

NIIRTA launches 30 point plan for new parliament pg 03 - 05



LET'S GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT...

It's property advice, but it's just a wee bit sharper.



Instinctive Excellence in Property



NIIRTA launches thirty point policy plan for new parliament

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) has launched a thirty-point economic plan for Northern Ireland's MPs and the new Parliament.

Retail First sets out wider policy priorities, which for the most part, are not devolved and fall within the current remit of Westminster, working in partnership with the NI Executive.

Senior representatives from the five main parties addressed the launch. They included Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister Jonathan Bell MLA, Mairtin O Muilleoir MLA, Mark Durkan MP, Regional Development Minister Danny Kennedy MLA and Justice Minister David Ford MLA, who each gave a three-minute elevator pitch to fifty senior business representatives on their economic priorities for the new Parliament.

Speaking at the launch NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

"As the largest industry in Northern Ireland, a growing, vibrant and entrepreneurial retail sector is essential for a sustainable economic recovery. Our members are community entrepreneurs – they connect people, business and investment, and they are the anchors in bringing in jobs to local people. We need to strengthen that connectedness and community spirit"

"Retail First is an ambitious plan which sets out for the most part non-devolved policy priorities which require a renewed partnership, not just between governments in Belfast and London but across all of political parties and civic society"

"We need the right incentives and the right environment for our businesses and enterprises to thrive locally, nationally and across the world. That means we need appropriately trained staff – a workforce that can adapt and develop to the changing needs of consumers and trade. We need the next

generation of retail entrepreneurs to bring ideas to the table to keep us at the forefront of innovation"

"We don't just need to talk about retail in Northern Ireland – we need to shout."

"We don't just need to talk about retail in Northern Ireland – we need to shout. We need to put retail first – no other place in line will do. And that is what we can do with this plan"

"NIIRTA proposes we make our own pact. A growth pact between those of us here today – members of the retail sector – with all levels of government – 11 new councils, Stormont and Westminster – the growers of our economy"





RUNNING IN HR CIRCLES... PENINSULA CAN HELP!

We advise thousands of **senior managers**, **HR specialists** and **business owners** on a daily basis allowing peace of mind and confidence in their decisions. Our **insured advice** protects you and your company meaning you never need second guess again.

Peninsula provides:

- Practical 24 hour advice whenever you need it
- Contracts of employment for staff
- A suite of tailored documents, policies and procedures
- Employment tribunal representation

Why not test our expertise, call now for some free advice?



0800 917 0771

or visit: **peninsula-ni.com**

HR | Legal Services | EAP | Health & Safety



^ Glyn Roberts, Graeme Elliot of Heathrow and Paddy Doody NIIRTA Vice Chairman



^ Theresa Villiers, Secretary of State for NI with Glyn Roberts



^ Promoting Retail First in Lisburn with Lisburn Chamber of Commerce President Stephen Houston, Glyn Roberts, Jeffrey Donaldson MP and Cllr Pat Catney

Among the thirty points included in Retail First

- National Insurance holidays for retailers that locate in areas of high unemployment and dereliction
- Establishing a new Economic Advisory Council to advise the Secretary of State for NI on non-devolved issues
- Setting up an Interface Investment Fund to promote new employment in those areas
- A new UK wide GCSE in Entrepreneurship and technical degrees to be delivered by our FE colleges
- A NI International Infrastructure Conference to be held West of Bann, hosted by the Prime Minister, to identify potential

funding streams and produce an agreed action plan to support our rural towns and villages

- We want to see the full economic potential of our five local cities to be realised by giving them more powers through City Deals and for Westminster to introduce a Cities and Prosperity Act to provide the legislative framework for this to happen
- Date and a rate for Corporation Tax, to provide the step change our economy needs
- The freeze on Fuel Duty to be extended across the lifetime of the new Parliament.
- Support the establishment of a UK Small Business Administration on same lines as US version



[^] Pat Leneghan, NIIRTA Director, Enterprise Minister Jonathan Bell, Glyn Roberts and Chris Suitor of Suitor Menswear.

Enterprise Minister Launches Independents Day 2015

Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister Jonathan Bell launched this year's Independents Day campaign on a visit to the office of the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association office in Ballyhackamore.

Minister Bell met a senior delegation of NIIRTA members and then embarked on a walkabout to meet members of the Ballyhackamore Traders Association.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“This was a very productive first meeting with Minister Bell discussing the challenges facing the local retail sector and its crucial role in growing our private sector as a whole. Retail is our largest sector of Industry and is a key partner for economic growth towards a new dynamic private sector led Northern Ireland economy”

“We also impressed upon the Minister to ensure that Northern Ireland's town centres and retail sector are included in future Tourism strategy”

“Independents Day is all about highlighting and celebrating the huge contribution that local retailers make, not just to

the economy, but to the community and our town centres”

“We want to see shoppers make an extra special effort to shop independently and we believe they will be surprised at the high level of choice, quality and customer service that our sector offers”

Enterprise Minister Jonathan Bell MLA said: “Small businesses are at the heart of the Northern Ireland economy and it is important we create the conditions that allow them to grow and flourish. Recently, we have seen many encouraging signs; the private sector is growing, job numbers are increasing and fewer people are out of work.

“There are also continuing positive signals that local households are beginning to spend more and this year's Independents Day campaign is important in the context of encouraging all of us to appreciate and support our local traders. Organisations such as the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) are vital in helping to promote small retailers and business, as well as ensuring the local high street remains a vibrant and dynamic place at the centre of the community.”



^ Paul Maskey MP with West Belfast traders



^ DET Minister Johnathan Bell, Glyn Roberts & Ivan McElroy at McElroy's Greengrocers

“Independents Day is all about highlighting and celebrating the huge contribution that local retailers make...”



^ East Belfast MP Gavin Robinson with Glyn Roberts at NIIRTA member's store, Wyse Byse

NIIRTA expresses concern at proposed DOE cash for bottles return scheme

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) has expressed concern at A proposed 'cash for bottles' scheme outlined by DOE Minister Mark Durkan.

NIIRTA's concern is based on the pilot schemes in Scotland, where independent retailers' objections included concern over cost to the business, increased staffing and the space to store and manage high volumes of returned beverage containers.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“Our members pride themselves in re-cycling and commitment to a low carbon economy. However based on the Scottish experience of a similar 'cash for bottles' scheme we have major concerns at this being introduced in Northern Ireland”

“Independent retailers in Scotland concerns for the proposed scheme included:

- Independent retailers do not have the space to store and manage high volumes of returned beverage containers.
- An increase in staffing levels would be required to manage returns and prevent delays at the till.
- At an indicative purchase cost of £30,000, plus £2,000 installation, costs are not financially viable for an independent convenience store retailer to install Returned Vending Storage.
- Independent retailers will be disproportionately disadvantaged as they do not have access to back hauling services, their stores are smaller and they have less capital to invest in the set-up of the scheme.

“NIIRTA members trade at the heart of our communities and local economies and the additional cost and burden of compliance with a deposit and return scheme will have a significant negative impact on the operation of our members' businesses. We believe that the most effective alternative for boosting recycling is to invest in expanding coverage of the kerbside collection scheme. The infrastructure is already well developed, and the public are familiar with what is required of them”

“We are seeking an early meeting with Minister Durkan to discuss our concerns”

free



2015. SEE YA SUGAR

freeist

Scrumpious +

SUGAR FREE

In that order



Indulge your customers cravings
for the little treats they love
without sugar getting in their way.

To stock up now contact Steve

02890 267080

freeist



freeist

freeist.co.uk



Cross Group LED Lighting

Smarter solutions for retail

Ambient LED lighting for the retail floor

LED accent lighting for maximum merchandising impact

Bespoke LED fridge lighting solutions

External LED solutions with IP66 rating and 10 year warranty



Get set for the third Small Business Saturday

Small businesses across Northern Ireland in all business sectors and communities are to be put back in the spotlight when the third annual Small Business Saturday takes place on December 5th.

Small Business Saturday is already the UK's most successful small business campaign. Last year 16.5 million adults went out to support a small business on Small Business Saturday with 64% of the UK aware of the campaign. The UK's small businesses between them provide 60% of private sector jobs and nearly 50% of private sector turnover. Last year the campaign was featured by all major media, trended at number one on Twitter on the day (above One Direction!) and received around 3.5 million views on its Facebook page. This year Small Business Saturday carries the theme "5 million small businesses, one big day".

It is a grassroots, non-commercial campaign, which highlights small business success and, although the focus is on one day, the campaign aims to have a lasting impact on small businesses by changing mind-sets so that people aim to support small businesses all year round.

"Most people in the UK either own a small business, work for a small business or know somebody who does, so supporting a small business on Small Business Saturday is personal and means you are supporting somebody you know," explains National Campaign Director, Michelle Ovens.

"The Small Business Saturday campaign plays a valuable role in focusing the minds of consumers and business people on what small businesses in any sector or line of business can offer in terms of range of products and services and levels of customer service."

American Express originally founded the hugely successful 'Small Business Saturday' initiative in the U.S. in 2010 and remains the Founding Supporter of the campaign in the UK, as part of its on-going commitment to encourage consumers to shop small. The campaign benefits from the backing of leading business organisations including the Association of Convenience Stores, Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association and the Federation of Small Businesses.

What's in it for small businesses?

The campaign exists as a nationwide promotional and marketing tool for small businesses, something for business owners to join up with and use for the benefit of their own small business. It is totally free to participate and all and any small businesses can get involved, from one-man-bands, through to a high growth office, and from tradesmen to social media gurus. In addition to the campaign itself, the team also delivers help and advice alongside opportunities to connect with other small businesses. In short, Small Business Saturday exists to support, inspire and promote small businesses.

And if your business doesn't trade on a Saturday, don't worry. Small Business Saturday has events, workshops and support networks happening all year round and we also encourage small business owners to plan something on the Friday before Small Business Saturday, if it works better for them. So, whatever your business, whatever your size, whatever stage you are at – if you are a small business, the campaign exists to help you.

How can you get involved?

- Logos, digital banners, a social media guide and lots more are available on our website will be available for you to download at www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com. Display them on your website or on your premises.
- Team up with other like-minded businesses either in your local area or your sector and create a Small Business Saturday map of participating businesses. We have found that small businesses working together can often make more of a splash than those trying to work alone.
- Talk to your local or trade media about how your business will be getting involved with Small Business Saturday – we can help you out with press release templates.
- Be sure to link to the Small Business Saturday website. Join our Facebook page and Twitter feed and encourage other small businesses to do so. Our social feeds are really interactive and you can get great advice from small business owners like you there.

- Network, share ideas and team up for Small Business Saturday. Use the hashtag #SmallBizSatUK. Follow Small Business Saturday UK on Facebook. 'Like' & 'Share' our videos, images & blog posts. Create & upload videos yourself.

More Information

More information is available at: www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/smallbusinesssaturdayuk and on Twitter @smallbizsatuk.

High cost of doing business is NIIRTA's top priority

By Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive

The Chancellor's much trumpeted National Living Wage in the recent Budget is no doubt a popular measure for working families in the UK. However, the Treasury has given little thought as to how small businesses and independent retailers could afford a forty percent increase in their wages bills by 2020.

The introduction of a compulsory 'Living Wage' will have a detrimental impact on independent retailers in Northern Ireland. This will lead to retailers having to reduce staff hours, work more hours in their business and ultimately cancel their investment plans. To introduce this measure with no consultation undermines the independent Low Pay Commission and is a reckless way to impose a massive burden on small businesses.

Our members want to pay their staff a Living Wage, but what the Chancellor is proposing is unaffordable in the current economic climate.

NIIRTA has concerns that the proposed increase in the Employment Allowance to £3000, which is positive, for independent retailers, is unlikely to fully off-set the increase in costs brought by the new over 25s National Living Wage rate. If the Chancellor is serious about supporting small businesses being able to afford this, why not offer a matching Income Tax Allowance, pound for pound for small businesses to off-set this increase?

This raises a wider question of the high cost of doing business in Northern Ireland. Many of our members are still paying the highest energy costs in the UK plus a large number took a serious hit in the recent Rates Revaluation.

Added to this, we have a retail planning system that still gives an unfair competitive advantage to large out of town hypermarkets.

Our members want to pay their staff a Living Wage, but what the Chancellor is proposing is unaffordable given the perfect storm of costs and regulation facing small businesses and independent retailers.

Furthermore, there is the increasing cumulative impact of red tape and regulation, for example, DOE Minister Mark Durkan's plans to introduce a bottle return scheme, to be collected, administered and processed by local retailers. There was no thought given or even consultation about the increased staff costs or extra storage space. It is this type of burden of extra cost and bureaucracy that local businesses simply do not need as we move slowly toward recovery.

Locally, the elephant in the room, preventing progress, is the ongoing Budget and Welfare crises, which are creating unwelcome political instability at a time when the economy should be the central focus of the Executive. We need to see full implementation of the Stormont House Agreement and a real effort to resolve the roadblock of welfare reform among the Executive parties.

Retail is our largest sector of Industry and is a key partner for economic growth towards a new dynamic private sector led Northern Ireland economy. To support that growth we need a new enabling policy framework, which makes Northern Ireland the best place in the UK and Ireland to start and grow successful world-class small businesses and the next generation of retail entrepreneurs.

THE BERRY BEST WAY TO BOOST UP YOUR SALES



STOCK UP NOW!



@BoostDrinksNews
www.boostdrinkstrade.com

YOU SPEAK, WE LISTEN.



We commission research and listen to what you, the independent retailer want. So here are five ways we're supporting your needs...

1

Competing with supermarkets

Boost is exclusive to independent retailers!



2

Creating more demand and driving footfall

We're sampling all our products across the UK and using social media to create consumer demand.



3

More profits

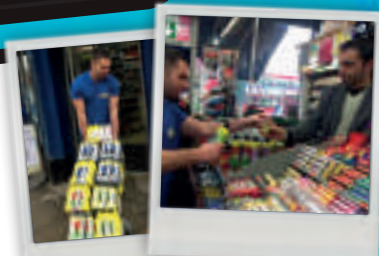
Thanks to our low prices and healthy cash margins you can make more profits with Boost.



4

Face-to-face contact

We've increased our support to wholesalers and visited more retailers to get even more people engaged with our brand.



5

Advice and support

We now have a brand new trade website which includes our handy 'How to sell more section' and 'Profit Calculator'.



Don't just take our word for it

"I feel like Boost really takes interest towards independent retailers like myself. Not only is it a well-loved product in its market but it's an easy sell and gives me great profit margins too. It's my number one selling energy drink brand!"
Leslie Stafford, Centra Retailer, Belfast



@BoostDrinksNews

www.boostdrinkstrade.com



Commissioned research 2014

STOCK UP NOW.





[^] Seán Murphy of REI, Seán Sherlock TD and Glyn Roberts of NIIRTA

REI and NIIRTA launch report on building the retail industry: North and South

Tourist shopping market could be €800m/£580m to retailers North & South annually

Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) with Minister Seán Sherlock have launched a first-ever report on building retail in Ireland, North and South. The report is based on a detailed analysis of 500+ responses from international visitors to Belfast and Dublin along with a qualitative survey of 40 retail businesses based North and South of the Border. The research was funded through the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's Reconciliation Fund.

REI Deputy Chief Executive Seán Murphy said, "This report provides real insights into why we need to promote the whole of Ireland as a visitor shopping destination. Doing this will grow visitor spend on retail all over the island. We know that the island is competitively priced when it comes to luxury goods prices ex VAT. Using this research will enable us all to further enhance the island of Ireland's attractiveness as a visitor retail destination," he added.

Glyn Roberts, CEO of NIIRTA said "Our joint research indicates that there is a major prize for the retail industry on

the island of Ireland if we can ensure that the broad choice of retail options is correctly profiled to incoming international visitors. Both our organisations will be working in partnership to ensure that policies are put in place to support what is the Island's largest industry by employment. From a Northern Ireland (NI) perspective, more can be done to attract Republic of Ireland-only tourists to NI. A vibrant retail sector with thriving town centres can play a key role in doing this. Crucial also will be further promoting the new British-Irish tourism visa to attract visitors from outside the EU to the island," he concluded.

Seán Sherlock, TD Minister of State for Development, Trade Promotion and North-South Co-operation said "I welcome the release of the results of this North South collaborative research project, the first such joint economic survey on an all-island basis. It is important that we adopt an all-island approach towards the retail sector, which employs over 300,000 in our towns, cities and villages. Through the Reconciliation Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs, we have supported this research in aid of an economic sector which is at the heart of communities across the island. The retail sector plays an invaluable role in the economy of this island."

Among the findings of the Report were:

- Overall, most visitors to both Dublin (71%) and Belfast (55%) are staying for more than one night but less than a week, indicating a strong preference for short breaks in Ireland rather than longer holidays.
- Visitors from Australasia were the most likely to be staying for an extended period, with around a third staying for more than 2 weeks (33% in Dublin and 35% in Belfast).
- The next longest staying visitors are North Americans (10% in Dublin and 13% in Belfast).
- When asked about travel between the North and South, 16% of visitors in Dublin had also visited Belfast, while 32% of visitors in Belfast had also visited Dublin. Again, it was North American and Australasian visitors who had visited both cities in significant proportions.
- The average international visitor to Dublin is spending €606 in the city during their stay. This ranges from €224 for visitors on a day trip, up to €3,020 for those staying more than two weeks.
- The average visitor to Belfast is spending €358 in the city during their stay. This ranges from €123 for day-trippers to €3,874 for those staying for more than two weeks.
- Tourist spend on shopping is worth potentially €796.8m/£580m to retailers North and South.

Key recommendations for this report include:

- The establishment of a North-South Retail Forum to bring together key retail business groups and relevant Ministers to ensure effective communication and policy changes
- Promoting Cross-Border Weekend Shopping Breaks for Dublin, Belfast and other shopping destinations on the island
- Including the promotion of town centres and Retail as a core part of the Tourism Strategy of both Tourism NI and Fáilte Ireland
- Putting in place a strong Town Centre First Retail Planning Policy
- Launching a campaign across Ireland to non-EU Shoppers regarding VAT back entitlements
- Further promoting the new British-Irish visa arrangements to attract visitors from outside the EU

About this Report

In September 2014, RSM McClure Watters Consulting (Belfast) and RSM Farrell Grant Sparks (Dublin) were commissioned by Retail Excellence Ireland and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association to conduct research into a North-South Approach to Retail.

Funding for the report came from the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade's, Reconciliation Fund. The research comprised of a questionnaire conducted by researchers on the street with 502 visitors in Belfast and Dublin, along with a qualitative telephone questionnaire conducted with 40 border-based retailers.



[^] Greg Murtagh (left) with Noel Allen of Boost Drinks.

Growing Sales for Boost Drinks

Boost Drinks is enjoying fantastic growth in both sales and market share in Northern Ireland. NIIRTA Member Greg Murtagh, who manages a store on Boucher Road in Belfast and says that Boost makes a huge contribution in terms of volume and profit. "It gives me a real edge", he explains, "and is actually our top-selling soft drinks brand!"

This shop is around 1,700 square feet, serving builders and passing trade in a heavily industrialised area of the city that is currently subject to huge investment in terms of construction. Fuel, confectionery, soft drinks and the deli are all main categories.

Greg stocks all five 250ml 49p PMP cans, including the new flavours of Exotic Fruits, Sugar Free Pink Lemonade and Citrus Zing, but his single best seller is Boost Original – of which he sells 240 units a week. He also sells the three Sport varieties. The 1litre Original also sells well – particularly from the chiller. In total, the store sells over 600 units of Boost a week!

"The guys at Boost are really supportive and help us in a whole host of ways from sampling activity, to merchandising, to content for our Facebook page! They really give meaning to their Champion of the Independents initiative, both in terms of our business partnership and also by providing us with a competitive edge, and products that the consumer cannot get in any multiples!"

Facebook is a key driver of new customers for Greg and so he is really benefitting from Boost's very active social media programme. The latest initiative is the Bad Things Happen When You're Tired campaign. Keeping with a humorous, irreverent approach, Boost will be highlighting the negative situations that can arise when people are not sufficiently alert.

For further information about Boost visit www.Boostdrinkstrade.com or follow Boost on Twitter @BoostDrinksNews.



NIIRTA comments on Belfast bus lane enforcement

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association has urged shoppers travelling by car into Belfast City Centre to be aware of the new bus lane enforcement fines which have recently been introduced.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“Shoppers who travel by car need to be aware of these new fines being introduced and we would urge them to observe the bus lane restriction”

“We would strongly encourage the DRD not to be over zealous in their approach as Belfast City Centre needs to be open to shoppers who use their cars just as much as for those who use public transport, cycle or walk”

“A congested Belfast City Centre is in no one’s interest and we need to ensure that it is open and accessible for shoppers and tourists alike”

Hospitality sector has potential to deliver up to 5,000 new jobs over the next 10 years

Hospitality Ulster - the organisation which has developed from Pubs of Ulster, representing pubs, restaurants and hotels - has said that the hospitality sector in Northern Ireland has the potential to create up to 5,000 new jobs in the next 10 years.

That would bring the number of people employed in the food and drink element of the hospitality sector to around 50,000.

Speaking at the launch of Hospitality Ulster, Chief Executive Colin Neill was confident that a hospitality sector which develops its skills base and becomes more professional in its approach to business will make a greater contribution to the NI economy in terms of jobs, wealth creation and investment.

Hospitality Ulster will represent the entire sector under one umbrella membership organisation and will provide a range of support services and resources such as legal advice, updates on regulation changes, property information and accountancy issues among others.

As a lead industry voice, Hospitality Ulster will also continue to be a strong advocate for the sector in terms of influencing government, working with stakeholders and ensuring that the sector identifies and removes barriers to growth.

Latest key statistics of the Hospitality Sector:

- 1 in 20 jobs in Northern Ireland;
- £70.5 million payments in Corporation Tax (Pubs (£16.2m), Hotels (£19m), Restaurants (£35.1m) and Event Management (£0.1m));
- 60,000 total jobs (Direct, Indirect and Induced) – 45,000 can be attributed to food and drink element;
- £653.4million wage contribution of the hospitality sector (Direct, Indirect and Induced);
- Contributes £17.9m in business rates in Northern Ireland.

^Statistics taken from Hospitality Ulster commissioned report by Oxford Economics ‘Economic Impact Assessment of NI’s hospitality sector’ – May 2015



^ Finance Minister Arlene Foster, Pubs of Ulster CEO Colin Neill and First Minister Peter Robinson

Colin Neill, Hospitality Ulster, Chief Executive said:

“The hospitality sector is a key pillar of our economy. Not only does it support around 60,000 total jobs of which 45,000 are sustained by the food and drink element, it supports £653million in wages and contributes to the Northern Ireland economy to the tune of about £1.2billion.”

“This is an exciting time for the hospitality industry as we have evolved to create an organisation which better represents our members and their businesses.”

“Despite the loss of jobs during the economic downturn and sluggish growth recently, we now have the opportunity to really improve upon a sector which has so much promise. Weak projected growth over the next decade is growth nonetheless and it is up to us to bring forward a solution to buck the forecast estimates.”

“The evolution to Hospitality Ulster reflects the changes in our members’ businesses and the potential to support areas of the sector which were previously under-represented.”

“Hospitality Ulster has set up a strategic advisory panel made up of key players from the hospitality sector to assist in developing the industry. We look forward to continuing to work with government to help create more jobs, more wealth and contribute even more to the local economy.”

“Our ongoing campaigns such on cutting Tourism VAT, reducing red tape and business rates, licensing reform, promoting café culture and food hygiene ratings legislation, among others, will now be strengthened with the creation of the Hospitality Ulster umbrella brand.”

Olga Walls, Hospitality Ulster, Chair and Owner of The Derg Arms in Castleterg added:

“This is an exciting time for the hospitality industry as we have evolved to create an organisation which better represents our members and their businesses.”

“We recognise that pubs, hotels and restaurants here have undergone significant changes over the past number of years and as the voice of that collective industry we aim to promote the work of our members to safeguard and protect their businesses.”

“Adapting to consumer trends and the ever shifting economic climate is essential to ensuring a vibrant sector. Recently we have studied the industry and listened to our members. Where once our license type described our business as a place to drink, eat or sleep, today the sector operates a multitude of business models based on much more.”



Belfast One Launches Draft Plan

By Belfast BID Manager Claire Maguire

Rewind to 1970, the struggling town centre businesses of Bloor West Village, Toronto decided action was needed to revitalise their town; attract shoppers back from out-of-town shopping centres; and essentially save their businesses. In order to take matters into their own hands, the business owners successfully lobbied for legislation and eventually founded the first Business Improvement District/Area, pioneering what is now a globally successful concept. Today, 45 years later, the Bloor West Village BIA is still demonstrating its success in improving the trading environment for local businesses.

The Business Improvement District (BID) model is now truly international, with BIDs demonstrating their successes in countries such as USA, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and of course the UK. The legislation enabling the formation of BIDs was passed in England and Wales in 2003, in Scotland in 2006, and in the Republic of Ireland in 2007; there are now over 200 established BIDs across the UK.

The Northern Irish BID legislation was passed through Stormont in 2014. Recognising the important role BIDs are playing in towns and cities across the UK, The Department for Social Development (DSD), commissioned a programme to support the introduction of BIDs in NI, supporting six pilot

locations, of which Belfast City Centre is one, through the development process by way of a BIDs Academy.

The development of the Belfast City Centre BID – Belfast One – is being facilitated by Belfast City Centre Management, who employed a dedicated development manager, Clare Maguire, in October 2014. Immediately Clare, under the guidance of the NI BIDs Academy, set up a BID Task Team to represent the BID study area, both by business sector and geographically. The team, chaired by independent business owner Chris Suitor, has been meeting regularly for the last six months to guide the development process, and help to interpret and refine the results of the consultation.

Indeed the BID development process is dominated by consultation with the businesses within the BID area, and this is why it can take up to a year to develop a BID business plan. Thorough and meaningful consultation is crucial to the success of a BID; businesses know best how their business could be improved and so instead of imposing projects and ideas, Belfast One is asking businesses to tell them, based on experience, what Belfast City Centre could be doing better. The consultation has included surveys, a workshop programme, one-to-one business meetings and much more, with the aim of giving businesses as many opportunities as possible to get involved in the process.



NIIRTA Welcomes Ballymena BID Vote

The information gathered to date has been consolidated into a Draft Summary Business Plan which was launched for consultation on Tuesday 30th June 2015, at an information evening in Ten Square Hotel. The plan focuses on three main themes, which have emerged as being common priorities across all city centre businesses:

- Promote: to increase the number of people who visit Belfast City Centre – for business, for retail and for leisure;
- Enhance: to ensure that everyone who visits Belfast City Centre has a first class experience; and
- Support: to drive down business costs and provide practical support and help to all businesses within the BID area.

The Draft Summary Business Plan is the final stage of consultation and it is hoped that many more businesses will engage in the process and give feedback on the plan. This is an opportunity for Belfast City Centre to go from good to great, and we at Belfast One would ask all businesses to get behind the BID and help to shape the future of this city!

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) has welcomed the vote to establish the first Business Improvement District (BID) in Northern Ireland. Town Centre traders in Ballymena voted in favour of establishing a BID scheme.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“NIIRTA has long campaigned for the establishment of BIDs in Northern Ireland and we are delighted that Ballymena traders have shown real leadership for their town, by voting in favour of the proposed scheme”

“BIDs are all about giving town centre traders more power to shape their town centre and to make it a more attractive place to visit for consumers”

“We look forward to the other six areas establishing their schemes”

Business Improvement Districts -

Increased investment for ambitious places?

By Peter Day Ballymena BID Manager

Although town and city centres have existed for hundreds of years they need to evolve and adapt continually if they are to remain competitive. Fundamental to this will be an increase in investment. To achieve this, there needs to be engagement with, and support to, self-reliant and proactive business communities by developing easily accessible mechanisms which offer them freedom, money and the opportunity to manage their own local issues. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) offer businesses clarity and control and therefore the incentive to engage. These models already have a proven track record of success. Since the introduction of BIDs in England and Wales in 2004, over 100,000 businesses have engaged in the process and chosen to give over £300m to support additional investment in their locations.

Since 2007, Ballymena businesses have been working together with each other and a range of supporting organisations to make Ballymena town centre better for business. It's no surprise that the ambitious and innovative traders in the town have delivered the first Business Improvement District in Northern Ireland! When the Northern Ireland BIDs legislation became live in July 2014 Ballymena was quick off the mark surveying local businesses on ideas for town centre improvements. The survey information was collated, debated and refined further at a series of business workshops. The information from the workshops, survey and from one to one meetings with local businesses formed the basis of the first draft of the Business Improvement District Plan.

This Plan was developed by a task team representing 14 local businesses. The 14 businesses represented the sectoral mix in the town. As 74% of business in Ballymena is retail so was the membership of the task team. The task team gave local businesses the clarity and control of creating the BID plan and managing the BID process. Their efforts give the BID credibility and clarity of purpose. Their hard work discussing and promoting the draft plan ensured valuable feedback and amendments that fed into the final BID plan which was produced by February 2015. The sustained level of commitment and engagement from all local businesses



ensured that after a postal ballot lasting 6 weeks the Ballymena BID was voted in as a yes by local businesses. So, less than a year after starting off with a survey, 84% of local businesses voted yes by number and 88% by rateable value.

The resounding yes vote means that over the next five years Ballymena businesses will invest £1.5 million in their town centre. These are investments in marketing and promotion, addressing issues around accessibility and the physical environment and supporting town businesses. Importantly, Ballymena BID has also committed to sustaining a small but important Innovation Fund as part of the Plan, demonstrating the BID commitment to thinking creatively about the many challenges that lie ahead. All of this activity will be controlled and managed by a BID Board made up of local businesses who will invest in the BID.

Already things are looking good for Ballymena. Not only is the town Northern Ireland's first BID, formally launched with DSD Minister on 18th June and officially conducting business from 1st July, but a multi-million pound public realm scheme is underway to improve the town centre streetscape. A number of streets have also benefitted from DSD investment in shop front improvements through the Revitalise scheme. This investment is already paying dividends as in the first 6 months of 2015 over 12 new businesses have set up shop in Ballymena. The BID provides Ballymena businesses with a framework for them to evolve and adapt over the next five years, ensuring Ballymena remains a prosperous and competitive town into the future.

Find out everything you need to know about Ballymena BID by visiting www.ballymenabid.com.

The Northern Irish BID legislation was passed through Stormont in 2014. Recognising the important role BIDs are playing in towns and cities across the UK, The Department for Social Development (DSD), commissioned a programme to support the introduction of BIDs in NI, supporting six pilot locations, of which Belfast City Centre is one, through the development process by way of a BIDs Academy.



Contactless payments set to rise...

The use of contactless technology to pay for everyday goods and services is set to rise as Danske Bank has announced it has issued contactless debit cards to over 265,000 of its customers in Northern Ireland. Tony Wilcox, Danske Bank's Managing Director of Personal Banking, said:

"There is a growing expectation amongst consumers that card payments should be acceptable everywhere. Feedback from many of our customers clearly indicated a growing desire for contactless technology to also be made widely available and we have reacted to that demand".

While still a relatively new technology in Northern Ireland, the UK Cards Association say that more than 370 contactless transactions are made every minute in the UK, that is six every second – and the uptake in useage has more than tripled in the last year.

Contactless technology is a fast and easy way to pay for goods and services of £20 or under without having to enter a PIN. Contactless cards have an antenna in the plastic so that when they are used at a contactless reader they securely transmit purchase information to and from the contactless reader to make a payment. A number of banks in Northern Ireland offer contactless technology to customers, but Danske Bank's large scale migration project, providing the majority of their personal customers with such cards, is set to add further impetus towards changing consumer behaviour.

Ann McGregor, Chief Executive of the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the business benefits of contactless technology include "shorter queue times, reduced overheads and reduced costs per transaction".

Many well known high street retailers have already introduced contactless terminals in their stores, including the likes of Boots, Marks & Spencer, Lidl, McDonalds, Burger King and Costa. Tesco, Northern Ireland's biggest retailer, is also currently reviewing the introduction of contactless payment terminals.

Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive of the NI Independent Retail Trade Association, said many independent retailers are also already embracing contactless technology. He said:

"We very much welcome news that Danske Bank has issued contactless enabled debit cards to the majority of its customer base. Many of our members are forward thinking business people who already have the contactless payment terminals in place, however it is important that more is done to educate and encourage consumers to make use of this convenient facility".

After meeting with Danske Bank, Patsy McGlone MLA, Chair of the Stormont Enterprise committee, said he wanted to see more retailers encouraged to operate contactless payment terminals, saying that there was "clearly an increased potential for basket spend given that customers become no longer reliant on the change in their pockets".

Given the increasing popularity of contactless payments, the cards payment industry is already reviewing the agreed maximum contactless card transaction spend (£20), with a view to increasing it in the near future.

Pictured above: Tony Wilcox (Danske Bank) with Ann McGregor (NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry) and Glyn Roberts (NI Independent Retail Trade Association).

Danske Bank expects sustained growth in retail sector

Northern Ireland's retail sector is entering a period of sustained growth, but local independent retailers still need support from the public.

At the first in a new series of Danske Advantage events, Danske Bank said it had revised its growth forecast for the sector upwards to 4.6 per cent in 2015 from its earlier forecast of 4.3 per cent, with growth of 2.6 per cent predicted in 2016. Danske Bank held an event in partnership with the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA), which launched its annual Independents' Day campaign.

Danske has launched the Advantage series to give clients and prospective customers an opportunity to hear from leading speakers in industry sectors that will be key to the ongoing recovery of the local economy. The 'Leading the way for local retailers' event addressed the challenges and opportunities created by changing consumer demands, the role of town centres and the continued growth of online retailing.

Kevin Kingston, Danske Bank's Deputy CEO & Managing Director Business Banking said: "Banking and retail have much in common, particularly when it comes to dealing with

change. The retail sector is adapting to new realities, with many retailers now blending the best of what technology has to offer with the basic human need for community interaction. The online revolution has also changed how people do their banking and how they pay retailers. For example we now see more transactions done by smartphone than through any other channel and there was a 300 per cent rise in contactless payments made in the UK last year.

"We believe the economic landscape for retailers is only going to improve in the year ahead and Danske Bank is committed to supporting the growth and success of the local retail sector."

Danske Bank last year approved almost £200m in lending to the sector from small independents to the large multiples. It expects this to increase, noting that it has approved 30 per cent more in lending volumes to the sector in the first quarter of 2015 than the same quarter last year.

Glyn Roberts, CEO of NIIRTA, said: "It is fitting that Danske Bank decided to focus the first of its Advantage events on the retail sector as it is the largest sector of the Northern



Ireland Economy. With the right assistance, independent retailers can be at the cutting edge of the new private sector economy.”

Also addressing the breakfast event, Social Development Minister Mervyn Storey MLA said: “Over the last five years my Department has invested over £100 million in our town and city centres to improve their physical appearance. My Department has undertaken Public Realm Programmes, Comprehensive Development Schemes, provided Urban Development Grants and have carried out a range of activities to help reverse economic and physical decline.

“This year’s Independents’ Day campaign will, once again, serve to promote and celebrate independent retailers, and highlight the significant contribution and commitment that they make in regenerating and reinvigorating our town centres. I fully support the campaign and I know that those taking part in the initiative will continue with the good work they do on a day and daily basis to promote and support their local retailers.”

The event, chaired by Jim Fitzpatrick, also heard from an expert panel of experts including Pete Boyle, owner of Argento, and Colin Conway from Newell Stores.

The discussion ranged from the use of online sales and social media to drive sales, to town centre regeneration and the pressures facing retailers from rising rents and rates. An audience poll conducted by Turning Technologies on instant electronic voting technology showed 39 per cent of those who voted said online sales were critical to their businesses, while websites and social media were key tools for 57 per cent of attendees. The audience of retailers also said political stability would be the best thing government could do to support the retail industry, with 44 per cent saying it was the top priority.

< Pictured at a Danske Bank Advantage event entitled Leading the Way for Local Retailers are Kevin Kingston, Deputy CEO of Danske Bank; Colin Conway from Newell Stores; Social Development Minister Mervyn Storey; Pete Boyle, owner of Argento; and NIIRTA CEO Glyn Roberts. NIIRTA also launched their annual Independents’ Day campaign at the event.

“We believe the economic landscape for retailers is only going to improve in the year ahead...”

NIIRTA Outlines Changes To Business Rates

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) outlined new priorities for future Business Rates policy at its recent Rates Seminar.

Speaking at the seminar, NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“Business Rates is our number one priority in 2015, particularly in supporting our members who have lost out in the current Revaluation process”

“While Corporation Tax directly supports larger businesses, which is to be welcomed, more support is needed to support our indigenous local businesses with sensible reforms to our rating system”

“We face a perfect storm of challenges such as the Revaluation, Rates Convergence of the eleven Councils, the future of the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme and a wider review of Rating Policy. Therefore we would urge the Finance Minister to establish a Business Rates Advisory Forum, made up of businesses representatives to advise and act as a touchstone group on the impact of any changes”

“NIIRTA wants the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme to be extended from the current £15k NAV qualifying figure to £17k NAV by 2017 –bringing even more small businesses in to the discount scheme”

“The Empty Premises Relief Scheme, which has helped to create nearly 400 new businesses by giving them 50% rate relief in their vital first of trading, needs to continue”



JOIN NI'S **FINEST** AT RETAIL'S BIGGEST NIGHT

Judging is now underway for the Neighbourhood Retailer Awards 2015, and with over 450 entries, this year's ceremony will be the biggest yet.

Table bookings are hitting an unprecedented rate, as independents, groups, and industry figures join the rush for seats at this celebration of NI's grocery industry.

The red carpet will be laid out on October 16 for the champagne reception to greet those attending the awards ceremony before a sensational gala dinner with fine wines and soaring live entertainment.

After the success of last year, the 2015 Neighbourhood Retailer Awards return to the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Belfast for their 16th annual outing.

Among the brightest lights in the convenience sector will be top decision-makers from NI's biggest symbol groups, wholesalers, oil companies and suppliers - making this the most essential networking opportunity of the year.

The awards have attracted a deluge of high-calibre entries from both established and new retailers, all of which are hoping to hop on stage and take home one or more of the prestigious



Pearce Kelly, of Kelly's Eurospar Moneymore, accepting the Retailer of the Year award at last year's ceremony

awards, and with it, recognition and respect from the industry's biggest players.

The awards have been thoroughly supported over their 16-year history, and this year is no different, with leaders in their respective fields - such as Philip Morris, Nestle Professional, Nestle Cereals, Cuisine de France, Note Machine, JTI,

Sales Placement, PRM, Imperial Tobacco, and United Wine Merchants - already joining the list of significant sponsors of this year's award categories.

Bill Penton, publisher of Neighbourhood Retailer and organiser of the NR Awards said: "These awards are about recognising and rewarding innovative retailers who consistently strive to offer first-class customer service to local people.

"Each award undergoes a stringent and wholly independent judging process, so taking home one of these awards means a lot to every winner.

"The ceremony is also a fabulous celebration where people can relax and enjoy an evening with colleagues and friends."

He added: "Local retailers make a major economic contribution to cities, towns and villages across NI and are an integral part of neighbourhood communities. It's fantastic to see that hard work recognised." **nr**

ALL EYES ON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



One of the most talked-about awards at last year's Neighbourhood Retailer Awards was the Lifetime Achievement Award, and speculation is rife over who will take this year's title.

2014 saw the category's inaugural outing, and its first winner, Belfast retailer Niall Creighton (pictured), received an emotional standing ovation from the 500-strong crowd at the ceremony.

The Lifetime Achievement Award, this year sponsored by PRM, acknowledges work carried out over the course of the recipient's career and is open to owners, entrepreneurs, educators, managers and innovators that have made a difference within Northern Ireland's retail industry.

Unlike other awards, there is no entry form and winners are not nominated. The recipient is decided upon each year by senior staff at Neighbourhood Retailer and the name of the winner remains a closely guarded secret until the gala evening itself.

Speculation has already begun about who is in the running for the accolade this year, as the country's retail sector gets ready for the biggest night of the year.

TO BOOK A TABLE, CONTACT PAMELA BEERS ON 02890 457 457 OR VISIT NEIGHBOURHOODRETAILER.COM FOR MORE DETAILS.

NORTHERN IRELAND'S BIGGEST RETAIL INDUSTRY AWARDS



BOOK TODAY

NORTHERN IRELAND'S
NEIGHBOURHOOD
RETAILER
awards 2015

Supported by



Gala Awards Dinner
Ramada Plaza, Belfast
Friday October 16th, 2015

- Champagne reception • Gala dinner with fine wines • Awards ceremony
- Entertainment • Perfect networking opportunity

RESERVE YOUR TICKET TODAY

Single ticket - £95+VAT Table of 10 - £925+VAT Dress - Formal

Contact: Pamela Beers on the Neighbourhood Retailer Awards
hotline 028 9045 7457 or email: pamela.beers@pentonpublications.co.uk

Subway - The Perfect Partnership

The SUBWAY® brand is one of the most popular franchise opportunities, with more than 43,000 SUBWAY® stores worldwide in over 105 countries. Recently, it celebrated the opening of its 2,000th SUBWAY® store in the UK and Ireland and is actively seeking new franchisees to be part of the success story as it continues its expansion.

With 87 SUBWAY® stores currently located in Northern Ireland, the brand is planning for six additional stores in the region this year and 100 stores in total by the end of 2016. The SUBWAY® brand sees this growth not only from high street locations, retail parks and shopping centres, but also from non-traditional locations, including within convenience stores, on petrol forecourts or at transport hubs, universities and hospitals.

There are currently opportunities available for convenience store and forecourt operators to partner with the franchise and open an outlet within an existing store. Partnering with the SUBWAY® brand provides excellent dual branding opportunities, high rental returns and increased customer market share.



SUBWAY® Development Agent for Northern Ireland, Adam Heyes commented: "The level of growth that the SUBWAY® brand has experienced in the UK and Ireland is a fantastic achievement. Celebrating the 2,000th store in the UK and Ireland reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of our franchisees, together with the power and support of the global SUBWAY® brand. Expansion in Northern Ireland is going strong and we are looking forward to opening another six stores throughout 2015."

Partnership Opportunities

We're hungry for even more stores across the UK and Ireland

➔ As a franchisee, a SUBWAY® store can offer you:

- On-going training and support
- Regional and national marketing activity
- Proven control systems
- Waste managed at less than 1%

➔ As a landlord, a SUBWAY® store can offer you:

- Excellent dual branding opportunities
- High rental returns
- Increased customer market share
- Flexibility in terms of space and design



For more information or to submit a location for consideration please visit

www.subway.co.uk/property

For further enquiries please email

Caroline Thomson and Alice Chalmers
development@subway.co.uk

Over 2,000 SUBWAY® stores
now open in the UK and Ireland

Over 450 outlets now open
in non-high street locations
including convenience stores,
forecourt sites, transport hubs
and visitor attractions



© 2015 Doctor's Associate Inc. SUBWAY® is a registered trademark of Doctor's Associate Inc.

NEW
POTATO
BRAND



**You Say
Potato™**


**WE SAY CONVENIENT
PRODUCTS THAT
DELIVER GREAT
PROFITS**

For more information please contact Denise on
(028) 3839 1029 or email info@yousaypotato.com

www.yousaypotato.com



You Say Potato is part of
Wilson's Country Ltd



Keeping Northern Ireland on the path to a low carbon economy.

Natural gas produces virtually no sulphur dioxide and 25% less carbon dioxide than heating oil.

Indeed, in the 17 years since the natural gas industry established itself here Phoenix customers across business, public sector and domestic households, have helped prevent over 3.1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere - equal to removing over 1 million cars from Northern Ireland's roads for a full year.

Into the future, natural gas has an important role, alongside renewable technologies, in helping to further reduce Northern Ireland's carbon footprint as well as continuing to provide a solid foundation for the local economy.

www.phoenixnaturalgas.com

Call us for more information
08454 55 55 55*

 **PHOENIX**
NATURAL GAS

*Calls may be recorded or monitored. Calls cost from 3p per minute from a BT landline. Calls from other phone networks may vary.