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Gazette 5

Mixed reaction to news that recession is officially over

As the country officially moves out of recession and business analysts talk about the green shoots of recovery, has the effect been felt locally in the high street? *Gazette* reporter Claire Marshall went to find out

WE ARE now out of the recession, but can anyone really notice the difference? This was the question posed to local business people and the answer was, in short – not really.

However, consumer confidence and optimism could be returning, with hopes for a better year to come.

In Wotton-under-Edge the picture was mixed, with some businesses noticing no change and others experiencing buoyant trade.

Chairman of the Chamber of Trade Alex Wilkinson said: "I have spoken to some members and the picture is quite buoyant, it depends what market it is. The luxury goods end is still suffering but many other areas are doing well." Mary Beasley, of budget

shop Cuzens, said: "We have done very well out of the recession because we sell items at the cheaper end of the market. Having said that there have been a lot fewer shoppers in the town. Since the bad weather recently it still looks the same."

Keith Bryon, owner of Wotton DIY, said it's too early to tell if recovery is underway.

In Dursley, traders agreed they wouldn't reap the benefits of an improved economy until work on the new Sainsbury's supermarket is complete.

Mandy Woodward, of Wildwood Flowers in Parsonage Street, said she had noticed a shift in buying habits.

"I think we have to be optimistic for the coming year with Sainsbury's arriving and also Iceland coming to the town," she said.



Traders in Dursley high street

"The one thing I have noticed is before people would come in and buy just the cheapest bouquets, now we still have people buying the cheap flowers but others that want really expensive ones."

However, Margaret Harbard, of Dursley Pet Shop, said she had yet to feel any effects of recovery.

"We are considerably down on last year, so I couldn't say things have got any better for us and nothing will until the temporary traffic lights are taken down and some parking spaces are found," she said.

Gloucestershire's largest private employer, Renishaw, has been making slow and steady improvements after taking a hit in the global markets last year.

Chris Pockett, Renishaw spokesman, said: "Whilst our monthly sales in the UK have certainly improved since the depths of the recession in

spring 2009, in the last six months they have generally been at levels below that of the corresponding period in 2008.

"However, we are now detecting a shift in attitude in the UK engineering sector, with customers at least starting to consider investments."

One area that has started to bounce back is the local housing market. Estate agent Richard Mace, of Besley Hill in Dursley, said sales were up 38 per cent on last year.

"People feel now that prices have reached the bottom and are levelling out and those that chose not to sell a year or two ago are now deciding to do it," said Mr Mace.

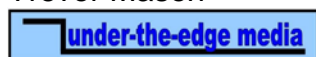
"There is more optimism about and confidence is the key thing."

Do you feel we are out of recession? Let us know at gazetteseries.co.uk/news



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