



The Retailer

The Magazine for **Retail NI**



Ballymoney
named High
Street of the Year

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Message from the President

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of The Retailer.

Despite Stormont being down, Retail NI continues to be as busy as ever to ensure your voice is heard by political leaders, locally and nationally.

We were delighted to host the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak MP at the Retail NI supported reception at the Conservative party conference and the new Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Hilary Benn MP at our event at the Labour party conference.

In last few months we met with the new EU Ambassador on the Windsor Accord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Head of the Civil Service Jayne Brady and all of the local party leaders to outline the challenges facing our members.

Our annual High Street Heroes Awards had a record number of votes with over twelve thousand people voting for their favourite independent retailer and local high street. Congratulations to Bradleys Centra in Maghera on winning best independent retailer and Ballymoney on winning high street of the year.

Above all else, we are here to help you and your business if you are experiencing any problems our staff team are on the ground helping members with problems such as crime, business rates, planning, energy bills and many more.

All the very best

Peter McBride
(President)



WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

The Chocolate Manor
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Planet Payments
George Best Belfast City Airport
Titanic Distillery
Biopax Ltd
Cityman Menswear
Amour Flooring
nijobfinder
Pinnacle Response
Long Meadow Cider

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LORD MAYOR MEETS WITH BUSINESS LEADERS TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS FOR CITY CENTRE

The Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Ryan Murphy, met with business leaders in September to hear about current city centre trading conditions and update them on initiatives underway to improve cleanliness and support revitalisation.

He joined Retail NI and Hospitality Ulster for a walk through the city's core, where he met with local retailers and independent traders, as well as council cleansing staff who work to keep the city clean.

The meeting followed a strong summer for tourism in Belfast, with hotel occupancy rates for June and July 2023 well above the same period in summer 2019, prior to the pandemic. Footfall in the city centre had also increased throughout 2023, following on from the opening of the new University of Ulster campus and the reopening of Primark.

Councillor Murphy said: "It was really valuable to spend time with traders and businesses today to hear what their priorities are and where they feel additional support is needed. "We all want to make Belfast city centre a better place to live, work, visit and do business in and, while we're making good progress towards that shared goal, there is still work to do.

"Today's visit was an opportunity to listen to concerns, particularly around issues like dereliction, drug

use, noise and how best to support vulnerable people, and get feedback on what's working and what could be done better."

Following a meeting of the council's cleansing taskforce, Councillor Murphy told representatives about efforts to boost cleanliness, as well as ongoing work with the PSNI, government departments, statutory agencies and others to address the complex issues associated with homelessness and addiction.

"Council is continuing to prioritise cleaner city streets, and traders agreed that they are seeing progress on that front," he said.

"New on-street recycling bins have been introduced over the summer, we have brought in more people and machines to maintain cleaning standards and we are working with commercial premises on how best to present bins for collection to help keep streets tidy and clear from obstacles and prevent litter build-up.

"The three BIDs are also supporting our cleansing schedules with additional resources in high footfall areas and a public consultation will open this autumn on byelaws to address noise and other issues.

"But there will always be room for improvement. We recognise that community safety is a



concern for both residents and businesses, and our council is committed to supporting the work of relevant agencies in finding solutions which help those who are vulnerable."

The Lord Mayor also provided an update on initiatives to deliver on ambitions in the Belfast Agenda, the city's community plan, to create more jobs, encourage more people to live centrally and develop a more accessible and connected city centre.

"The pieces are slotting into place, with work underway, through our A Bolder Vision for Belfast strategy, to prioritise sustainable and active travel in our city core, to encourage more city centre living, to reconnect to our communities, and to re-embrace our place as a waterfront city to enable us to meet the challenges all modern city centres face," he said.

"Belfast does have vacant units to fill - our Vacant to Vibrant scheme has been really proactive in encouraging and incentivising organisations from all sectors to take on empty buildings and turn them into new premises, with 14 businesses supported so far and several more in the pipeline. Our Grey to Green initiative will also see funding distributed to create a temporary city centre farm and garden.



Colin Neil (Hospitality Ulster) Cllr Ryan Murphy, Lord Mayor, Glyn Roberts (Retail NI)

"In Cathedral Gardens, the Active Travel Hub has proven very popular since it opened, promoting the benefits of wheeling or walking around Belfast. In the longer term, this site will become a new public park for the city, with procurement now underway to appoint a design team to take forward this work."

Councillor Murphy also outlined other improvements coming up, following approval at a full council meeting.

"A series of interventions are planned for in and around Great Victoria Street, revitalising this vital corridor into the city, ahead of the opening of the new Belfast Grand Central station," he said.

"The next stage of work to reimagine Belfast's entries will begin soon at Sugarhouse Lane, Patterson's Place and

Winecellar Street. These will complement vibrant new artwork and lighting recently introduced through the 5Cs project, with the Department for Communities, with more still to come.

"A design team will be appointed shortly for the game-changing Belfast Stories visitor attraction at the corner of North Street and Royal Avenue, options are being considered to better connect our cultural hub at 2 Royal Avenue with Bank Square and Castle Street, and our plans are moving ahead to create more inclusive city centre housing, making use of council and wider public sector-owned lands, following an open call to the market earlier this year.

"Later in September, we will also be announcing exciting plans for a year of culture and

entertainment in 2024, with a real focus on local communities, as well as our city core. Together, these initiatives provide plenty to be positive about, but it's also vital that our city centre businesses are supported, included and have their voices heard."

In a joint statement, Colin Neill, CEO, Hospitality Ulster and Glyn Roberts, CEO, Retail NI said:

"This was a good opportunity to discuss the significant challenges and potential opportunities in the City Centre. Belfast City Centre is not just another high street it is a regional economic driver for Northern Ireland as a whole".

"It is crucial that a strengthened multi departmental approach is needed to ensure we tackle the problems and make the city centre a fun, family friendly and attractive destination for local consumers and visitors".

HIGH STREET HEROES 2023

Northern Ireland's High Street Hero award winners are confirmed

Ballymoney tops the poll as High Street of the Year after tight race with Belfast's Shankill Road and Newtownards.

A record 12,000 online votes cast to determine Northern Ireland's retail elite.

Ballymoney has taken a top award at this year's High Street Hero awards, confirming its gold status as High Street of the Year 2023 in a major Northern Ireland online poll.

The hugely successful High Street Hero NI awards is a joint initiative powered by Retail NI and supported by Camelot, Room, Strategic Power Connect and Belfast Live.

Part of the Causeway Coast and Glens district, in an area best known for its nearby international tourist attraction The Dark Hedges, the thriving Country Antrim town came out on top after taking the lead against runner up and silver winner, Belfast's Shankill Road, and Newtownards – last year's joint winner, and the bronze holder for 2023.

Famous for its annual Spring Fair and thriving with a wide range of independent shops, family-run businesses, boutiques cafés and restaurants – and a finalist two years in a row – Ballymoney enjoys a great community spirit in a thriving town centre packed with traditional charm.

Retail NI first launched the High Street Heroes NI awards in 2020 to recognise and reward local retailers and their impact

on local communities – and this year's event was its most successful yet, with more than 12,000 online votes cast.

"What this year's High Street Hero awards has shown is that people care passionately about where they live, shop and socialise and they wholeheartedly recognise the importance the role in which independent retailers play in ensuring their town and cities are great places to be around and where communities and the local economy can thrive,"
Glyn Roberts, Retail NI's chief executive said.

The award for overall retail winner this year went to Bradley's Centra in Maghera in County Londonderry which scooped the gold award ahead of fashion boutique Couples in Coleraine which took silver, with Ballymoney fashion retailer The Winsome Lady taking bronze for 2023.

"Our High Streets are at very heart of every community, bring people together and can be lively, dynamic and social places that build belonging and trust to a community. I'm delighted for the winners this year after a tough competition and grateful to the thousands of people from across Northern Ireland who took part to determine this year's successful line-up,"
Glyn added.

From Londonderry to Lisnaskea and Belfast to Ballymoney, a total of 33 finalists were represented across 13 categories this year, which included first-time winner

of Northern Ireland's 'Green Retailer' of the year which was won by NISA Fresh Food Centre in Castlewellan.

Bradley's Centra in Maghera was one of the biggest winners of the night, taking home three separate awards for Best Convenience Store, Best Deli/Bakery and Best Forecourt – in addition to Overall Retail Winner.

Last year, in a poll of over 10,000 votes, Newtownards and Coleraine were named joint winners of the prestigious High Street of the Year award, trumping Ballymoney's attempts to take the top prize.

Presenting the High Street of the Year award to Ballymoney Chamber of Commerce, Shadow UK Minister for Levelling Up, Alex Norris, said:

"Representing the dynamism, excitement and positivity of our towns, cities and communities, the High Street Hero awards are an important showcase of excellence which help to shine a spotlight on success, and I'm delighted that Ballymoney has risen to the challenge to take this year's top award."

"Despite many challenges, those who entered, who were shortlisted and who took home an award, should be proud of their commitment and dedication to serving their customers and communities. Their hard work will never go unnoticed, and I'm delighted the people of Northern Ireland have voted in such amazing numbers to choose their favourites. Well done to everyone involved."



RetailNI

Standing up for
Independent Retailers



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WINNERS

Best Convenience Store

Sponsored by Bobby's Foods

Bradley's Centra, Maghera

Best Coffee Shop

Sponsored by Berties Bakery

Chat & Chill Café, Lisburn

Best Healthcare Retailer

Sponsored by Eir Evo

Harkin's Pharmacy, Maghera

Best Fashion Retailer

Sponsored by Danske Bank

Couples, Coleraine

Best Generalist Retailer

Sponsored by AIB

NCG, Newtownards

Best Deli/Bakery

Sponsored by Aryzta

Bradley's Centra, Maghera

Best Homeware Retailer

Sponsored by Bank of Ireland

W & J Walker, Ballymoney

Best Forecourt

Sponsored by Pivotal

Bradley's Centra, Maghera

Best Off Licence

Sponsored by United Wines

Bradley's Centra, Maghera

Best Butcher

Sponsored by Harbinson Mulholland

The Butchers, Monkstown

Best Green Retailer

Sponsored by Strategic Power Connect

NISA Fresh Food Centre,
Castlewellan

High Street of the Year

Sponsored by Fibrus

Ballymoney



Overall Independent Retailer

Sponsored by Camelot

Bradley's Centra, Maghera

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL THE
WINNERS!

THE HIGH STREET HEROES NI AWARD WINNERS FOR 2023 ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Best Butcher

The Butchers, Monkstown – Gold
Greens of Lisburn – Silver
David Mawhinney & Sons, Bangor – Bronze

Best Coffee Shop

Chat & Chill Café, Lisburn – Gold
Maxemoo, Millisle – Silver
Sugarcane Café Bistro, Comber – Bronze

Best Convenience Store

Bradley's Centra, Maghera – Gold
Doherty's Vivo, Londonderry – Silver
Eurospar, Lisnaskea – Bronze

Best Deli/Bakery

Bradley's Centra, Maghera – Gold
Brownie on the Hill, Dundonald – Silver
The Butcher, Monkstown – Bronze

Best Fashion Retailer

Couples, Coleraine – Gold
The Winsome Lady, Ballymoney – Silver
CityMan Menswear, Londonderry – Bronze

Best Forecourt

Bradley's Centra, Maghera – Gold
Spar, Glenarm Road, Larne – Silver
Eurospar Lisnaskea – Bronze

Best Generalist Retailer

NCG, Newtownards – Gold
Finishing Touches Too, Limavady – Silver
Brew & Yaki, Newtownards – Bronze

Best Green Retailer

NISA Fresh Food Centre, Castlewellan – Gold
McRobbie's Retail, Newtownards – Silver
77 Retail, Belfast – Bronze

Best Healthcare Retailer

Harkin's Pharmacy, Maghera – Gold
Brogans Eyes & Ears, Lisburn – Silver
Real Health, Coleraine – Bronze

Best Homeware Retailer

W&J Walker, Ballymoney – Gold
Wardens, Newtownards – Silver
Amour Flooring, Bangor – Bronze

Best Off License

Bradley's Centra, Maghera – Gold
McBride's on the Square, Comber – Silver
Eurospar, Lisnaskea – Bronze

High Street of the Year

Ballymoney – Gold
Shankill Road, Belfast – Silver
Newtownards – Bronze

Overall Independent Retailer of the Year

Bradley's Centra, Maghera – Gold
Couples, Coleraine – Silver
The Winsome Lady, Ballymoney – Bronze



Andrew Gardiner & Dave Clarke Bobbys Foods & David Beattie Eir Evo



Bradleys Maghera



Alex Green Camelot



Therese Burns Couples Fashions



Denise Donaldson NISA Fresh Food Centre & Ruth Kimbley, Strategic Power Connect



Hinch Distillery



Joelene Poole Retail NI, Wendy Craig Camelot, Frank Shivers Bangor Chamber of Commerce



Paddy Doody Chair Retail NI



Helen Cartan & Wendy Alan Finishing Touches Too



Bradleys Maghera



Mark Simpson, Glyn Roberts Retail NI, Alex Norris MP Shadow Policing Minister



Paddy Doody Chair Retail NI & Raymond Millar
The Butchers Monkstown

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EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY SCHEME DEFERRED FOR A YEAR UNTIL OCTOBER 2025

Following extensive engagement with industry, and in light of the pressure facing consumers and businesses in the current economic context, new rules to ensure packaging producers pay for the cost of recycling their packaging will be deferred a year from October 2024 to 2025.

Government will use the additional year to continue to discuss the scheme's design with industry and reduce the costs of implementation wherever possible. In anticipation of EPR, producers have already started to use less packaging and adopt easier to recycle packaging formats, and we expect this process to



continue – ensuring that costs are not then passed onto households later on.

This decision to defer producer payments has been taken jointly with the devolved administrations and will provide industry, local authorities and waste

management companies with more time to prepare to ensure the success of the scheme, helping make sure it is best designed to deliver on long term recycling goals while supporting households with the immediate challenge of high prices caused by inflation.

UTILITY REGULATOR

Back in September Retail NI and its members were delighted to host representatives from the Utility Regulator at a roundtable meeting in the BT building at Lanyon Place.

Kevin Shiels, Executive Director and Colin Magee, Non-domestic Customer Protection Manager were in attendance. They advised that the Regulator, as part of a special project, was currently carrying out stakeholder consultation with non-domestic consumers. As the energy sector had changed and the number of suppliers



of both electricity and gas had increased over the past 5-10 years they needed to get a feel for the new market. The project would not only review non-domestic consumer protection to assess what protection non-domestic customers needed but it would also look at the service of current suppliers, engagement by suppliers, how complaints were dealt with as well as looking the cumbersome lines in contacts that prevented market engagement. They

are currently talking to various organisations to get a better picture of the market and expect to issue a call for input to the wider consumer base before the end of the year.

Both Kevin and Colin welcomed any feedback members had on the market, both positive and negative and asked that they be contacted directly by email on Kevin Shiels kevin.shiels@uregni.gov.uk Colin Magee colin.magee@uregni.gov.uk

Ministerial Meetings representing our members

Minister of State for NI - Steve Baker MP

Steve Baker MP, Peter McCool Retail NI Board, Winnie Mellet Ballymoney Chamber of Commerce, Glyn Roberts Retail NI



Retail NI along with Ballymoney Chamber of Commerce were delighted to host Minister of State for Northern Ireland in Ballymoney recently. Ballymoney was recently voted High Street Heroes High Street of the Year 2023. The Minister visited several local shops on his visit.

Shadow Secretary of State for NI – Hilary Benn MP

Hilary Benn MP, Glyn Roberts Retail NI



Retail NI along with SME Labour were delighted to host the Northern Ireland Reception at the Labour Party Conference in early October. Hilary Benn MP, Shadow Secretary of State for NI addressed the event.

Labour Party Chair – Annelise Dodds MP

Glyn Roberts Retail NI & Annelise Dodds MP Labour Party Chair



Glyn Roberts, Retail NI took the opportunity at the Labour Party Conference to catch up with the Party Chair, Annelise Dodds.

Chancellor of the Exchequer – Jeremy Hunt MP

Glyn Roberts Retail NI & Jeremy Hunt MP Chancellor meeting in Westminster.



Leader of the Alliance Party – Naomi Long MLA

Colin Neill Hospitality Ulster, Brian Murphy BDO, Naomi Long MLA, Glyn Roberts Retail NI, Stephen Kelly Manufacturing NI & David Warnock BDO



Trade NI & BDO recently met with Naomi Long MLA, leader of the Alliance Party to discuss the Prosperity Dividend Document published earlier this year.

EU Ambassador – Pedro Serrano

EU Ambassador Pedro Serrano & Glyn Roberts



Great engagement at the Tory Party conference with EU Ambassador Pedro Serrano and Retail NI. Glyn Roberts took the opportunity to update the Ambassador on the issues affecting the industry and Windsor Framework.

Head of Civil Service - Jayne Brady

Colin Neil Hospitality Ulster, David Warnock BDO NI, Jayne Brady HOCS, Glyn Roberts Retail NI, Stephen Kelly Manufacturing NI, Brian Murphy BDO NI.



Retail NI and our Trade NI partners met the Head of Civil Service Jayne Brady and the Permanent Secretaries of Economy and Finance departments to discuss ongoing challenges facing our members.

The Costs of Workplace Conflict is Crippling Business

by Don Leeson, Chief Executive,
Labour Relations Agency



Have you ever wondered what the cost might be to your business of not having a contented, motivated workforce? The Labour Relations Agency has, and we commissioned research from the University of Westminster to find out.

The figures are eye watering!

The research puts the annual cost to Northern Ireland employers of conflict in the workplace at £851 million. And this figure is probably an underestimate. With the wave of strikes and industrial action seen in the last year or so, the figure is probably now closer to £1 billion, say researchers from the University of Westminster.

Interestingly, much of the costs of workplace conflict are not as a result of strike action, nor disgruntled employees taking cases to the industrial tribunal. In fact, litigation from employment disputes is actually one of the lowest costs of conflict to employers (an estimated £49 million per year).

The biggest single factor behind the cost of workplace conflict? Staff turnover. Resignation costs employers somewhere in the region of £350 million per year, with dismissals for poor performance or misconduct accounting for a further £300 million.

The estimated costs of finding new staff is over £5k per employee. Worse still, the costs of training new recruits – and the understandable lower outputs from them while they reach

expected levels of productivity – are estimated as £25k per employee. That's an estimated £30k for replacing every dissatisfied or disgruntled employee who walks out (or is shown!) the door.

So what can businesses to reduce and minimise these costs?

Clearly, prevention or avoidance of conflict is usually preferable. My article in the last edition described the work the Agency has done to encourage respectful workplace conversations. Our 'Respectful Conversations' guide and podcast is available at: <https://www.lra.org.uk/resources/guide/respectful-conversations-podcast-and-guide>.

Inevitably, however, all workplaces will experience conflict no matter how fulfilling and supportive they are – 'people are people' and we're all not always going to get on. Therefore, effective management of workplace conflict is key. The Labour Relations Agency believes that employers should move their focus beyond grievance and disciplinary processes and procedures and compliance with these – important though this is – to encouraging early and informal resolution through such practices as mediation. This is in effect moving from the inevitable 'win-lose' outcomes of

traditional processes to 'win-win' where employers and employees all benefit from mutually satisfactory resolution of conflict.

As with most aspects of a successful organisational culture, the skills and behaviours of managers are key to success. Employers should look to support managers by prioritising the development of the fundamental management skills needed to prevent, contain and resolve conflict at work. While not the only solution, the Labour Relations Agency's Certificate in Effective Line Management Practice can help in this regard (see www.lra.org.uk for further information).

One final thought. Dismissing employees is a big cost and brings the risks of litigation against an employer for unfair dismissal. However, as described above, litigation is the smallest component of the overall cost of conflict to employers in comparison to employee replacement. While some dismissals are inevitable and an efficient response to poor performance or misconduct, some are avoidable. Research suggests that managers often avoid addressing the early signs of poor performance or behaviour due to a lack of personal confidence and/or skills. Again, effective management development can repay such investment many times over through improved outputs and reduced employee turnover.

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REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST STAFF

Despite record spending by retailers, who invested £1.2 billion on crime prevention measures in the last year, The British Retail Consortium (BRC) 2020 Crime Survey showed that every day, over 400 retail workers faced a torrent of violence and abuse in the workplace in the UK. In addition The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) 2020 Crime Report found that there were over 50,000 violent incidents in local shops.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland's lead for Business Crime, Chief Superintendent Darrin Jones said: "Everyone has the right to go to work without the fear of violence or intimidation, and there is no excuse to treat retail workers with anything but dignity and respect. We take reports of assaults on retail staff incredibly seriously and encourage retailers to report all offences to police to ensure a thorough investigation.

"Working together we can reduce business crime and we're asking everyone to play their part. If you're in a shop or in business premises, and you



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

see something suspicious or staff being abused, report it to us. That piece of information can help us apprehend criminals, bring them before the Court and return stock to retailers if applicable.

"Call us on 101 and ask to speak with your local Neighbourhood officer or Crime Prevention Officer."

The Police Service of Northern Ireland is a key partner in the National Business Crime Centre (NBCC) and collaborate on proactive operations, as well as development of preventative advice.

The NBCC has developed a booklet for those in the retail environment to help them identify the key drivers of violence against staff and provide guidance on how to prevent or mitigate the associated threat of violence and abuse of staff.



This section also draws on guidance from industry partners such as the Association of Convenience Stores and the British Retail Consortium.

This guidance can be used by employers to help support their staff, but also by employees themselves. We recognise that reducing incidents of this nature is a priority for businesses, and the police will work with you and our partners to tackle the issue.

The document can be accessed via the following link and also available for download Reducing Violence against Staff Guide Launched (nbcc.police.uk)



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BOBBY'S NORTHERN IRELAND DEPOT OPENING

Bobby's is thrilled to announce the opening of its first permanent base in Northern Ireland, bringing increased convenience to independent retailers across the region.

The strategically located depot offers several tangible benefits to local retailers, including improved product availability and a wider range. By streamlining operations and optimising logistical efficiency, the regional sales team can now focus more extensively on the company's commitment to personalised support, exceptional service, and building strong relationships with retailers.

In a gesture of giving back to the community, Bobby's Foods has made a generous donation to the Friends of The Cancer Centre. This esteemed organisation plays a vital role in offering essential services and support to those affected by cancer. We are honoured to contribute to their invaluable work.

Reflecting on this momentous occasion, John Lucas, National Sales Manager, emphasises the collective achievements made possible through collaborative partnerships. He expresses his sincere gratitude to Maxwell Freight in Crumlin for their invaluable guidance and support. The collaborative efforts of Bobby's Sales Team in Northern Ireland, have played a pivotal role in establishing their exclusive products to 500 retailers in the convenience trade.

Bobby's is committed to delivering convenience, exceptional service, and a diverse range of products, empowering retailers to thrive in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Photographs credited to Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Retailer



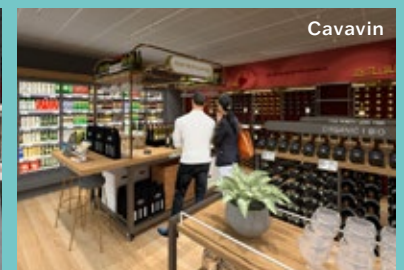
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Sensational summer of fundraising thanks to generous shoppers and show-goers

Shoppers across Northern Ireland kicked off a sensational summer of fundraising when they supported their local SPAR stores' Blooming Great Summer Fundraisers for Marie Curie, digging deep and donating over £55,000 for the charity.

Over one weekend in June, stores operating across Northern Ireland held various tea parties, coffee mornings, fancy dress days and fun days for their shoppers, all in the name of raising vital funds for the charity which provides end of life care for thousands across the country.

It came hot on the heels of a successful Balmoral Show, where show-goers donated over £26,700 for both Marie Curie and the Cancer Fund for Children. Earlier in the year, store activity around the charity's annual Great Daffodil Appeal raised almost £16,000. So far this year, SPAR NI store teams and shoppers have raised an incredible £98,396 for their charity partner, and £798,717 since the partnership began in 2017.

Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group, which owns SPAR in Northern Ireland commented; "We have had an exceptional first half of the year, dedicated to raising vital funds for our charity partner which does so much for so many in our communities. Our key events, from the Great



Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group
Conor O'Kane, Senior Partnership Manager at Marie Curie

Daffodil Appeal to Balmoral Show and the Blooming Great Summer Fundraisers, show there is an army of staff and shoppers willing to go the extra mile for our charity partners, and I want to thank each and every one for making 2023 such a successful year of fundraising already."



SPAR NI now looks forward to supporting Marie Curie on the annual Twilight Walk, which takes place on Friday 29th September at Shaw's Bridge in Belfast, as the charity marks its 75th anniversary this year. Participants can either take part in the main event or organise their own walk by registering online.

Conor O'Kane, Senior Partnership Manager at Marie Curie, added; "From the big events to the everyday donations at the till, SPAR NI has been one of our most active and dedicated partners since 2017. Their creativity and commitment to our key fundraising moments throughout the year give us so many opportunities to help those in the local community who need a community nurse for a night, or to provide even more care from our Belfast hospice.

"We're so grateful for the donations received by the stores and their shoppers which will go towards Marie Curie's direct nursing care as well as our information and support services and our helpline 0800 090 2309."

For more on SPAR NI's partnership with Marie Curie, visit spar-ni.co.uk/marie-curie.



Camphill Community Hollywood



Camphill Hollywood, situated in the town of Hollywood, was established in 1997.

Camphill Café is a commercial shop & café but part of an intentional community. Our customers recognise this endeavour, not only are they buying tasty, wholesome organic goods but by having a meal and a coffee in our Café, or doing their weekly shopping, they are also contributing to worthy social cause. For decades, Camphill Café has provided Day Opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, offering a unique environment that fosters personal development, skills, and sense of belonging in a commercial setting.

We pride ourselves on being able to offer our customers dishes and treats that cater to those with special dietary needs such as vegan, gluten-free, sugar-free and dairy-free.



In a delightful fusion of technology and community spirit Camphill Café have found a new home on the "I Want Fed" app. With the integration of Camphill Cafe's organic goods and supplements into the "I Want Fed" app, users gain access to a thoughtfully curated selection. From artisan foods made with care to supplements that support well-being, Each product carries the essence of Camphill Hollywood's dedication to quality, sustainability, and the empowerment of individuals with diverse abilities.

<https://iwantfed.com/camphillcommunity/hollywood/delivery>

MUSGRAVE NI PARTNERS WITH NOW GROUP TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME AND LAUNCH JAM CARD COMMITMENT

SuperValu & Centra stores across NI to become JAM Card friendly

Musgrave NI, which operates the SuperValu and Centra brands, has partnered with social enterprise, the NOW Group to support people with learning difficulties and autism into sustainable employment.

The retail and wholesale group has launched its new Skills to Employment Programme (STEP) to employ 25 people across its estate over the next five years. Twins Tomás and Mícheál Harkin, NOW Group participants, have already been employed at SuperValu Dairy Farm in Dunmurry and Centra Foxes Glen on the Stewartstown Road in Belfast as part of the recruitment initiative.

The NOW Group is a multi-award-winning social enterprise operating across Ireland - committed to getting adults with learning difficulties and autism into sustainable jobs for the future.

SuperValu and Centra stores are also becoming JAM Card friendly, increasing inclusivity and accessibility for more shoppers across Northern Ireland.

Developed by the NOW Group, JAM Card is a simple, discreet yet extremely effective tool that allows those with learning difficulties, autism or any communication barrier to ask for Just A Minute in any social situation, in a non-verbal way. The JAM Card and app currently has 145,000 users across the island of Ireland. SuperValu and

Centra store colleagues are now undertaking a training programme with the aim that all stores will be JAM Card friendly by September.

Speaking about the partnership, Caroline Rowan, Head of Retail Operations for Musgrave said:

“We are excited to partner with the Now Group to offer new employment opportunities to adults with learning disabilities and autism. Tomas has been working in SuperValu DairyFarm for over two months and is already proving a great asset to the team. He has expressed how much he’s enjoying his new role while Mícheál has just started in Centra Foxes Glen. We are looking forward to seeing them both progress in their roles and are delighted to have them on board.”

“Our stores operate in the heart of communities across Northern Ireland, and we are committed to providing an open, inclusive, and accessible shopping experience for all our customers. The JAM Card initiative will improve accessibility for customers, and ensure our colleagues are all equipped to provide great customer service to everyone.”

Sean Hanna, NOW Group Director of Services, added:

“We are thrilled to partner with Musgrave NI to create inclusive and sustainable employment



Head of Retail Operations for Musgrave NI Caroline Rowan; Sean Hanna, Director of Services for the Now Group (back right) and new employees twin brothers Mícheál (left) and Tomás (right)

opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities, Autism and neurodiverse conditions. At NOW Group, we are dedicated to empowering individuals, and this collaboration with Musgrave NI allows us to create sustainable job opportunities for our participants.

“Moreover, the JAM Card commitment by SuperValu and Centra stores is a significant step towards inclusivity and accessibility in Northern Ireland. Since launching the JAM Card initiative in 2012, the scheme has been a resounding success with more than 2,500 organisations across the region participating in the training programme. With its non-verbal communication approach, JAM enables those with learning difficulties or communication barriers to feel more comfortable and confident in social situations.”

To find out more about the NOW Group's services, visit: www.nowgroup.org



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SCAN ME

Conservative Party Conference

Retail NI once again supported and organised receptions at the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences to promote our policy priorities and challenges facing our members.

The Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and over 200 MP's, diplomats and journalists attended the Conservative reception in Manchester, hosted by Heathrow.

At the Labour reception the new Shadow Secretary of State, Hilary Benn MP was the keynote speaker.



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak MP, Paul Leeman NI Conservatives, Glyn Roberts Retail NI



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak & Glyn Roberts, Retail NI



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CALOR

Blackfire Food

Blackfire Food is a small Belfast based company specialising in products that showcase the versatility of chilli peppers.

They have won multiple Great Taste Awards for their unique hot sauce range, all of which are gluten and allergen free as well as being plant based. From their mild 'Bonfire Chipotle' BBQ sauce (it's smoky not hot) through to their world famous superhot 'Pain in the Hole', Blackfire have a sauce to compliment every meal.

Hot sauces and spicy food has never been more popular (the seasonings and condiment market in the UK is worth over £2 billion annually) and as Managing Director and chief alchemist at Blackfire, Tim McCarthy points out "there is a good reason that we have been cooking with chillies for over 7000 years. Chillies are delicious but they are also packed with vitamins, antioxidants, fat burning properties and if recent research is anything to go by then they may have cancer fighting properties too."

Tim recently hosted the NI Chilli Eating Championship at the Mela in Belfast's Botanic Gardens and was overwhelmed by the size of the huge crowd, testament to the popularity of the chilli pepper. Everyone was there to see the suffering, pain and discomfort of the contestants who went through 8 rounds of eating increasingly hotter chillies to try to win a cash prize. So popular was the event that security had to close the doors before it even began due to the large numbers trying to get in.

NI has a very educated palate when it comes to food despite our historical reputation for having a very conservative diet. Since Tim launched Blackfire in 2014 he has noticed a growing appetite for increasingly spicier, more adventurous food and Blackfire's range aims to fulfil this desire. Blackfire's business model

This is unreal!!!

*Has changed
dinners forever.*

– Sorcha Mc.



It's amazing! I have it on everything atm lol.

– Maurice McC.

is built on the 'flavour first' principle. They stay away from novelty sauces which are just about getting the Scoville (measurable heat level) Units by adding chemical extracts but most of these sauces lack character, which is where Blackfire stands out. Pear and ginger, dulce and mango, black cherry and balsamic vinegar are just some of the unique flavour combinations developed by Tim to create the range. Getting the balance of heat and flavour is indeed alchemy.

All of the sauces come in handy, travel size 100ml bottles and can be bought individually

or in gift packs of 3 x 100ml. The Hotbox contains the 3 hottest sauces, then there is the Standard and the BBQ box. They can all be used as a condiment directly onto food or as a marinade on everything from cheese boards, pizza, noodles, burritos, chicken, steak, poached eggs, the list is endless. New product development over the last six months has now expanded their list of products with a couple of chilli oils, dry rub spice mixes and their biggest seller at the minute, Garlic Chilli Crunch with crispy shallots which when dropped onto any food gives it a spicy moreish lift. Blackfire's range is available for retail, wholesale and online.

www.retailni.com

STILLS BLAZING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Whiskey production now under way in Belfast for the first time since prohibition in 1930s

FOR the first time in almost 90 years, the production of whiskey is under way again in Belfast, on the site of the historic Thompson Dock and Pumphouse, the birthplace of the Titanic.

Drinks company Titanic Distillers has invested almost £8 million to convert the Pumphouse, a listed building in the heart of Belfast's Titanic Quarter, into the city's first working whiskey distillery since the days of prohibition in the 1930s.

Having been granted its Distillers License to produce spirits last week, the shiny new copper stills are now up and pouring at the distillery, under the watchful eye of Head Distiller Damien Rafferty.

"We opened our doors to tourists in April this year to allow visitors to explore the distillery and the site where Titanic last rested on dry ground," said



Damien, "but to finally begin production on site is an incredible feeling and a huge milestone, not just for us but for the city of Belfast.

"A lot of time, hard work and investment has gone into this amazing project to date, but this week marks the culmination of all that – with the distillery and visitor attraction now both fully operational.

"In many ways though, the job is only beginning as we start producing a whiskey that the people of Belfast and Northern Ireland can be proud of, and one that will represent us well all over the world," he added.

The new distillery will produce single malt premium whiskey made from ingredients that have been carefully selected to produce the best possible flavour.

A unique house blend of malted barley and yeast is used to produce the 'wash' which is then distilled in the three Forsyth's stills, situated on a mezzanine floor



TITANIC
DISTILLERS


overlooking the Pumphouse's original Gwynne pumping engines which are deep in the building's pump-well.

Titanic Distillers Director Peter Lavery reflected on what he claims is 'a momentous occasion'. "It's been quite a journey over the past five years, but we are thrilled to get our license and to start producing our own spirits on site," said Peter.


"Whiskey has played an important part in the history of our city but there hasn't been a working distillery here since the 1930s, so, as a Belfast boy, it really means a lot to me to revive this great distilling tradition – and help bring Belfast back to the forefront of Irish Whiskey production.

"Once, we led the way globally - not just in shipbuilding but across many areas of industry, manufacturing and innovation," he continued. "With our Titanic Distillers Premium Irish Whiskey, now produced on this most historic of sites, we hope to do so again."

The Thompson Dry Dock first opened in 1911 to service and accommodate the massive White Star transatlantic liners Olympic and Titanic.



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Interview with a Retailer

DEREK WRIGHT

Family

Married to Lindsay, midwife at Ulster Maternity Hospital with 2 older sons & 4-year-old twins. A very modern family and looking forward to becoming a Grandad in 2024.

Career

I am a menswear Retailer in Newtownards and we are celebrating 40 years of the business, Street Life & Suit Locker, specialising in men's casual wear and suit tailoring. My parents ran Dresswell a clothing retailer started in 1965. The Suit Locker was founded during Covid which is a Suit Showroom in a Converted Shipping Container and we have big plans for Street Life in 2023.

Im also a property developer who manages The Precinct in Newtownards Town Centre a complex of 20 mainly start-up businesses including beauty, hair, healthcare, coffee shops & leisure.

In my spare time I am very proud to be President of Chamber of Trade of my hometown Newtownards representing and promoting the great local businesses.

Who in the business world do you admire most?

Colonel Harland David Saunders started business at the age of 62, Kentucky Fried Chicken. Although Im a fan of Fried Chicken, his foresight and ability to start a business in his 60's and grow it in his 70's.

Proof there's still time for me yet.

What do you do when you are not working?

Currently watching a lot of rugby. Keen Ulster and Ireland rugby supporter. Member of Ballydrain Harriers in Comber, ran Berlin Marathon in 2005, but really need to get back to training! Theres another Marathon in these legs & lungs.

What is the biggest misconception people have about you?

I don't like to be front and centre of the stage, I like to build strong teams of people and I prefer to work in the background.

Who are your biggest role models in life?

Mum & Dad, Billy & Carole, they started the family business in 1965 and are very hardworking, determined people who learnt from failures and handling successes. I have been taught by the best.

If you had a superpower, what would it be?

Peter Pan - Never grow up and live forever.

Describe your job in three words.

The 3 S's ----- Suits, Shirts & Socks

What company do you admire most and why?

Newtownards Homeware retailer Wardens as they are still a Family-run business going strong after 145 years which constantly adapts their business

What has been the most valuable piece of career advice you have been given?

Treat everybody as you want to be treated yourself, be courteous and treat everyone the same, no matter what their background is.

When you were a child, what did you want to do and why?

Always wanted to work with people and run my own business. I saw how being hands on and the constantly changing world of the fashion business was interesting, rewarding and enjoyable. The day you buy is the day you sell ! Your Fastest & Best Seller is on your SALE rail in a few weeks.

If you could only invest in one area of your business, what would it be?

Investing in our team as they are the biggest asset of any business is the people that help to run it.



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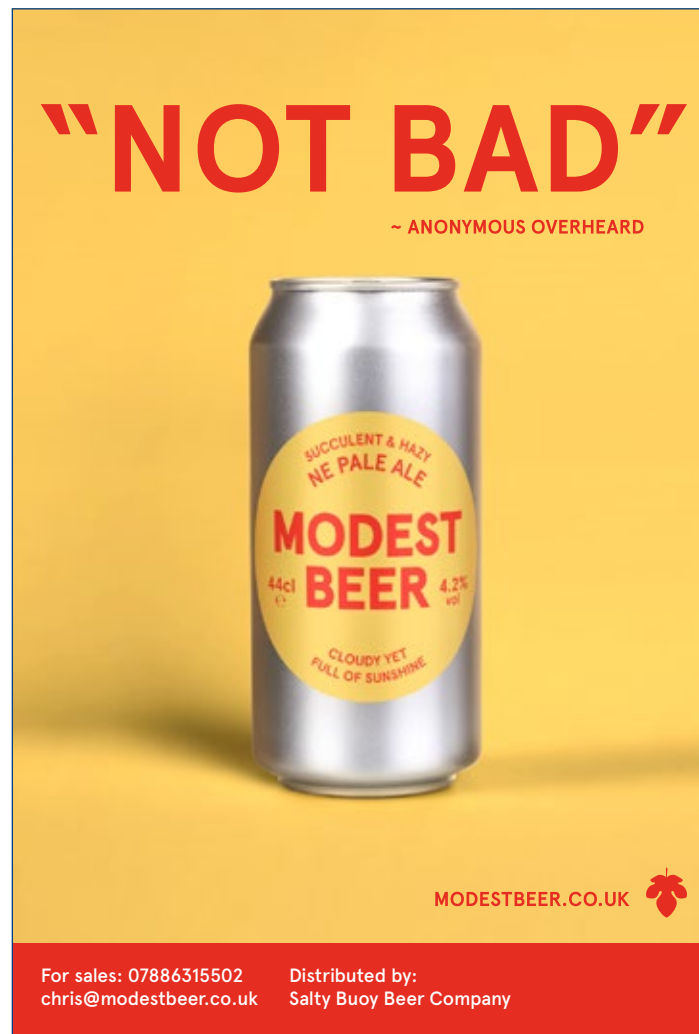
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Unlocking Evening Trade Potential

Traditionally, many delis have catered primarily to daytime foot traffic, missing out on the significant revenue streams generated during the evening hours. Stephens Catering Equipment visionary approach aims to bridge this gap by introducing exciting food concepts that extend into the evening trade. By incorporating Burrito, Southern Fried Chicken, Rotisserie Meats, Pizza or Food to Go offerings, retail business owners can transform their



deli counters into alluring destinations for customers seeking satisfying meals beyond standard retail hours.

Shaping the Future of Retail Culinary Experiences

Stephens Catering Equipment emerges as an avant-garde catalyst for retail businesses looking to evolve and thrive. SCE will set up the concept in their test kitchen before going to site to ensure staff are familiar with the processes and the operation of the equipment. These food concepts aren't just offerings; they represent an opportunity

for retailers to diversify, expand, and flourish. With a proven track record of delivering excellence and a commitment to partnering in success, SCE paves the way for business owners to boost revenues by up to 50%, all while enriching the culinary landscape of the evening trade. In an industry characterised by change, Stephens Catering Equipment innovation stands as a beacon of growth and transformation, redefining delis as dynamic culinary destinations that cater to diverse tastes and preferences.

For More Information:
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Glyn Roberts Retail NI & Cllr Andrew Greer Mayor Lisburn Castlereagh City Council

Lisburn Castlereagh City Council Showcase

Retail NI attended a showcase event in London's Palace of Westminster back in September held by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council. Attendees at the event heard details of how the Council plan to market its tourism brand on both the domestic and international market.

Representatives from the tourism sector met with a wide range of local food, drink and hospitality businesses to discuss how they can best harmonise plans to attract more visitors to the Lisburn and Castlereagh area – particularly Royal Hillsborough and the historic village of Moira.

Tourism Northern Ireland, Tourism Ireland and Invest NI

joined elected members and officials from Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council (LCCC) to hear that while the 'gem' of the council area is 'Destination Royal Hillsborough', neighbouring towns and villages can help enhance the overall visitor experience.

Attendees were also told that the tourism spend from out of state visitors in the council area in 2019 was £20.2 million. There has been over £7.5 million of further investment since that date – by businesses and the council to greatly enhance the tourism offering across Lisburn and Castlereagh.

The money has been used to improve visitor experience in Royal Hillsborough including development works at Hillsborough Forest Park, spending on cafes, restaurants, bakeries along with a high-end guesthouse.

David Burns, Chief Executive of LCCC told the London event that eating out and hospitality are very important factors for tourists when choosing where to visit – and that new offerings of this type were opening up across the council area such as Origin 101. Popular food offerings include Wine & Brine in Moira with its three-time Great British Menu contender, chef Chris McGowan and

Shorthorn Beef supplied exclusively by Hannan Meats in the council area and at Fortnum and Mason, London.

The Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Councillor Andrew Gowan added: "The council is pleased to work alongside Tourism Northern Ireland and Tourism Ireland to expand our horizons in terms of the Lisburn and Castlereagh brand. There are numerous opportunities for our tourism and hospitality sectors to seize and develop – allowing us to share wonderfully authentic experiences with visitors.

"We have beautiful heritage in our villages, fantastic natural assets and iconic attractions including Hillsborough Castle & Gardens combined with Let's Go Hydro for outdoor enthusiasts of all ages. Together we will work with local businesses and government bodies to showcase 'experiences', and assist those who actively plan their trips see what we have to offer.

"We will also help our local hospitality and tourism sectors enter the business events sector. They can offer opportunities for those attending conferences and team-building days."

Concluding the event, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP said: "Lisburn & Castlereagh is investment ready. There are definitely opportunities for further growth within its tourism and hospitality sectors.

"It is beneficially located on the Belfast-to-Dublin economic corridor so it is ideal for visitors from Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and further afield. I am delighted to have the opportunity to bring the council's tourism investment event to London as I am very proud of my home city and am confident it will sell itself to other markets."

Retail NI Statement on Windsor Accord Labelling



Commenting ahead of 1st October, which sees local retailers having to display 'Not for EU' Labelling instore, Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

"Retail NI has engaged extensively with DEFRA, DAERA and UK Government Ministers to ensure that the instore labelling requirements and inspection regime will be as light a touch as possible for our members".

"We have taken a pragmatic solution-based approach to this issue and other aspects of the Windsor Accord."

"While we did not seek this 'Labelling' we understand the importance of reassuring the EU of the integrity of the Single Market".

"With the implementation of the Windsor Accord now moving forward, we need to see more effective

structured engagement with the local retail sector and for the UK Government and EU to be flexible as possible as challenges arise".



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