



PRESS RELEASE

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CARRIER BAG CHARGE FOR WALES

The Welsh Assembly has approved a law, to come into force on October 1st 2011, to introduce a mandatory charge for single use carrier bags. This is part of its efforts to dramatically reduce the volume of carrier bags given out to shoppers.

The level of the charge for each bag has been set at 5p. The Assembly Government believes this is high enough to encourage people to change their shopping habits but not so high that it will deter impulse shopping or place a significant burden on shoppers who have forgotten their reusable bags. This logic sounds plausible and the RSA will be interested to see how this works out in practice.

Experience in other countries is mixed. Carrier bags only make up a small proportion of waste going to landfill and households do re-use a significant proportion of them, often for rubbish disposal. In Ireland, the introduction of a charge led to a massive increase in sales of plastic waste bags, up several hundred percent. There is also the danger of creating a massive increase in the use of paper bags as retailers switch to them. Paper bags are also bad for the environment.

Notes for editors:

The Rural Shops Alliance (RSA) is the national voice for about 7,500 rural retailers. We campaign on their behalf and also help these shops to become more competitive with practical advice and support, to the benefit of thousands of rural communities. Many 'blue chip' suppliers and county councils sponsor and partner the work of the RSA. Our direct contact with rural shops and with these organisations means that we keep in close touch with emerging issues and concerns in our fast changing business sector.

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