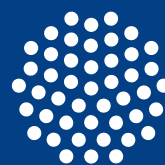


Issue 10 | Winter 2023



RetailNI

Standing up for
Independent Retailers

The Retailer

The Magazine for **Retail NI**



Tackling the Cost of Doing Business Crisis

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Message from the President

Welcome to the New Year Edition of The Retailer.

As we start 2023 it's a good time to reflect on what has happened during the past year. We have seen a lot of political instability both in the UK and Northern Ireland from a non-functioning executive to three Prime Ministers in less than three months. None of this has helped the current cost of doing business crisis.

Here at Retail NI, we continue to lobby for our members at all levels of Government. We, along with Hospitality Ulster, NI Takeaway Association and 15 Chambers of Commerce, have met with all political parties to reinforce the message that we need a working Executive to address the current cost of doing business crisis. We have also written to all eleven local councils urging them not to hike their local business rates.

In the past few months Retail NI has met with the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly and a range of senior political leaders raising crucial issues such as the NI Protocol, Business Rates, the Energy crisis, and a range of other cost of doing business challenges.

With our members receiving their new Rates Valuation as part of the Reval 2023, our team is on hand to provide advice and how to appeal.

Retail NI has big plans for this year with a major Supplier Showcase event on 23rd February, our Westminster networking event and our annual High Street Summit.

Together we have a louder voice, and we will continue to fight for the best interests of our membership. If you have any questions, issues or problems please do not hesitate to contact one of the team, there are there to help.

Peter McBride



Dates for Your Diary

Supplier Event
23rd February 2023

High Street Summit
March 2023

Trade NI Westminster Event
23rd May 2023

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FIBRUS LAUNCHES A NEW PRODUCT TO HELP RETAIL NI MEMBERS



Glyn Roberts (CEO Retail NI) & Colin Hutchinson (Fibrus Chief Financial Officer)

Northern Ireland full fibre broadband provider Fibrus has launched a new product which aims to fight the ever-rising cost of doing business.

The service, featuring locked-in prices, has been developed in response to the challenges faced by local SMEs (small to medium-sized enterprises) and won't charge a connection fee or be subject to annual CPI increases.

Targeted at businesses with under 10 employees, Fibrus Business Broadband will allow companies to "save money with confidence", according to Chief Financial Officer Colin Hutchinson.

"It's a fact that SMEs are the backbone of Northern Ireland's economy, which is why it's incumbent upon us to support them as they continue to face unprecedented business and inflationary costs.

"With no connection fee and a contract which won't be subject to annual CPI increases or price jumps at the end of its term, we believe this is an opportunity to provide a sense of financial stability at a time where there is generally little certainty," he said.

"That's part and parcel of why we are bringing this to local businesses," added Mr Hutchinson.

"Fibrus is a local company and we understand the issues facing local business people.

"It's essential that our SMEs are given the support they need to grow and thrive, particularly in the current economic climate."

Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive of Retail NI, welcomed the news. The trade body is partnering with Fibrus to highlight the opportunity the new broadband offer will provide businesses.

"Amidst unprecedented inflationary pressures, high business rates, spiralling energy costs, it is important to recognise the importance of what that means to our local companies.

"Doing business has become almost prohibitively expensive and this will make day-to-day operations easier and therefore more efficient.

"Any savings in the current climate must be welcomed, so we're looking forward to developing our relationship with Fibrus for the good of our members, and their customers," he said.

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RETAIL ROUNDUP

BUSINESS SECRETARY ENERGY CAP STATEMENT

Following the Business Secretary Jacob Rees-Mogg, statement on Energy bills Retail NI CEO Glyn Roberts issued the following reaction:

“Given the crippling financial difficulties that local independent retailers and other small businesses are experiencing, it is hugely disappointing that more clarity was not provided on the Energy Cap.”

“We have been given no timelines on how the Energy cap will apply to Northern Ireland business owners. This is unacceptable and our members deserve better.”

“This is not just a Cost of Doing Business Crisis-it is now an emergency.”

“Government needs to ensure that a clear date is provided for the introduction of the Energy Bill Cap, a business rates holiday and VAT reductions to support local small businesses.”

RETAIL NI COMMENT ON CHANCELLORS AUTUMN STATEMENT

Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts reacted to the Chancellors Autumn Statement

He said “Our members are facing a perfect storm of cost challenges from Energy, Business Rates and a major downturn in consumer



spend. It is disappointing that there was very little further support in the statement for local small businesses struggling to keep the lights on.”

“The freezing of the threshold for employer National Insurance is a stealth tax on small businesses and jobs and will result in higher costs.”

“We note the Chancellor announced a £13.6 billion package of business rate support for small businesses in England. We will be lobbying for the Barnett consequential of this to provide rates relief to struggling small traders in Northern Ireland.”

Regarding the Statement made in October Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“We welcomed that the Government reversed the National Insurance increase which provided some relief to local independent retailers who are struggling with the cost of business crisis.”

“Retail NI will continue to engage with the Secretary of State for NI on how the Investment Zone proposals could apply to Northern Ireland, particularly in town and city centres that have high levels of dereliction and are in need of further support.”

“We are disappointed that no funding assistance from Treasury has been allocated to allow a business rates holiday to be introduced locally. If we are to stand any chance of saving local high street businesses and protecting jobs, it is vital that a rates holiday is urgently introduced.”

“Lowering VAT rates should also have been included in this statement, rather than focusing on stamp duty and corporation tax.”

“The UK Government needs to go a lot further in supporting our local high streets and we will continue to press for further measures.”

ENERGY BILL RELIEF SCHEME FOR NON-DOMESTIC CUSTOMERS

In October the Government released details on the Northern Ireland Energy Bill Relief Scheme for non-domestic customers and businesses could get support this winter.

The scheme was designed to provide energy bill relief for non-domestic customers in Northern Ireland. Discounts were to be applied to energy usage initially between 1 October 2022 and 31 March 2023. The scheme was comparable to that in GB.

The discount was automatic, and the Government warned of how quickly scams were emerging. They advised if businesses received messages asking for bank details, it could be a scam and should be reported.

The Energy Relief Scheme was available to everyone on a non-domestic and supported price was set at

- £211 per megawatt hour (MWh) for electricity and
- £75 per MWh for gas

This rate ensured consistency with businesses and consumers in Great Britain. The Unit Prices reflected other additional costs such as network charges and operating costs, plus the impact of competition between suppliers.

The Government is due to publish a review into the operation of the scheme in the new year, to inform decisions on future support after March 2023. The review will focus in particular on identifying the most vulnerable non-domestic customers and how the government will continue assisting them with energy costs.



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Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers progresses

Consumers in Northern Ireland, England and Wales will be able to recycle their plastic and canned drink containers more easily through a new Deposit Return Scheme set to be introduced in 2025.

Every year NI consumers go through an estimated 420 million plastic drinks bottles and 90 million drinks cans, many of which are littered or condemned to landfill. Evidence has shown that a Deposit Return Scheme can become a simple part of daily life to make recycling easier - recycling rates in countries such as Germany, Finland, and Norway, which employ such a scheme, are above 90%. Current recycling rates for drinks containers in the UK have plateaued at around 70%.

Through a small refundable deposit placed on single-use drinks containers, the Deposit Return Scheme will incentivise people to recycle their drinks bottles and cans to redeem their deposits. Evidence suggests that an effective scheme could increase recycling rates to at least 90%, reducing littering of these drinks containers by around 85%, and reduce plastic pollution. DAERA will work with its counterparts in England and Wales and with industry to press ahead with delivery of the scheme.

In addition to the Deposit Return Scheme, DAERA is also introducing an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme for packaging, which will mean packaging producers and

manufacturers will cover the costs of recycling and disposing of their packaging. This will drive higher collection and recycling rates of packaging and covers any drinks containers not included in the DRS such as glass, cartons, or high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic, which is used for most fresh milk packaging.



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Success for Retail NI Staff at Business Eye Awards

Retail NI were delighted that Office Manager, Joelene Poole won Executive Support Professional at the AIB Business Eye Awards in November.

They were shortlisted for 3 Awards in total
Executive Support Professional
Business Personality of the Year
Outstanding Leadership & Management Award

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PREVENTING UNDERAGE SALES

Make sure all staff members are fully trained. Follow these top tips:

TAKE YOUR TIME

Distractions can prevent proper checks from taking place

MAKE EYE CONTACT

with customers to assess their age

IF IN DOUBT, ASK FOR ID

and check that it's an acceptable form of identification



REMEMBER: Mystery shopper visits are carried out in support of preventing underage sales. If your store doesn't correctly ask for ID on 3 separate occasions, you could lose your terminal.

Rules & Procedures apply. Players must be 18+.

Ministerial Meetings

RETAIL NI HOLD NI RECEPTION AT THE LABOUR PARTY ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Retail NI Hosted the Northern Ireland Reception at the Annual Labour Party Conference in September. The event was attended by many MP's, Peers and Ambassadors from around the world along with businesses. It provided an opportunity to emphasise the current cost of doing business crisis with various Shadow Ministers and Peers.



Peter Kyle MP, Glyn Roberts, Lady Basildon & Lord



Prime Minister Liz Truss & Glyn Roberts

RETAIL NI HOST PRIME MINISTER AT TORY PARTY CONFERENCE

Just before Liz Truss stepped down as Prime Minister Retail NI were delighted to host the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister & Secretary of State for Northern Ireland at a Northern Ireland Reception as part of the Annual Tory Party Conference in October.

The reception provided our CEO Glyn Roberts with the perfect opportunity for engagement with many Ministers. The current cost of doing business crisis and its impact on Retail NI members was discussed. He also took the opportunity to raise the issue of the reintroduction of the Rates Holiday for members.



Chris Heaton Harris Secretary of State & Glyn Roberts



Therese Coffey Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs & Glyn Roberts

TRADE BODIES MEET WITH SIR JEFFREY DONALDSON AND GORDON LYONS

Retail NI, Hospitality Ulster along with various Chamber of Commerce met with the DUP yesterday.

The meeting provided useful engagement with Sir Jeffrey Donaldson and Gordon Lyons on the Cost of Doing Business Crisis. One of the salient points was the reintroduction of the Business Rates Holiday to help businesses in the current climate.



RETAIL NI MEET PRIME MINISTER SUNAK

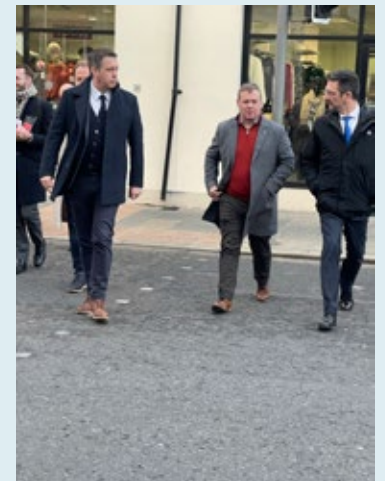
Retail NI CEO, Glyn Roberts, had a useful in December with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

He was able to raise the need for the Business Rates holiday to be reinstated as well as the need for more support for members during the cost of doing business crisis.

MEETINGS WITH NIO MINISTER OF STATE, STEVE BAKER

Retail NI met with Minister of State for NI, Steve Baker.

Representatives from some of the Chambers of Commerce met with the Minister for useful discussions on the issues facing retailers in the current cost of doing business crisis. We were then delighted to jointly host, along with our colleagues from Ards Chamber of Commerce, the Minister on a walkabout in Newtownards. Again there were useful discussion on the challenges facing our High Streets and Cost of Doing business crisis. The Minister took the opportunity to speak to various businesses and get an insight into the problems they were facing.



RETAIL NI MEET FOREIGN SECRETARY JAMES CLEVERLY

Retail NI CEO attended a worthwhile roundtable with the Foreign Secretary James Cleverly and business group colleagues. Discussions took place on the challenges with the NI Protocol facing our members and the need for a wider EU and UK Government deal moving forward.



Centra Community Fund awards £5K to organisations across Northern Ireland

Five organisations receive £1K each from Centra Choices Fund

Leading convenience brand Centra has awarded five community-focused organisations £1,000 each to help them continue their meaningful and life-changing work across Northern Ireland.

The £5,000 Centra Choices Community Fund was launched as part of the Centra Choices campaign, celebrating the choices that define us. The campaign focused on four behaviours that promote happiness in ourselves and others - Positivity, Kindness, Respect and Attitude.

Applicants for the grants had to demonstrate how their group benefits the wider community and how it aligns with one of the four behaviours celebrated in the campaign.



Craigavon Lakers: From L-R: Colin Shields, player; Anna Shields, player and coach; Sarah Cousins, coach; Jennifer Morton, Centra Brand Manager; Ciaran Bradley, player; Mark Finney, captain.

With five individual pots of £1,000 available, Keady First Responders, The Hygiene Bank Moira, Hands that Talk Dungiven, St Matthew's GAC Drumsurn and Craigavon Lakers Wheelchair Basketball

were selected from more than 150 applicants from across Northern Ireland.

Desi Derby, Marketing Director at Centra said: "At Centra, we choose community. We launched this fund to give back to the neighbourhoods in which we operate and show support at a grassroots level.

"The standard of applicants was incredible, and it was so difficult to narrow it down to just five organisations. It warmed my heart to see how much people care about their communities and all applicants were truly inspirational.

"We are delighted to support the winning recipients and hope the well-earned funds will help them all to continue their important and life-changing work. From funding life-saving equipment to ending hygiene poverty, these groups all do amazing work and I hope this encourages the local communities to continue to support them too."



Keady First Responders: From L-R: Damien McGlennan, co-owner Centra Keady; Jennifer Morton, Centra Brand Manager; Adrian Cassidy, Keady First Responders Volunteer; Martina Conway, Keady First Responders Volunteer

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Help to Retain Great Staff and Improve Productivity
Emerging from the global pandemic and facing into a more unpredictable economic future, retailers, like all other businesses, are navigating a perfect storm.

Adding to the rising cost of energy, transport, goods and services, staff recruitment and retention has never been more challenging. The combined effects of Brexit and the pandemic has seen significant numbers of people choosing to exit the labour market. Between June and August this year the UK recorded its lowest unemployment rate since 1974 with businesses competing to attract employees from an ever-decreasing talent pool.

Recruiting staff, even at the best of times can be expensive and unpredictable meaning there are significant gains for businesses who work harder to retain the talent they have by aligning the needs of the business with the needs of their employees.

Ciaran Lynch, Co-Founder of Gig Grafter, a home-grown



technology company providing a cloud-based workforce management platform used by independent retailers across Ireland, explains how scheduling is often overlooked as a tool that businesses should be using as part of their staff recruitment and retention strategy.

"Businesses that plan rotas further in advance, provide reasonable notice of shift changes and show a willingness to provide flexibility to meet the changing needs of their employees can gain a real competitive advantage in retaining and attracting employees in a tight local labour market".

Forward planning provides greater certainty for

employees in terms of the hours they will be working and the earnings they will achieve. It also helps businesses become more resilient in managing and responding to changes in demand and staff availability.

Ciaran, along with his brother and co-founder, Barry Lynch, created Gig Grafter. A cloud-based workforce management platform Gig Grafter has developed to improve business efficiency by making the process of Rota Planning, Wage Cost Budgeting, Holiday Management and Payroll Processing simpler and quicker to do.

For more information contact Ciaran Lynch at ciaran.lynch@giggrafter.com
Mobile :07961536065



Royal Recognition for an Independent Retailer

Peter McBride, an independent SPAR retailer, has been recognised for services to the economy and the community in County Tyrone in Northern Ireland. He has been made an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in the New Year Honours List 2023. The New Year Honours List, published by order of King Charles III, marks the incredible public service of individuals from across the United Kingdom.

Recipients in the New Year Honours List 2023 have been awarded for their outstanding contributions across all parts of the UK for their work on areas including sustained public service, youth engagement and community work.



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Interview with a Retailer



CHRIS SUITOR - SUITOR BROTHERS

Chris Suitor is a partner at Suitor Brothers Tailoring, Suitor & Co Café and Suitor Coffee as well as being a DJ, Event Host, speaker and licensed Boxing MC. He lives in Dundonald, with his wife Nichola, and was educated at Grosvenor Grammar School before heading to Queens University Belfast. He is a proud dad to Ava (11) and Lois (9). Nichola is a Yoga Teacher and runs the Coffee businesses. Just turned 40 years old!! Yikes!

Who in the business world do you admire the most?

At an international level, its hard to look past the big ones Musk, Bezos, Gates, Jobs, Ford etc.. and its hard to pick one out of such a plethora of amazing people! But if I had to pick one it would be Walt Disney. He once said, 'A man should never neglect his family for business' ... Truer words never spoken. And we all know

What do you do when you are not working?

My business enterprises tend to take up the vast majority of my time, however I always make time for my family. More so lately as I ended up doing far too much on the business side and made myself sick. Burnout is a horrible place to end up. Outside of that I play the odd round of golf and enjoy walking in nature.

What is the biggest misconception people have about you?

That I am hugely outgoing person! I tend to get invited to every event under the sun, and I believe I'm good craic, but I enjoy nothing better than being with my closest family and spending quality time at our home in Dundonald, or at Suitor Cottage in Donegal.

Who are your biggest role models in life?

My dad for sure. From an extremely poor beginning in life, on a rural farm in Monaghan, he built the business I run today, and instilled the work ethic, morals and fairness I believe has made me succeed in all matters of my life. Also, my Wife Nichola. She has been through a lot in life but is still the most amazing person I have around me. Keeps me grounded!

If you had a superpower, what would it be?

Oh that's a tough one. I would choose to be able to fly! So I can get to Donegal quicker! And I recently did a 15,000 feet skydive and view was mighty!

Describe your job in 3 words

Making People Happy. Whether its menswear, coffee, food or a DJ Event, my Jobs are all the same. Make 'em smile!

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

When starting my first business, which was a Custom Car Bodyshop, I asked my Uncle William for advice as he was in the automotive industry for decades. He told me to 'Watch the Overheads' That was it. Something so so simple and always resonates. But one of the main reasons start up businesses fail these days. Do the due diligence on your fixed costs! And engrain them in your mind.

What is your favourite task of the week & Why?

Currently its taking my kids to school! I know it won't last forever, Ava is for transfer test and Lois not so far behind, so I'm enjoying every morning.

What company do you admire most and why?

Moy Park, From a small farming company in the sticks, to a Billion pound business. Its absolutely spectacular rise is amazing and the represent NI so well on the global stage.

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

Ahh, I was Top Gun 1 generation, so of course I wanted to be a Fighter Pilot! I enjoyed years of Air Training Corp but gave it up when I found cars and girlfriends. My love for business was instilled as a young child too. My dad always included my brother and I in work so we learned many traits very early. I have a BEng from Queens in Engineering and was destined for a career in that but working for myself was much more appealing. Looking back now, I wish I had skipped Uni and went straight to business!

Reval 2023: A job half done

11 January 2023 marked the end of the internal process that saw Land & Property Services (LPS) value 75,000 properties, by their omission, “without carrying out any inspections” or checks on the accuracy of their property records.

It seems somewhat flaky that a £1.682 billion total property valuation that yields approximately £650 million for front-line public and local council services would be conducted without property inspections running alongside the rental analysis.

It may be a sign of the times of a shrinking organisation, but how can anyone have faith in the accuracy of the draft valuation list?

Following the postponement of the General Revaluation in 2010, changes were made in 2012 to Article 39A of the Rates Order. These changes gave the Commissioner of Valuation the power to amend the valuation list where property values

change between the valuation date and the date bills go out to ratepayers. This accounts for changes such as vacancy levels in an area, the levels of footfall, the types of retailers present, oversupply or changes in planning permissions. Furthermore, these changes only need to be observable and do not need to be measurable.

I would argue that Reval 2023 is incomplete until the Commissioner reflects these changes in the published valuation list. However, LPS is in the business of collecting rates and rate retention and is not concerned with the true fairness and equality of the valuation list. If they were, they wouldn't have introduced legislation in 2022 to restrict ratepayers from obtaining reductions due to the continued impact of COVID restrictions.

LPS needs to start visiting the premises of independent retailers and small businesses as part of the revaluation process. They must conduct property inspections, measured surveys and consider rental values on a local level. This approach will help remove the uncertainty around the accuracy of the proposed changes.



Despite the half-done job, LPS will only change the draft valuation list with ratepayers initiating it; that is why they invite ratepayers to engage with them and not the other way around. Therefore, if you operate in a locality where footfall is down, vacancies are rising, and other changes have occurred since 2021, I advise you to review your rateable value, start the informal review process today and challenge your NAV on 1 April 2023.

The Rating system is based on fairness and equality, and it will fall to ratepayers to uphold those standards and hold LPS to account.

John Gowland (john@gowlandsni.com) is the Managing Director at Gowlands Business Rates Savings Specialists.



Perfect Storm Is Here Tackling the Cost of Doing Business Crisis

BY GLYN ROBERTS
RETAIL NI CHIEF EXECUTIVE

With Retail NI members receiving their draft valuation of their business rates in January it was a stark reminder of the need for radical reform of our broken, antiquated, and expensive rating system. It is unacceptable and a drain on our local economy that Northern Ireland businesses continue to pay the most expensive business rates anywhere in the UK.

In England small businesses are getting a 75% reduction in their business rates to assist with the Cost of Doing Business Crisis. Despite the UK Government giving Northern Ireland this funding as part of the Barnett Consequential, our local small businesses are unlikely to get a single penny of reduction in their rates bills with the money going instead into the Stormont black hole.

Why should independent retailers and small businesses in Northern Ireland be so unfairly treated in comparison to their English counterparts? Unfortunately it doesn't stop there - worse is still to come.

With the Regional Rate likely to be set by the Secretary of State and the local rate to be struck by our eleven local councils, we have real concerns that we could see inflation busting rises that will cripple many local businesses. Retail NI and a consortium of 16 trade bodies and chambers of commerce wrote to all eleven council Chief Executives urging them not to go down this road. We urge all local councillors to listen to these genuine concerns.

We are at a critical juncture as a perfect storm of factors is causing devastation for the retail and hospitality sectors. It could see thousands of businesses threatened over the next few months if no action is taken.



Out of control energy bill increases, labour shortages, inflation, and falling consumer confidence are all risking the business climate of Northern Ireland. Fears that many will simply go under in the next months without government assistance are keenly felt and we cannot continue on this path of destruction any longer. With this perfect storm many Retail NI members are worried about pushing customers away by having to raise prices to keep pace with the rising costs.

Sadly, the bad news just keeps coming with the UK government's inadequate, poorly targeted and ultimately pointless new energy support package for businesses. Local shops and many other businesses face a massive hike in energy costs from April 2023.

The government is currently reducing business energy bills by effectively controlling the wholesale price, the main component of businesses' energy bills. They will however be moving away from this model in April and instead providing a subsidy to electricity bills of 1.96p per kilowatt hour for all business customers paying over a minimum rate!

Retail NI is making this issue our top priority in our engagement with Ministers and local political parties. Watch this space.

Nearby for Creeslough

Friday the 7th of October 2022 will be a day that will stay with many after the tragic events that occurred in the village of Creeslough, Co Donegal. The desire however, from people near and far to want to do something to help has been very heartwarming and we as the retail partner of the Lafferty's Nearby store promised we too would stand shoulder to shoulder with them and the Creeslough community.

Having been in partnership with the Lafferty family for over 12 years we understand fully the impact this tragedy has had in the local area. We continue to be very mindful and respectful of what has happened, with the victims and their families being a significant priority for us at S&W Wholesale.

Working closely alongside the local community, the Diocese, and the Lafferty family we are proud to have been able to get those much-needed services and essentials back into Creeslough. This significant joint investment opened a store on Friday 11th November next to St. Michael's Church to ensure the people of Creeslough can shop close to home with local jobs being supported.



Michael Skelton, MD of S&W Wholesale commented, "The strength and teamwork of this close-knit community is touching to be a part of. Creeslough and beyond has supported the Lafferty family and us in getting their store opened to allow for those much needed services back into the community. It has been great to witness local contractors, our supply partners, the Diocese, staff of the store all working alongside our symbol [Nearby] teams across ROI and NI. This really is a community store built by the local community and we are proud to see our support come to fruition. From all of us at S&W, we can't thank you enough for the support and guidance and we hope that this store is a symbol of our long-standing commitment to Creeslough and the surrounding areas."

The store opened on Friday 11th November with staggered opening hours as a mark of respect to all the victims as Novena Masses continue. Annette & Danny-Martin, Owners of Nearby Creeslough said, "We have been overwhelmed by the help, support and guidance from friends, strangers, S&W Wholesale and our community of Creeslough to get the store opened. Your kind messages of support mean so much to us, the family circle and our great team of staff. We hope to see you in store very soon."



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Andrew Porter,
Group Manager, Creightons Group

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Advocacy for All

Advocacy for All is a Free regional Advocacy service funded by the Department of Health's, Mental Health Support Fund, administered by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland. Advocacy for All supports people who are over 18 with mild/moderate mental health needs have their voice heard.

The Advocacy for All service provides an opportunity to discuss options and rights around issues that are impacting on mental health with a trained Mental Health Advocate. The service aims to empower by supporting the understanding of what choices are available to resolve issues impacting on that persons mental health

Advocacy for all provides information and signposting in relation to mental health support across northern Ireland, Advocacy for all is focused on community, supporting people to connect to groups or support within their local community, we have an advocate based within each trust area, providing local knowledge.

Advocacy for all will Support people to become more confident to speak up for themselves in relation to their mental health/wellbeing, also providing Access to i-Connect a unique digital wellbeing platform providing tools to monitor and improve mental health and wellbeing

Advocacy for all is also providing learning opportunities to



develop self-advocacy skills, running a Level two self-advocacy course.

How to get in touch;
email - hello@inspirewellbeing.org
Telephone – **0808 189 0036**
Web chat – www.inspirewellbeing.org
org

Titanic Tigers Special Olympics Club

Established in 2019 in East Belfast, Titanic Tigers Special Olympics Club was the first standalone Young Athletes Club in Northern Ireland providing play and sport activities for children with learning disabilities aged 4-12 years. The Young Athletes Programme, which was designed by the Special Olympics, provides a flexible and versatile framework to introduce children to fundamental movements in a familiar, encouraging and fun environment where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.



Set up by a number of parents from the local area with the support of Special Olympics, the Club meets every Friday night – even running virtual sessions during the COVID-19 lock downs. Starting with around 20 athletes and 15 trained volunteers, the Club has been so successful it has had to change venues to accommodate growing numbers with over 30 athletes and 23 volunteers now registered and new athletes continually looking to join. Entirely self-funded, the Club relies on membership fees, fundraising and donations to cover costs such as venue hire, kit and equipment.

As the Club's Chairperson, Jonathan Martin, said, "Titanic Tigers is a very special Club, providing kids, who don't always get the chance, to regularly come together to be active, have fun and make friends at their own pace in a safe and supportive environment. The enthusiasm and determination the athletes have to try new sporting activities, along with the smiles on their faces each week really highlights to all involved how important this Club is – or as we would generally say, roarsome!"

If you would like to get involved or find out more about the Club please get in touch with our Chairperson Jonathan Martin or Club Secretary Susan Gillen on info.titanictigers@gmail.com



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This year Nicholl Oils reached a tremendous milestone, marking their 60th year supplying fuel to homes and businesses across the province.

Upon receiving the prestigious award, Hugh Nicholl said "I am very honoured, on behalf of Loreen, my family, Gary, Karen and Colin, and all our staff over those 60 years to receive this award. All I can say to everyone is thank you very much, and let's hope we have a few more years"

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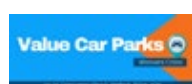
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