**News around the World**

The news update this issue concentrates on retailing and change in the C.B.D.

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| **9 February 2013 – ‘Free shops’ may boost local economies**In Wrexham there is a 'free shop’ on a market stall.Customers are free to take whatever they want from the stall. A ‘free shop’ which gives goods away for nothing could help to boost the local economy, a psychologist has claimed.The Give and Take stall in Wrexham's People's Market is run by volunteer group Free Economy Wrexham. Customers are invited to take whatever they want from a selection of second hand goods donated by supporters.Psychologists suggest that the stall attracts customers who are happy and are more inclined to spend money in neighbouring shops. The initiative has been running at the market since November and organisers say it has become so successful they hope to expand to a second stall.All goods, donated by people from the local community, are free to shoppers. They are invited to make a voluntary donation and any money made goes back into community projects. |  |
| **8 February 2013 – Post Office Crown branches to move into retail outlets**The Post Office has announced plans to close up to 70 of its main High Street premises, otherwise known as Crown branches, as part of a £1.3billion facelift. It wants to replace them with Post Offices that are based in other shops.The Post Office says that the overall size of the network will not be affected, and where retail partners cannot be found, the Crown branches will remain. It should give both partners a competitive edge and help to keep services in our High Streets. |  |
| **3 February 2013 – Age Concern charity shop closures**Age Concern Cardiff and Vale has closed both its charity stores. The charity said clothes banks had hit its retail trade and a third of charity shops may close.A big issue are bogus bag collectors who drop off bags at houses and then collect them when they are full. Many of these operators give little or no money to the charities they put on their collection sacks.Age Concern closed its shop in Whitchurch, Cardiff, with the loss of five jobs. Its store in Birchgrove, which had a pay-by-weight competitor in the same street, shut in December 2012.Set up in 1974, the independent charity, which has 64 full and part-time staff and 380 volunteers, has run a retail arm in Cardiff for about 20 years. Its two high street stores have helped fund work which includes support for elderly people living in poverty, emergency grants, welfare rights advice and a hospital after-care service. |  |