



PRESS RELEASE

IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 29 July 2011

RED TAPE CHALLENGE –REAL PROGRESS OR RED HERRING?

The Dept for Business, Innovation and Skills has just announced the first results from their Red Tape Challenge, designed to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses. These results cover the retail industry. The RSA obviously welcomes the thinking and objectives behind the scheme. Anything that makes life less bureaucratic for small retailers and the measures proposed are indeed very welcome. The principle is great but we can't help but feel that most of the proposed changes are not going to make a great deal of difference to retailers. As we pointed out when the initiative was launched, the inclusion of legislation such as the Trading with the Enemy (Authorisation) (Netherlands East Indies) Order 1946 was obviously included to make up the numbers - the "Netherlands East Indies" has not existed for 50 years - and provide good headlines when it was (surprise, surprise) put forward for repeal.

The real test of the Red Tape Challenge will come when proposals in areas such as employment law are published. This is where retailers report the most impact of red tape, but the area where new regulations are still being introduced even while the Red Tape Challenge is under way.

Ken Parsons, Chief Executive of the RSA said, *"The government has resisted the temptation to revisit areas that are working OK, such as the Sunday trading laws. The current announcement could contains some useful if modest proposals, such as the plan to consolidate the age-related sales legislation, and we hope that time will be found in the legislative programme for the suggestions to be implemented. However, the real test of the government's determination to reduce red tape will come later in the process, when emotive aspects such as employment and health and safety legislation come under the microscope. We await their further proposals with interest."*

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.

More Information:

Kenneth Parsons

Gary Hepburn

Duty Press Contact

- Tel 01761 462371 Mobile 07980 673675

- Tel 01305 752050

- Tel 07092 048546