

**T**rish Jenkins, subpostmaster of Llanishen Post Office in Cardiff, has a new retail business of which she's extremely proud. Following a successful application to the Welsh Assembly Government's Post Office Diversification Fund (PODF), she has now transformed her office to include an internet hub service, complete with six computers and two printers.

After a career as a tax inspector Trish fancied running her own business, so followed in the footsteps of her husband's uncle, who was successfully running his own post offices in the Welsh capital. On his advice, Trish joined the NFSP shortly after being appointed.

Twenty three years on and Trish has held a number of positions within the NFSP including Executive Officer, Chair of the P&D Committee and National President, and is now the Membership, Publicity and RTU Officer for the Wales/Cymru region. "I think I've done every role in the NFSP! I love working for the Federation, the interaction I have with people and helping them where I can – I think it's a fantastic organisation that looks after all of our people," says Trish.

Llanishen Post Office is "fairly large". With five counter positions in a small suburb of Cardiff, it services a large residential area so the customer base is spread across the board.

**TIME TO CHANGE**

Recently, when Trish's landlord let the premises adjoining her post office to another business selling the same items that she sold – cards and small gifts – she wasn't sure what to do. But she knew she had to diversify so started selling crisps, sweets and cold drinks. Then the Welsh Assembly Government, in recognition of the social and community value of post offices, announced that it was giving out grants to ensure subpostmasters could have sustainable and viable businesses,



**YOUR STORY**

**Sub with a hub**

Cardiff Subpostmaster Trish Jenkins explains how her office has been transformed by a government grant

and continue to provide essential services in their communities.

Always on the lookout for new ideas, Trish decided to research which options would be eligible for a grant. She explains: "We asked people what they thought of our idea of an internet café. We spoke to people who have internet cafés and to a company that designs them. We submitted their plans with our application."

Llanishen was one of three offices in the Cardiff area to get the full grant of £35,000. "I thought we were in with a good chance as our application was robust, but when I got the letter telling me I had been successful, I was over the moon! Firstly to get the grant, and secondly to get the full amount," exclaims Trish.

Trish's grant was awarded in the first tranche, announced in July 2009, when 63 Welsh post offices benefited from over £1.1m in funding to help with capital and revenue costs.

The Fund is running for a further two years to help subpostmasters improve their offices.

**GOING ONLINE**

Getting the full grant meant Trish could do all the work she wanted to, but she still had to put in a lot of her own money too.

The internet hub was launched last November by Julie Morgan, MP for Cardiff North. Local businesses, customers and Huw Roberts, Director of Welsh Affairs for Royal Mail (pictured on this month's cover with Trish and Julie Morgan), also attended the launch, which was covered by the local radio station and press.

Trish says: "I'm so pleased with the hub. I've had lots of comments from customers on how good it looks. It's also really important for people without access to the internet at home – it opens up more information to them."

Trish plans to offer simple training sessions in response to requests from customers so that everyone can benefit, and has also taken on a new member of staff to manage the internet hub. And although the hub is still relatively new, Trish plans to continue looking for new ventures and

asking her customers what they would like to ensure they keep coming back to her office.

Trish believes that the Welsh Assembly has set a precedent that other countries in the UK should follow. "The Welsh Assembly has been fantastic with post offices, and NFSP officials in Wales have really pushed government officials and come up with this diversification grant," adds Trish. "All Welsh subpostmasters should apply. Even if you don't get the full amount, it's still worth going for – if it's something that can improve your office and increase custom, then it's worth it."

Further information about the Post Office Diversification Fund can be obtained by emailing [PODF@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:PODF@wales.gsi.gov.uk), by phoning 01685 729612, or by visiting [www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

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