffic, deter drivers using it as a cut through to the M5, and introducing areas where people can stop and park more easily and introducing a café culture. There is a Chamber of Trade – it has been very dormant, but there are moves to breathe new life into it. The Town Council has been involved in the 'shop local' campaign. It also has a policy of purchasing local goods and only using local businesses. Stonehouse Partnership has also been discussing the feasibility of using empty shops for displays."

Survey results in detail

STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

Organisation/contact

Stow-on-the-Wold Town Council - Town clerk Mike Corker
 Stow Business Association - Mark Vance

01451 832585 info@stowonthewold.net
 01451 830344 mark@vines.co.uk

Town population

2,112

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area

100-plus (estimate)

Number currently empty

8

Closures since July 08

5

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
Antiques	independent			
Gifts	independent			relocated
Furniture	independent	6-7		lack of business
Beauty therapies	independent	3		lack of business
Hotel	independent	15-20		recession

Openings since July 08

3

Types of shop/business opened

- hairdresser
- clinic/therapist
- charity shop

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

Response from Stow Business Association: "Probably, though if someone comes to us wanting advice this is not a role we attempt to fulfill."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from Stow Town Council: "Currently the district council has just closed the town Visitor Information Centre which covered the whole North Cotswolds. They did this to save money and cut costs and because they do NOT HAVE to provide this service. It will have a severe impact on tourism, our main business. Stow Town Council is still trying to persuade them to reconsider and to carry on with some funding support for this service."

Response from Stow Business Association: "We have done various marketing activities, established a website for the town, organised Christmas events. But it's mainly based around the website and raising awareness that way. District council support? They are a waste of time. The town council probably do more than the district..."

Survey results in detail

TETBURY

Organisation/contact

Kathryn Limoi, chairman Tetbury Chamber of Commerce and Industry

kathrynjlmoi@o2email.co.uk

Town population

5,345

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 130-150 (estimate)

Number currently empty 8-9 (estimate)

Closures since July 08 9

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
3 x antiques	independent			
estate agency	chain	2 (est)		closed local branch
off licence	independent			
off licence	independent			*
florist	independent	1		loss of business
newsagent	independent			loss of business
shoes	independent	2 (est)		loss of business

* wine merchants – closed shop but still trading from home

Openings since July 08 3

Types of shop/business opened

- kitchen design
- antiques
- women's clothing

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

"Would hope most aware of FSB etc."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Ideas and initiatives the Tetbury Chamber supported, started and or otherwise working with local council include:

- Food Festival in September
- The Tetbury Bag, the Tetbury Passport
- Writing to coach companies visiting the area telling them all about the town and where coach parking can be found
- Inviting French Market to town
- A new Town Guide under production
- Early days, but talks on a photographic competition and a series of exhibitions of local artists.
- The Music festival in October is gaining prominence and attendance.

Survey results in detail

TEWKESBURY (1 OF 3)

Organisation/contact

Pauline Clarke, Town clerk	01684 294639	townclerk@tewkeshurytowncouncil.co.uk
Bruce Keen, chairman, Tewkesbury Chamber of Commerce & Industry	01684 293092	bkeen@tewkeshurysaw.co.uk
Katie Power, Economic Development Officer, Tewkesbury Borough Council	01684 272249	Katie.Power@tewkeshury.gov.uk

Town population	10,130
Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area	255
Number currently empty	16
Closures since July 08	11

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
clinic/therapist	independent			lack of business
women's clothes	independent			lack of business relocated
women's clothes	independent			
estate agent	independent			housing slump
baker	independent			relocation
food store	chain			part of M&S nationwide closure
czech foods	independent			
czech foods	independent			
discount home goods	independent			
newspaper office	chain			cutting costs
sport	independent			

Openings since July 08	15
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Types of shop/business opened

- 2 x restaurant/café
- 2 x charity shop
- clothing
- second hand goods
- discount store
- estate agent
- developer
- delicatessen
- takeaway
- Czech foods
- IT/computers
- tattoo parlour
- removals/house clearance

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PRINT

PREVIOUS

NEXT

Survey results in detail

TEWKESBURY (2 OF 3)

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

Response from Chamber of Commerce: "We are working with the town council and borough council on getting the support that is out there."

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from Tewkesbury Town Council: "The Town Council is willing to assist retailers in whatever way they can. The Council is a major part of a current campaign to regenerate the town by means of 'Tewkesbury future'. This campaign has resulted in public meetings, development of projects, a visit to the Houses of Parliament and a BBC documentary (see case study). The Council is also involved in lobbying the Borough and the Highways to try to ensure that everything is done to ensure that traffic and parking are not obstacles to the trade in the town."

Response from Tewkesbury Borough Council:

■ **Tewkesbury Food and Drink Festival 2009.** Ongoing annual event that has taken place for the last five years. The event helps promote Tewkesbury as a traditional market town, attracting many visitors to the area over the two days of the event and also helps support local rural food producers. We also provide stands to a number of retail outlets from the town which helps to promote their business to a wider audience. This has received funding through both Rural Renaissance and Severn Trent Water as part of the Flood Recovery Programme.

■ **Local Shop Campaign.** Partnership project between Gloucestershire First and Tewkesbury Borough Council. It has received funding through Severn Trent Flood Recovery Programme and Rural Renaissance. It is a two-year fixed term programme running to March 2010, unless further funding/sponsorship can be sought. The main aim of the project is to develop and strengthen the retail sector and environment within the three identified centres of Tewkesbury, Winchcombe and Bishops Cleeve – to increase the support and use of local shops, to raise awareness of local shopping provision and to provide opportunities for retailers to undertake specific training to enhance retail offer. Please see www.localshopcampaign.co.uk for more information. As part of the project a retail support Officer is employed to manage the campaign and provide support to the retailers in the three towns. One main part of the programmes is the development of shopping guides for the three towns, it is really hoped that the distribution of these guides will encourage more people to use the towns as a shopping destination. This programme was based on the successful 'shop local project' established in the Forest of Dean.

■ Tewkesbury Borough Council has established a **small fund of money to help businesses** across the Borough during the current economic downturn. A flexible range of initiatives have been made available like a buy local campaign, business networking and conference events, training initiatives and help with marketing. Please note that while this is available to businesses across the borough it benefit many in the retail centres of Tewkesbury, Winchcombe and Churchdown.

■ **A short survey** has been undertaken to help us understand the effects of the current economic downturn on local businesses. While this was circulated to businesses across the borough, there was a high response from retail businesses. Information gathered through this survey will help formulate future recession work and provided a basis for the distribution of funding to help local businesses (identified above). This survey was developed and distributed by Tewkesbury Borough Council and its partners on the Tewkesbury Economic Partnership. (LSP – Economic Thematic Group)

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Survey results in detail

TEWKESBURY (3 OF 3)

- **A business advice leaflet** which provides useful information on where to go for advice during the current economic downturn has been developed by Tewkesbury Borough Council and its partners on the Tewkesbury Economic Partnership. (LSP – Economic Thematic Group). It has been distributed to all businesses in the area including the retail centres.
- Tewkesbury Businesses will be featured in a comprehensive new **Business Directory**, which will showcase businesses in the Tewkesbury area. The directory will encourage increased levels of local procurement, by promoting local traders to other businesses in the area. Again, this does contain information on businesses from across the borough, but does also feature businesses in the retail centres.
- We also organise an **arts and music festival** in Tewkesbury called 'Awaken Your Senses'. This operates in many venues across the town and helps attract many visitors to the town, helping boost the local economy. This will take place from September 11-13 2009.
- We also continue to support the towns and area in general, through **seasonal tourism campaigns, promotional leaflets and guides**.
- The Borough works with the Economic Task Force, to help implement **measures developed to deal with the current economic climate and help boost business**.
- Our new Economic Development Strategy has a **specific section focused on Markets Towns**. A key aim in the strategy is to 'regenerate and enhance our historic market towns'.
- We are also making every effort to make **payments to local businesses as quick as possible**.
- We are currently looking into working with the local Art Depot with regards to getting local artists to **display their work in vacant shop windows**.
- Tewkesbury is soon to feature on the **BBC's Money Programme**. The programme is looking at how the town has dealt with the current economic climate and will feature as a case study. This will include footage of local retail businesses and the food festival.

Survey results in detail

WINCHCOMBE (1 of 2)

Organisation/contact

Kevin Willett, Winchcombe Town Council	01242 604087	info@winchcombetc.plus.com
Ashley Grainger, Winchcombe Business Forum	01242 603591	ashley@ruffit.com

Town population 4475

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area Approx 55

Number currently empty 3

Closures since July 08 2 (estimate)

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
estate agent	chain		Several years	recession
off licence	independent			personal

Openings since July 08 1

Types of shop/business opened

- gift shop

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

Both the Town Council and Winchcombe Business Forum are aware of Business Link. Leaflets are available from Business Link from both organisations and the Town Council has posted them as pdf files on its website. Furthermore an officer from Business Link has agreed to provide the Town Council with a helpful article about fighting the recession for publication in the next edition of the Town Council's 'Winchcombe Matter' (publication probably in June). Both organisations are also aware of the role of Gloucestershire First and the sterling support from Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from Winchcombe Town Council: "A Retail Support Officer funded using flood recovery money through Gloucestershire First, residing at Tewkesbury Borough Council offices, but now unfortunately resigned and moved to pastures new (we await his replacement), has done an excellent job of supporting retailers in Winchcombe, Tewkesbury and Bishops Cleeve. During his time with us Stephen Lambe initiated and oversaw schemes which included:

- Shop front improvement scheme
- 'Local shop your first stop' scheme
- Town Centre Business Awards
- Local shop website www.localshopwinchcombe.co.uk
- Local Shopping Guides
- Voucher scheme
- E-commerce training – internet marketing courses
- Environment friendly 'local shop your first stop' shopping bags

[to page 2](#)

Survey results in detail

WINCHCOMBE (2 of 2)

Winchcombe Town Council is actively supporting and encouraging tourism in a bid to help the local traders by:

- Exploring the possibility of Town Centre regeneration through ideas such as better road and pedestrian signage, street furniture improvements etc with the TBC Urban Design Officer in accordance with the 'Vitality, Viability and Vulnerability' study commissioned using flood recovery money.
- Winchcombe Town Council has resolved to fund the public toilets and assist with the funding of the Tourist Information Centre once TBC relinquishes these discretionary services.
- WTC is financially supporting a local 'Walkers are Welcome' scheme.
- Winchcombe Town Council has created a local action group with representation from local businesses and other groups along with TBC to move the 'Vitality, Viability and Vulnerability' study forward.

Tewkesbury Borough Council is helping with what very limited funds it has at its disposal in consultation with the local Business Forum. TBC is in the process of drawing up its Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2009 – 2014 which is looking to help businesses.

The consequences of the flooding and the subsequent recession have become intertwined and have been a double blow. However on the positive side we are perhaps more fortunate than some in that recovery schemes were already underway. Needless to say they must continue, we cannot afford to be complacent, we will continue to need help, and we must not let up on our efforts.

Response from Winchcombe Business Forum: WBF have recently been part of the shop local campaign (with vouchers and associated grants for shop front improvements, training programmes etc). We have printed and made available jute bags for retailers (with a grant) on a sale or return basis. We actively seek to support local business as much as possible.

We approached Tewkesbury Borough Council with regard to using empty shops in a creative way (we were looking at dressing the shops with a display of antiques) but have been advised that if any such display offered items for sale or displayed items for sale in other outlets then it was likely to incur business rates which we are unable to pay, so it is unlikely to proceed.

Having said that, TBC did say they would review them on an individual basis.

We are looking at the website and website promotion for tourism in 2009/10 and potential to organise other events.

Survey results in detail

WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE (1 OF 2)

Organisation/contact

Glenys Sykes, Wotton-under-Edge Town Council clerk 01453 843210 towncouncil@wotton-under-edge.com

Town population 5,699

Total retail/business units in High Street/main shopping area 93-94 (estimate)

Number currently empty 4 to 5 (estimate)

Closures since July 08 6

Types of shop/business closed

shop/business	chain/independent	jobs lost	time established	reasons
financial adviser/ mortgage broker	independent	1 full time	3-5 years	financial/housing crisis
estate agent	chain	2 full time	crisis	financial/housing
electrical	independent	1 full time	>30 years	retired
electrical	independent	1 full time	>30 years	retired
household (vac & wool shop)	independent	1 full time	20 years	retired
horse goods/ sports fashion	independent	2 full time	10 years	loss of business

Openings since July 08 3

Types of shop/business opened

- hairdresser
- antiques
- electrical

Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? If so, what?

“Yes – there is a local chamber of trade – the town clerk is very involved with GMTF. FSB was active here at one stage though has died back. But people know there's information and support out there.”

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Survey results in detail

WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE (2 OF 2)

Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities to attract more shoppers, maintain a positive impression of the high street environment, or to support existing or potential traders?

Response from Wotton Town Council: “The town council has promoted ‘shop local’ bags given by Stroud District Council –we have been putting those out to encourage people to shop locally. Our main initiative was ‘We love Wotton’ Day on Sat April 25 – see case studies. We have also used empty shops for displays – Wotton was among the first to do this, though it can be difficult to persuade owners. First time we did this was at Christmas – used empty shops to display goods you could buy in other shops, with goods labelled showing where you could buy them. We found this worked extremely well. One display was about what Rotary Club does in the community. Could also use it to promote Arts Festival. Generally the Town Council is always trying to think of new ways of getting people in to support traders.

Response from Stroud District Council:

- Stroud District Council through its partners helps start-up businesses throughout the district through Glos Enterprise Business Services
- SDC support to We love Wotton festival.
- SDC has released ‘shop local’ bags to the business traders.
- Businesses in the retail town centre are eligible for shop front grants. There is guidance on eligibility.
- SDC recently released funding to assist the Town Plan to be reviewed.
- SDC has released funding for the installation of CCTV

Summary of types of shops closed in 16 GMTF towns

Financial	
Accountant	1
Financial Adviser/Mortgage broker	1
Café/Restaurant	2
Charity shop	1
Clinic/therapist	1
Clothing	
All	1
Children	1
Women	3
Department store	2
DIY/motor accessories	1
Employment agency	1
Entertainment & leisure	
Antiques/bric-a-brac	5
Bookshop	1
Other – discount store	1
Other – museum	1
Estate agency	7
Food and drink	
Baker.....	2
Health food	1
Off licence.....	5
Other – specialist foods	3
Other – food/ grocery/ convenience store	4
Gifts, cards	4
Florist	1
Hotel	1
Household	
Furniture	1
Electrical	2
Other – general	3
Other – dry cleaning	1
Other – window cleaning	1
Newsagent	1
Newspaper office	1
Office supplies/stationers	2
Personal care	
Beauty therapies.....	1
Other – tattoo parlour	1
Petrol Stations	2
Shoes	1
Sports	2
TOTAL	70

Questionnaire

1. **What is the current capacity for shops/businesses in your main shopping area?**
2. **How many are currently empty?**
3. **How many closures have there been since July 08?**
4. **What types of business have closed**
Sub questions for each closed business:
 1. Was it part of a chain or independent?
 2. How long established?
 3. Numbers of jobs lost, if known
 4. Reason for closure if known.
 5. Did they contact the Town/District council or local retailers' organisation before closure?
 6. If so was any advice/support offered or accepted?
 7. What did the business need to stay open?
5. **How many new shops/businesses have opened in the past 9 months, what types and how many jobs created/saved ?**
6. **Was the Town Council/retailers' organisation aware of support for businesses? (eg Business Link, FSB etc) If so, what?**
7. **Has the District or Town Council/traders or business organisation initiated or supported any activities in order to:**
 - attract more shoppers eg shop local campaign (bags, incentives eg local vouchers)
 - maintain a positive impression of the high street environment eg using empty shops for displays, as temporary art galleries, community use, workshops etc
 - support existing or potential traders

Survey from Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce members May 2009 (1 of 3)

The following information is as a result of a short email survey of members of Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce in May 2009. The following questions were asked:

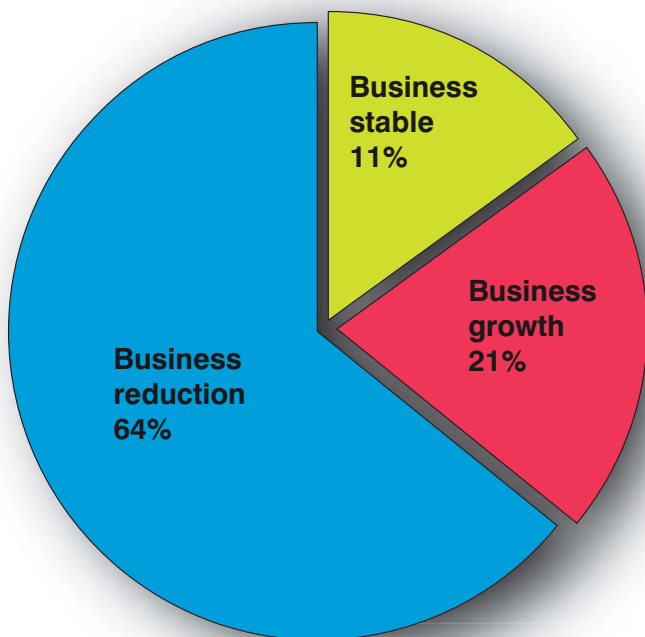
- 1 How is the current economic climate affecting you?
- 2 Are you having to make changes, including redundancies, short time working, etc.
- 3 How is your order book shaping up for the next six months
- 4 What particular help do you need, ie staged payments for VAT, business rates, etc.

Responses came from 34 businesses comprising SMEs to large companies and a range of business types including manufacturing, retail and services to business. The following analysis has been produced with some difficulty as responses varied and were not tick box but a general representation of the results is presented below.

CURRENT LEVEL OF BUSINESS

This has been categorised as Business Reduction, Business Stable or Business Growth as illustrated in the pie chart below.

BUSINESS SITUATION MAY 2009



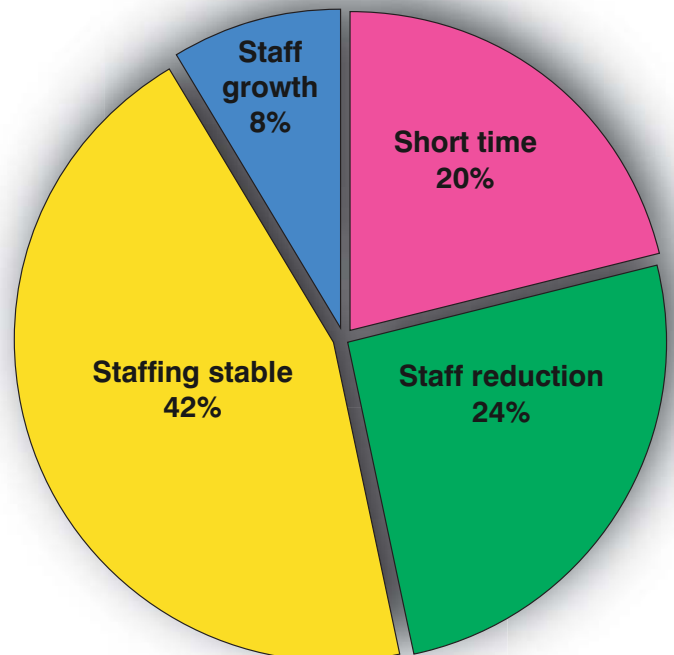
79% of Businesses were either still suffering from a reduction in business or were stable with the cuts they had made in staffing and hours or in some cases reorganisation of staffing.

In some cases business was now stable after a period of reduction in business, whilst in others business was at levels of two years ago when prior to the recession, they had been experiencing growth. Businesses that were growing were generally businesses on government contract, start up businesses who had no sales in the first instance or businesses that offered an essential service in spite of the economic climate.

STAFFING LEVELS

Staffing levels have been categorised as reduction in staffing, reduced hours or pay, staffing stable or staff growth. In some cases companies had made staff redundant, cut hours, reduced pay and were expecting to make more staff redundant. 44% of companies had made redundancies, cut pay, or cut hours obviously again with a reduction in pay. Of the 44% where staffing was stable, some were redeploying staff into chasing orders, marketing or generally visiting customers whilst others were stable due to the fact that they had made changes and staffing levels or hours were now matched to the level of work.

STAFFING LEVELS MAY 2009



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Survey from Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce members May 2009 (2 of 3)

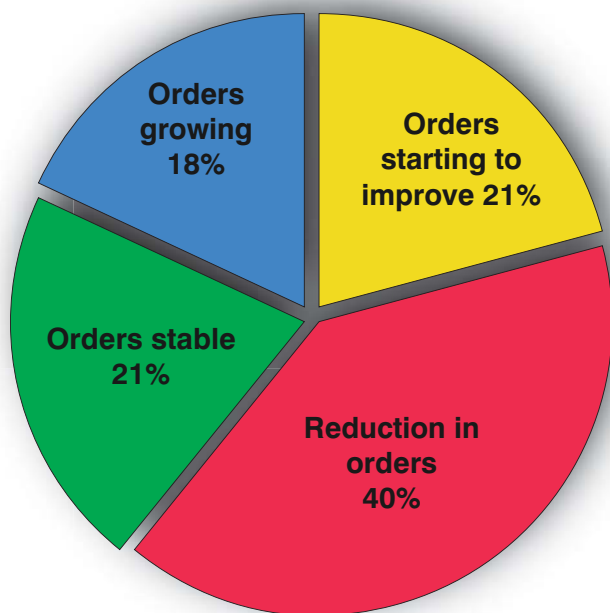
Again those companies reporting staff growth were the companies already stated, those on government contracts, start ups or businesses not affected by the recession.

FUTURE PREDICTIONS ON ORDERS

Future prospects were categorised as those who were still experiencing a reduction in orders, those where the orders were stable, those where orders were starting to improve and those where the orders were growing. 24%

The picture appears not to be quite so bleak for the next 6 months as that experienced by many companies over the last 6 months with the reduction in anticipated orders at 40% as opposed to 64% for the previous 6 months. This is not quite so clear cut as it at first might appear in that only 18% reported orders growing whilst others were in the situation where orders were sufficient for their reduced staffing levels or reduced hours.

ORDERS FOR NEXT 6 MONTHS JUNE -NOV 2009



As reported by one company the future situation should be seen with cautious optimism and on controlling costs and chasing slow payers. Staffing levels would depend on matching staffing requirements to the level of orders.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Reports are regularly produced for Gloucestershire with regard to current unemployment levels, the latest report being the figures for April. It reports that unemployment in Great Britain has risen by 4.1%, the figure for Gloucestershire being 3.6%, the highest it's been since 1997. This can be broken down into districts as illustrated overleaf, Gloucester showing the highest increase.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES COMPARISON MARCH 2009 AND APRIL 2009

Area	Apr'09 Number	Apr'09 Rate
UK	1,557,616	4.1
GB	1,510,759	4.1
England & Wales	1,383,933	4.1
South West	97,376	3.1
Gloucestershire	12,694	3.6
Cheltenham	2,860	4.1
Cotswold	1,094	2.2
Forest of Dean	1,861	3.8
Gloucester	3,441	4.8
Stroud	1,952	3.0
Tewkesbury	1,486	3.2

Mar'09 Number	Mar'09 Rate
1,523,482	4.0
1,478,196	4.0
1,351,744	4.0
96,045	3.1
12,220	3.5
2,761	3.9
1,036	2.1
1,844	3.8
3,275	4.6
1,916	2.9
1,388	2.9

Source: Office for National Statistics Crown Copyright Reserved (Nomis)

Produced by CESU Research Team (Economics)

Collated and distributed by GCC

The figures illustrate that at the end of April unemployment was still rising by 0.1 or 0.2%. This is borne out by our survey in the fact that some are still reporting the need to make redundancies and still encountering difficulties with trade.

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Survey from Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce members May 2009 (3 of 3)

THE BANK OF ENGLAND AGENTS SUMMARY FOR THE SOUTH WEST MAY 2009

The following report of the Bank's Agents across the South West is collated from business panels with representation of the various business categories from SME's to large corporate companies, from traders, service industries and industry as well as regular visits to a representative number of businesses. Gloucestershire does have its own panel which meets at Chargrove hosted by the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce & Industry. It reports:

- Investment intentions remain weak
- Manufacturing export volumes have shrunk further
- De-stocking has continued into 2009
- Business services turnover remained significantly lower than a year ago
- Construction activity had continued to contract
- Labour demand had continued to shrink and employment intentions remained weak
- Cuts in hours, lower bonuses and commissions, low payment settlements had continued to reduce labour costs
- On average there had been little change in the rate of inflation of materials prices. Weak demand had continued to press down on supplier margins

Although there was some easing in that:

- The pace on contraction in consumer spending has eased
- The pick up in the housing market activity had continued albeit from a low base

CONCLUSION

Although it has to be appreciated that this summary is based on a small sample, the nature and size of business is varied and a fair representation of other businesses. This response was seen to be quite good in that many businesses do not wish to let others know that they are experiencing difficult whilst those who are trading successfully are pleased to report this. The responses illustrate that the nature of the business has seen a different response to the recession, some companies being unaffected (although very few), some reporting having come through the worst, whilst some were just starting to experience the recession and needing to respond by cutting staff, reducing hours with a corresponding reduction in salary, implementing tightening on finance and cash flow. Although not reflected in this report, some are already implementing staged VAT or tax payments whilst others were getting financial reports from their banks

MARKET TOWNS

Although the survey response has been from businesses across the County and not just on the outskirts of market towns, its impact is seen very much in the market towns where many of those who are on short time or have been made redundant live. The result of this is born out by the fact that they need to manage on lesser budgets and have less to feed their families. Luxury items have been cut and shopping looking for bargains rather than the superior quality that is able at slightly higher cost locally. Market towns have been struggling but some who had been able to encourage local spend have now succumbed to closing shops and many of those left are struggling to survive.

**Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
May 2009**