

A national retailer in the NP

I see our NP is now publicly seeking a representative of a “national retailer” to become a member. Since I suggested this at our meeting December, I thought perhaps I should take some responsibility for having done so and set out some thoughts on the matter.

These are personal views, and I am only putting them here to provoke some thought and discussion so we can form a shared view, or a better understanding of each other’s views. I don’t imagine any of it is rocket science, but having it down on paper may help.

Selecting/approving a representative

I’ve been musing on the “criteria” for accepting a representative that would influence my comfort with the outcome, so here are a couple of thoughts:

- **Be committed to the community** To have a voice in our community an organisation must recognise its responsibilities to the community. We all give over and above what is required of us by society (by general standards), so this should also be true of this member.
- **Someone with influence** The person should have a reasonable amount of influence within his or her own organisation and preferably beyond. They should be able to speak with some level of authority about their organisation, it’s policies and actions – or indeed those of their sector. Similarly, the person should be able to communicate back to their organisation, or disseminate messages within their sector. To this end, I do not think a store manager or other operational line manger will suffice (this could be tokenistic, and pointless), unless they are involved in other activities that are relevant to strategic issues. The representative must have access to decision making that impacts upon our community.
- Any other criteria?

Next steps

I wonder if it might be a good idea to do a bit more work on this, then make a formal approach to all the key organisations in this sector. In this way, we can be clear about what we are looking for.

I think this will serve to put the spotlight on these organisations and encourage them to state their positions on the matter. Perhaps we could enlist the help of the media in this.