

Phone recycler tops with No 11

CHANCELLOR Gordon Brown praised a Gwent businessman for his innovative mobile phone recycling scheme.

Ashish Poddar, of Abergavenny, gave up his job as a City lawyer to set up www.freshties.com in January.

The website recently linked up with recycling firm SHP Solutions to set up a socially responsible mobile phone recycling business.

It will give people who recycle their old handsets the chance to choose which charity the proceeds will go to.

The site now has 5,000 members, but Mr Poddar hopes this will reach one million by next year.

Mr Poddar, who will soon move his business into new offices at the Innovation Centre in Torfaen, said: "People will contact SHP directly from our site and the



RECYCLING KING:
Ashish Poddar

company will buy their old phones.

"The customer can then choose a charity to give money to, or pick one with a profile on our site.

"This scheme will benefit both the environment and the community."

The initiative received

support from both Friends of the Earth, who rarely support businesses, and from No 11 Downing Street in the form of Chancellor Gordon Brown himself.

In a statement Mr Brown said: "I place great value on social entrepreneurship and so I give my support to freshties.com with its innovative use of technology to bring people, community and business together for mutual gain."

Emma Saysell, chief executive of Newport charity St David's Foundation Hospice Care, said: "The idea of channelling some of the sponsorship money from the site into partner charities is an excellent idea."

Freshties calls itself the UK's first "people-community-business exchange".