

Ana Juan sits down with roughly fifty local merchants to tee up new initiatives stimulating economic dynamism

Deputy Consell de Formentera premiere and commerce chief Ana Juan met with a group of local business owners to discuss areas the island's commerce department can direct its efforts and to shape new commercial strategies for winter 2020 and summer 2021. The talk at the Sala de Cultura (Cinema) in Sant Francesc was attended by roughly fifty local retailers and representatives of Formentera's craft markets.

Consellera Juan, who was joined at the encounter by staffer Amalia Mora, held up the strong turnout as proof of "the will of local business owners to work with the Consell and other groups to make improvements to a sector that is essential to Formentera society". Juan and Mora took note of shopkeepers' suggestions and concerns and detailed efforts under way within the Department of Commerce as well as "present and future strategies to turbocharge local commerce". The consellera also called on business owners to share ideas and initiatives of their own.

Strengthening local business

Among the range of measures on the horizon, Juan opened up about one in particular aiming to boost local business which won cross-party backing at the recent "debate on the state of the island": "The days ahead will come with activation of a plan for training courses so local tradespeople can increase their competitiveness and improve their business", she said.

Christmas campaign

The commerce chief said the ongoing pandemic meant islanders could expect this year's Christmas holiday celebrations to be different, and she pointed to efforts to make sure small business were at the forefront. "For starters, we'll be re-energising the Christmas version of our buy-local push, Compra a Casa", she said, telling the island's shop owners to "count on bigger prizes and a greater emphasis on sidewalk shopping". "We'll be promoting made-on-Formentera products and encouraging islanders to support neighbourhood establishments", quipped Juan, who indicated additional talk at the gathering had focused on possibilities for brand-new initiatives as well as Christmas light decorations. Some of the new

initiatives will be funded with money from Cel Obert, a pact that was struck recently with the Govern balear.

Juan described steps taken to offset costs faced by Formentera retailers during the invocation of emergency orders and similar tax rebates for the year ahead that the Consell is studying as well.

Formentera's commerce chief went on to enumerate initiatives —brokered by the Consell in association with the local small business association (Pimef), the Chamber of Commerce, the Balearic office of commerce and other island councils— to bolster small business and locally-produced goods during the pandemic, such as the launch of the new 'Compra a Casa' website
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