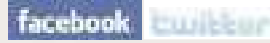


NIIRTAnews

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BANBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE - SAVED!



Banbridge traders hail historic second win for town centre

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association and Banbridge Chamber of Commerce have hailed the decision of Environment Minister Edwin Poots in accepting the Planning Appeals Decision to uphold the Planning Service rejection of the 130,000 sq ft out of town Tesco Hypermarket in Bridgewater Park outside Banbridge.

The proposed hypermarket would have been Tesco's largest store on the island of Ireland and was furiously opposed by the Save Banbridge Town Centre Campaign which included NIIRTA, Banbridge Chamber, Federation of Small Businesses, the Ulster Chemists' Association and a petition signed by over 3000 local people.

Retail history has been made as this is one of the largest Tesco stores in the UK and Ireland ever to be denied planning permission after a successful campaign from local traders.

In a joint statement, Glyn Roberts NIIRTA Chief Executive and Joe Quail, Vice President of Banbridge Chamber of Commerce said: "This is the right result for Banbridge, not just for local traders, but the future viability of its town centre and the safeguarding against the loss of hundreds of jobs from local traders who simply could not have competed on a fair and equitable basis with such a massive out of town store."

"If this proposed hypermarket had been given the go ahead it would have resulted in retail devastation for Banbridge Town Centre and many neighbouring towns and villages. This view has now been fully vindicated by both the DOE Planning Service and the independent Planning Appeals Commission."

"This was a David versus Goliath battle where our members took on not just the largest retailer in the UK, but also the largest property developer in the UK and succeeded in stopping Banbridge being turned into a tumble weed town."

"Let us be very clear about our campaign -it was never about keeping Tesco out of Banbridge. Both our organisations put forward a fair compromise that the existing Banbridge Town Centre store, which has planning permission to double in size could do just that. The current Tesco store location fits very well into the Town Centre and plays a vital role in the Banbridge retail offer and should merit serious consideration by them."

"We want to work with Tesco and the Outlet Centre to ensure that Banbridge Town Centre can continue to attract more shoppers from across this island and be a centre of retail excellence"

"Both NIIRTA and Banbridge

Chamber of Commerce congratulate Edwin Poots for making the right decision for the future of Banbridge Town Centre."

Des Stephens MD of Matrix Planning who advised both NIIRTA and Banbridge Chamber throughout the two year battle said: "This public inquiry would not have been necessary if the new stricter draft Retail Planning Policy PPS5, which has been promised for 7 years, had been published by the Planning Service. This would provide greater protection to existing town centres and ensure their survival against the daily onslaught of huge out of town retail developments which are being submitted in many towns across Northern Ireland. The same situation had prevailed in the mainland until the introduction of PPS6 to stem the flow of out of town developments and provide greater protection to town centres."

Environment Minister Edwin Poots MLA, who has decided to follow the PAC advice, said "While the store would have brought added business and jobs to the retail park, it would have had potentially ruinous consequences on Banbridge town itself.

"We always want to ensure that we don't take any decision that would led to the dereliction of town centres," said Mr Poots.

"This was not a straightforward decision, as it would also have an impact on the shopping outlet, bringing extra business to it. But the case was pretty strong from the PAC that it would have a significantly detrimental effect on Banbridge town centre."

John Friel, FSB Regional Chair: "The Federation of Small Businesses welcomes the decision taken by Minister Poots. "This has been a very difficult year for many small businesses and this move will afford traders in Banbridge town centre some much needed breathing space at this crucial time."

"The FSB believes the future economic prosperity of Northern Ireland is intrinsically linked to the local town centre and high street and we are calling for a more joined up approach by the various government agencies, departments and Ministers aimed at the regeneration of town centres across Northern Ireland. Small businesses generate wealth,

employment and opportunity. Sadly, these valued services are under threat from a variety of sources, and in towns and villages all over Northern Ireland, small businesses and local shops are disappearing or facing closure."

Jim Wells MLA , DUP Assembly Member said: "Had this application been granted it would have decimated town centres throughout South Down. The proposed store was projected to generate sales of £70 million per annum - more than the total income of all the shops in Banbridge and Rathfriland combined."

"It would have been the largest Tesco store in the island of Ireland and due to the size of the Outlet site, it could easily have been expanded, causing further damage to the retail base of an even wider area."

"I am very pleased that the worrying trend of the big multi national supermarket chains draining the lifeblood out of our town centres has been halted and I hope that similar applications throughout Northern Ireland will also be refused. Hopefully this part of the United Kingdom will not now follow the trend in England where so many town centres have been blighted by dereliction caused by huge out of town shopping complexes."

James McKay, President of Ulster Chemists' Association: "This is a very pleasing decision not only for traders but it also sends out the correct message to the NI Assembly about how we should be supporting SMEs in the current climate."

"Town centre retailers are the backbone of the community. The standards and competition that exist in Northern Ireland between local retailers provide the local consumer with a fantastic range of goods but in addition and most importantly with an unrivalled level of service, which large stores struggle to replicate."

"We are pleased that in this instance the pharmacies and indeed patients under their care in Banbridge have been protected from the threat that this out of town development posed to existing services. On behalf of the Ulster Chemists Association I wish to congratulate NIIRTA and the retailers of Banbridge on their collective efforts with the Save Banbridge Town Centre campaign."

NIIRTA meets the deputy First Minister on Economy



(from left to right) Glyn Roberts,(CEO NIIRTA), Paddy Doody (NIIRTA Chair), Peter Carrington (Chair Lisburn Road Traders), Martin McGuinness MP, Paul Stewart (NIIRTA President), Gerard O'Hanlon (Omagh Chamber President) and Rowan Black (NIIRTA Board member)

A senior delegation from the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Association met with the Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP MLA.

The delegation, which also included Gerard O'Hanlon President of Omagh Chamber of Commerce and Peter Carrington, Chair of the Lisburn Road Business Association discussed the need for greater focus on a joined approach to Town Centre Regeneration, Retail Planning and the role of the independent sector in rebuilding the local economy.

Speaking after the meeting, NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

"This was a very productive meeting with the Deputy First Minister at which we discussed the need to tackle the threat faced to our town centres by over a 1 million sq ft of out of town supermarket applications and the reform of our planning system to create a level playing field for both the independent and multiple sectors."

"Town centre regeneration is so vital not just in rebuilding our economy, but also for providing shared space for local communities. Three government departments currently have a responsibility for it - NIIRTA suggested to the dFM the need for an Executive sub-committee on Town Centre Regeneration to be established."

"Effective co-ordination in this area is crucial and we think this sub-committee and the urgent publication of draft PPS5 could be constructive."

"Given that our members alone employ in excess of 20,000 staff and have a turnover of over £3 Billion to the local economy we need to have a level playing field and the right policy framework in place to allow our sector to grow and help move our economy out of recession."

Banbridge - What Next?

Department of Environment Minister, Edwin Poots delivered a fabulous result for independent store holders across the Province on Wednesday by refusing the 130,000 sqft Tesco Megastore at Bridgewater Park, Banbridge.

This is testimony to the hard work of Northern Ireland Independent Retail Traders Association (NIIRTA), the Banbridge Traders, Asitis Consulting and Matrix Planning Consultancy LLP who have worked tirelessly over the last two years to secure this victory - but what does the future hold?

Tesco have remained tight lipped about how they intend to proceed since the decision was revealed, but there are several options that are currently on the table. The most appropriate has to be the taking up of their existing 2005 approval to increase the size of the Castlewellsan Road Store by 50%, but there is always the possibility of a smaller proposal in the future at Bridgewater Park or a Judicial Review of the current decision.

In any case Retail Planning Policy needs to be much tighter to prevent such proposals even getting to a Public Enquiry in the first instance. Whilst draft PPS 5 is currently held up by a Judicial Review I would urge you continue lobbying your local MLAs of the dangers of large out of town developments and how they have no place in Northern Ireland and support traders in many other towns who have continued fights against the large retail multiples.

Matrix Planning Consultancy LLP are currently representing the local traders at many sites across the Province and provide planning advice on Advertisements, Appeals, Applications, Enforcement, Industrial, Retail, Residential, Rural Development, Telecommunications, Transport and Waste & Minerals.

For further details contact Des or Andy Stephens @ Matrix Planning Consultancy LLP on 028 9182 8375 or 07974 199 045





NIIRTA & ATCM welcome town centre report

Andrew Irvine Chair ATCM, Simon Hamilton MLA, Chair of Social Development Committee and Glyn Roberts

In a joint statement the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association and the Association of Town Centre Management have strongly welcomed the NI Assembly Social Development Committee Report on Town Centre Regeneration.

Both NIIRTA and ATCM gave extensive oral and written evidence to the committee enquiry that was included in the final report conclusions which was debated in the Assembly on Monday 2nd November.

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive and Andrew Irvine, Chair of ATCM in Northern Ireland said:

“Both our organisations strongly welcome the conclusions of this report which reflects our main policy priorities for Town Centre Regeneration in Northern Ireland”

“Key areas of our policy agenda such as promoting a Town Centre first approach to major retail developments in line with draft PPS5, greater cross departmental co-operation, a town centre regeneration fund, the introduction of Business Improvement Districts and addressing the issue of car parking are all in this report’s recommendations”

“As it stands at the present, our town centres across Northern Ireland are under major threat from over 1 million sq foot of out of town multiple retail applications”

“If we get the right policy framework in place to support our town centres they can become engines of economic growth, supporting new retailers, new jobs and serving local and international consumers. Quite simply we want to see an economic and social renaissance of our town and city centres. We will be seeking an early meeting with Minister Ritchie to encourage her to implement the report’s recommendations.”

Social Development Committee Chairperson, Simon Hamilton MLA said: “Northern Ireland is famous for its historic towns and growing cities, where for generations local communities have worked and shopped together. In recent years, some of these towns have been lacking in economic vitality. It is crucial that this is addressed. We want to see councils and town centre management partnerships given the support and funding they need to bring life and energy back to our town centres. The Committee is particularly keen to see Business Improvement Districts established throughout Northern Ireland – these voluntary limited-life organisations have a proven track record in providing regeneration services to business ratepayers.”

He continued: “The Committee was concerned to hear hard-working regeneration bodies, outside the main population centres in Northern Ireland,

complain about geographical bias. The Committee wants this to be addressed by the reorganisation of regeneration funding. The Committee wants a competitive Town Centre Regeneration Fund to which voluntary and statutory bodies could apply. The Fund would transparently provide finance to the best regeneration projects, which are in sympathy with local master plans throughout Northern Ireland. As a scheme like this has addressed geographical bias in Scotland, the Committee wants to replicate its success over here and bring the benefits of town centre regeneration to all parts of Northern Ireland.”

He added: Practical regeneration support for our towns and growing cities should be a priority for the Department for Social Development. Given the importance of this issue and the significant related expenditure, the Committee was surprised to learn that the Department does not have an overarching strategy for town centre regeneration or a strong evaluation framework. The Committee hopes that this report will lead to a renewal of the Department’s approach to town centre regeneration, the provision of ring-fenced funding and securing of longer term economic and social benefits for the citizens of all our towns and growing cities.”

Gildernew meets with independent retailers

Agriculture Minister Michelle Gildernew MP MLA has met with a delegation of local retailers from NIIRTA.



Joe Quail, Paul Stewart, Michelle Gildernew MP MLA, Paddy Doody and Glyn Roberts

The delegation was led by the NI Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) Chief Executive, Glyn Roberts, Chairman Paddy Doody, President, Paul Stewart and NIIRTA member Joe Quail. At the meeting, NIIRTA briefed the Minister on its support for local farmers and producers through their local sourcing policies and for the Rural White Paper and Rural Champion strategies.

Following the meeting, the Minister said: “As local Agriculture Minister, I am very committed to facilitating better linkages between the various parts of the food chain. As part of this process, I have encouraged retailers to work more closely with the agri-food industry and to take account of increased input costs faced by producers. In this respect, NIIRTA has shown its commitment to the local farming communities through its members’ local sourcing policies. These will contribute to a more sustainable agri-food industry in the north of Ireland.

“Local supply chains are vital to our economy and I am very

keen to expand and enhance them. Increasing co-operation regarding sourcing is in everyone’s interests and I will continue to support the local food chain in any way I can.”

Following the meeting, Glyn Roberts commented: “This was a very productive meeting with Minister Gildernew where we stressed our members’ ongoing commitment to supporting local farmers and producers by sourcing nearly 100% local meat and poultry. The Independent Food Retail Sector is a vital route to market for many farmers and producers and we would urge the Executive as a whole to ensure that they give every support to the sector.”

Mr Roberts added: “It is also important that our members have an input into the Rural White Paper and Rural Champion strategies, as many of them are the backbone of the rural economy and make a valuable contribution to many rural communities. We indicated to the Minister our support for her approach and the willingness to be involved in this process.”





Glyn Roberts, Jim Wells MLA, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee and James McKay UCA President

NIIRTA & Ulster Chemists' Association Form New Community Business Alliance

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association and the Ulster Chemists' Association have formed a new Community Business Alliance to promote the health and wellbeing of the local community, combat the threat to local community businesses and to campaign to reverse the decline of our town centres.

The new partnership was launched by Assembly Health Committee Chairman Jim Wells MLA.

In a joint statement Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive and James McKay UCA President said: "This new partnership will strengthen both organisations' lobbying role and help us towards achieving our common policy priorities."

"UCA and NIIRTA members are community retailers and have a key role in promoting the health & wellbeing of the local communities which they serve."

"NIIRTA food retail members provide an easy and accessible source of fresh fruit and vegetables to local communities for the vital 5-a-day which complements the role of community pharmacies in health promotion. Both organisations will work together to enhance the delivery of the

public health agenda to local communities served by respective memberships to include areas such as obesity management and smoking cessation."

"Both our organisations are keen to expand our 'Community Business Alliance' and hope to talk to other business groups in the near future."

Jim Wells MLA, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Assembly Health Committee said: "I welcome this timely new initiative by NIIRTA & UCA, particularly as the Health Committee will be shortly launching a report into tackling obesity and the need for people to adopt low salt, low sugar and low fat diets."

"It is therefore vital that local community shops provide the 5 a day, supported by the crucial role local pharmacies play in promoting public health."

Ulster Chemists' Association & Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association

Memorandum Of Understanding:
"Supporting Local Community Businesses"

Community pharmacy in Northern Ireland

Research has indicated that approx. 123,000 adults, both healthy and sick, visit Community Pharmacies in Northern Ireland every day. This equates to 9% of the adult population in Northern Ireland. Customers perceive the Pharmacist as trustworthy and open to questioning on various products or ailments.

Community pharmacy:

- provides a quality healthcare service within the community, accessible to all with no appointment necessary
- provides good quality employment, training & development within the community, often with flexible, family-friendly working terms.
- is a vital part of local business services provided within the community, such as the post office, newsagent, butcher or grocery shop

promote community pharmacy in Northern Ireland the public value the service provided by their community pharmacies:

- accessibility of a healthcare professional without an appointment
- support & advice supplied with the medicine dispensed
- good quality advice supplied with over the counter remedies
- minor ailments scheme
- availability within the community
- signposting to other healthcare professionals

The Ulster Chemists' Association (UCA)

The Ulster Chemists' Association represents 99% of community pharmacies in Northern Ireland supporting them to provide a high standard of patient care in their communities since 1901.

The UCA aims to:

protect community pharmacy in Northern Ireland. The sustainability and viability of community pharmacies in Northern Ireland are under threat from:

- a reduction in funding for NHS services
- increased regulatory requirements on the pharmacy profession
- increased pressure on the community pharmacy supply chain
- increasingly complex employment law for small businesses
- increased running costs

UCA & NIIRTA

- recognise the threat to the sustainability and viability of local community services, businesses and networks such as the community pharmacy, newsagent, grocer and post office
- recognise the need to improve town centres, through improved road networks and the increased provision of free parking, to support customer access to local businesses and improve footfall within town centres
- call upon the Northern Ireland Executive to do more to support small retailers and welcome the introduction of the small business rates relief scheme and recognise the need to further enhance this to include a wider pool of SMEs
- call upon the DOE to immediately publish draft PPS5 and implement a radical revision of the planning system to promote a town centre first approach for retail development
- call upon the DHSS&PS to extend the Change for Life Campaign which is promoting 5-a-day across England in local shops to Northern Ireland
- call for an immediate resolution to the current contract dispute and early re-engagement of the DHSS&PS into meaningful contract negotiations with community pharmacy



Public transport reform consultation launched

Transport Minister Conor Murphy MP MLA has launched a public consultation on proposals to reform the arrangements for the planning and delivery of public transport.

The Minister said: "I want to make public transport people's first choice, not last resort. Our public transport legislation is outdated – it is over 40 years since the last major revision. These significant reform proposals will ensure the provision of a customer-focused, high quality, integrated public transport system that will put a greater focus on delivering efficient, affordable services that are responsive to local needs.

The proposals reflect good practice and the lessons learned in other regions, while also meeting the requirements of new European legislation.

Mr Murphy continued: "In order to bring these changes about, it is proposed to establish a public transport agency, within the Department for Regional Development (DRD). The agency would be responsible for planning and specifying the public transport services required and for managing the contracts in order to achieve the best possible services for customers. The new arrangements will bring together within a single organisation, all the public transport functions that are currently spread across a number of divisions of DRD, the Department of the Environment and the publicly-owned operator, Translink. The new arrangements will provide greater clarity about roles and responsibilities in the transport sector.

"I have ruled out privatisation. Public transport will continue

to operate within a regulated system and Translink, as our publicly owned transport operator, will continue to be the main provider of public transport."

The reform programme will allow new arrangements that will benefit public transport users including:

- An improved focus on customers' travel needs, with the introduction of integrated local transport plans;
- Performance based contracts that would include measures of importance to customers – reliability, punctuality and customer service;
- Improved integration of timetables and ticketing between different transport modes and providers;
- The regulation of fares to ensure that increases are kept to a minimum and services are provided as efficiently as possible;
- Access to bus stations and shared facilities for private operators delivering public transport services;
- Improved operational and investment planning;
- An integrated approach to decision making on public transport and road space usage such as bus priority, park and ride, congestion, car parks and traffic management which will improve the public transport experience.

The Minister said: "I am committed to providing a modern, sustainable, safe public transportation system which benefits society, the economy and the environment, and which actively contributes to social inclusion and improving quality of life. There will be a series of public meetings across the North over the next few months and I would encourage the public to give their views on the reform proposals."

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said: "We welcome this important consultation as having an effective public transport system is vital to our members and for the development of our town centres"

"NIIRTA is currently developing its response to the consultation and would welcome the views of our membership in this area. Please email us your views at info@niirta.com"

Copies of the consultation documents are available on www.drdni.gov.uk, by telephoning 028 9054 0225 or by e-mailing publictransportreform@drdni.gov.uk.

There will be a series of public meetings during December 2009 and January 2010 to discuss the proposals – details are available on www.drdni.gov.uk and these will be advertised locally.

An outline business case, which examines the organisational options and the potential cost and benefits of the proposed new arrangements, is also available on the Department's website.

The consultation period begins on 9 November 2009 and closes at 5.00pm on Friday 5 February 2010.



Yet More Exciting New Services From Connect; Bigger and better

Belfast based Connect Communications is delighted to announce the launch of a new IP telephony product. 'Communicator' is an exciting new hosted IP Telephony (IPT) system designed for businesses that offers powerful features to reduce your total costs and improve the productivity and image of your business.



Matthew Brown (MD)

"It is the ideal business solution providing fully integrated future proof, reliable communications. Communicator offers a cost effective, flexible solution to your organisation's day-to-day communications requirements," said Robin Brown, Sales Director. "But costs aren't the sole driver, it's critical to present your company professionally at all times. Yet it's harder to retain control, with remote workers interacting with other businesses continually." There are many benefits with 'Communicator', which include:

Cost and productivity benefits

- Simple to use
- Lower call costs
- FREE calls between sites
- Minimal Infrastructure requirements
- No new PBX or major capital outlay
- Add extensions to systems easily and cost effectively
- Administer telephony through online control panels, saving manpower and management costs
- Hot desk with ease – accessing personal settings from any phone in the company, and when you're working from home
- Disaster Recovery provision

Advanced call features

- Fully customisable voicemail
- Auto-Attendant options ensure that calls are

always routed to the correct person

- Login and authentication to safeguard against unauthorised use
- Advanced group calling features to prioritise workload

With the simple plug and play technology Connect telecom has taken the hassle out of managing the hardware and installation of leading-edge telephony systems. Installation is quick and cost effective and as with all of Connect Telecom's IPT products, existing telephone numbers can be ported onto the service maximizing the flexibility and cost savings that IPT offers.

The right solution

The Communicator Telephone System is just one of the many new services offered by Connect. To deal with the demand for these new services, including fleet management, Connect has recently expanded its sales team by a third, with specialists in IT and fleet management joining the team. At Connect Telecom we are committed to providing the best service, independent advice and the best solution for you. Our expert team will work hard to improve the efficiency of your organization, while reducing costs through the selection of leading communication technologies and services. We look forward to discussing how we can improve your company's communications today.

Based on Connect Telecoms proven web-based GPS tracking software

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) describes lone workers as "those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision." This doesn't necessarily mean that they work by themselves all the time, but spend a large proportion of their time without close interaction with colleagues. Lone workers may be at greater risk of violence or accidents.

Lone workers include people who:

- Work away from their base, e.g. sales people, service engineers
- Visit other people in their homes, e.g. health care workers, social services
- Work outside in the community, e.g. environmental officers, probation officers
- Work outside normal hours or are the only person on the premises, e.g. shift or flexi-time workers, security workers improving

communication helps to reduce risks and may reduce the feeling of vulnerability.

Connects Personal Tracking Solution provides:

- A system for communicating back to base - using telephone, text or email
- A panic alarm to be used in case of emergency
- The facility to notify others when the worker has reached a specific location or returned home
- The GPS tracking software runs in the background of a single, small and compact PDA providing a discreet and convenient solution.

Other Devices are available, ranging from robust PDA units to a small user friendly device that can be worn around the neck or on a belt clip.

NIIRTA

Benefits of Membership

Do you have a News Story? Contact NIIRTA with the details and we'll cover it if we can!

What is NIIRTA?

It's not just a lobbying body – it's a trade association with an excellent range of services and benefits available to members.

What can NIIRTA do for you?

NIIRTA can provide retailers with advice on a whole range of issues – from rates reductions and car parking to crime prevention and legislation information.

Here's a list of what's on offer from NIIRTA...

NIIRTA News – a regular update on issues affecting you!

Public Affairs – NIIRTA is the voice at Government level on all issues affecting your business

NIIRTA Advice Helpline – Available 9.00-5.00 – Monday to Friday – for specific advice on employment and other issues.

BUPA Healthcare – available to all members and staff – Tel: 0800 328 3654

HCMA – a sickness and injury scheme similar to BUPA – contact NIIRTA for details or telephone 01423 866985 (and quote NIIRTA).

Willis Insurance – Property insurance at competitive rates – Contact NIIRTA or Ian McClure at Willis Insurance – 028 9089 5068 and mobile 07961 453303

Vehicle Leasing – Fleet Financial are offering members vehicle leasing with 18 per cent discount – contact Fleet Financial or NIIRTA

XACT – Health & Safety/Food Management System available at competitive rates – 'No Obligation' audit facility available to NIIRTA members. Contact Xact on 0845 665 3006.



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NIIRTA gives its support to IFEX

David Bell, Sales Director Crossgar Food Service, Caroline McGuinness, EXPO Events and Michael Murphy, Foodservice Director

Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) has pledged its support to IFEX, Northern Ireland's largest International Food, Drink, Hospitality and Retail Exhibition. Running from 23–25 March 2010, at the King's Hall, Belfast, IFEX 2010 is much more than the leading industry showcase; it is THE commercial and retail event that offers exhibitors an unrivalled opportunity to get their slice of the action and communicate with over 7,000 potential buyers.

Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive of NIIRTA comments: "We are delighted to be involved in this year's IFEX. It is truly a unique event that offers real opportunities. The Independent Food Retail Sector plays a huge role within the NI economy, employing in excess of 20,000 staff with a turnover of over £3 billion. Therefore its future survival and growth is vital. IFEX presents a great opportunity for all our 1,100 plus members to explore the new innovative products and services now available at the show which will ultimately benefit their future business."

Garret Buckley, Joint Managing Director of Expo Events adds: "When we reviewed the success of the 2008 IFEX event, we identified that the retail sector accounts for the highest percentage of visitors to IFEX. So, this year, when designing the

show, we have ensured that this very important sector is catered for. Having the support of NIIRTA and its members is fantastic and I hope that through our partnership we can deliver a successful event which is of real benefit to NIIRTA members."

Highlights such as, the New Product of the Show Awards, Seminar Programme, Chef Skills 2010, The Live Hot Kitchen and the wonderful Pub and Club Pavilion, will ensure that IFEX 2010 is set to be the focus of the food, drink, foodservice, and retail sectors. This year the Quick Service Restaurants will also be catered for with specific exhibitors showcasing the latest developments in technology.

The 2010 event will mark the 23rd IFEX anniversary with the King's Hall playing host to a comprehensive range of Irish and International products and services across the food, drink, hospitality and retail industries. Some of Ireland's biggest companies have already secured their exhibition space at IFEX, including Crossgar Foodservice, Northern Ireland Seafood (NIS), Lynas Foodservice and Golden Glen.

To secure your space at this year's IFEX please contact: Caroline McGuinness on 028 9068 3331 or email caroline.mcguinness@expo-events.com or visit the website www.ifexhibition.co.uk

Small Business Rate Relief Fact Sheet

The Small Business Rate Relief Scheme is a new Northern Ireland Government scheme. The aim is to support the growth and sustainability of small businesses in Northern Ireland. This fact sheet answers any questions that you may have about the scheme.



What is the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme?

The Small Business Rate Relief Scheme is a new Northern Ireland Government initiative that will provide some small business owners with rate relief.

Who is eligible?

Eligibility is based on the net annual value (NAV) of the business property. The net annual value is also known as the rateable value of a non domestic property.

There are two levels of Small Business Rate Relief:

1. Business properties with an NAV of £2,000 or less
2. Business properties with an NAV of more than £2,000 but not more than £5,000

How much relief will I receive?

The amount of relief you receive will be dependent on the net annual value (NAV) of your property:

1. Business properties with an NAV of £2,000 or less will receive a reduction of 50% relief
2. While those with an NAV of more than £2,000 but not more than £5,000 will receive 25% relief

The Small Business Rate Relief will provide an average relief of between £300 and £430 per year.

How do I apply?

There is no application procedure for the Small Business Rate Relief.

Instead, relief will be applied automatically by Land & Property Services to all businesses that qualify. This will make sure that all who are eligible will receive the benefit of the rate

relief immediately. There may be occasions, due to data quality issues, when we may not have the relevant information to apply the relief automatically, or we may have awarded it when it is not due. If you think that you should have been awarded the relief, or you believe you have been awarded it in error, please contact Land & Property Services immediately on 0845 300 6360.

When will I receive the Small Business Rate Relief?

Qualifying businesses will receive the relief on their April 2010 bill.

What sort of businesses qualify?

All business sectors are entitled. This is provided that the premises in question are within the net annual value limits.

LPS does not hold information on whether a business ratepayer is a commercial enterprise or other organisation. This means that as this relief is applied automatically, there will be business ratepayers who are not commercial undertakings (such as small clubs) who will be eligible.

There is special provision for small post offices and information about this scheme can be found online at www.lpsni.gov.uk.

Are there any exclusions?

Excluded are properties that are unoccupied or partially unoccupied, ATMs, property used for the display of advertisements, car parks, sewage works, telecommunications masts and government buildings.

Why is Net Annual Value (NAV) used?

It is much easier to administer, for

ratepayers and government, than a scheme that is dependent on employment and turnover thresholds. It was decided to use the tried and tested criteria used in the rest of the UK namely NAV thresholds. This means that the scheme is really a small business premises relief scheme and because of this there will be small businesses that will not qualify.

How do I find out what my NAV limits are?

Go to: <http://lpsni.gov.uk/vListNDN/search.asp?submit=form> to search for the Net Annual Value of your property. Alternatively this information should be on your rate bill.

Why are the thresholds not higher?

The thresholds adopted are those that applied to the original Small Business Rate Relief Scheme in Wales, which was introduced in 2007. The Small Business Rate Relief Scheme will cost our Government around £9m a year. Higher thresholds would render the scheme unaffordable.

How long is it for?

It is intended that the scheme will have a life of 5 years and it will be reviewed before then to establish its effectiveness and value for money.

Who do I contact for more information?

For a question about your eligibility or how the scheme will operate contact Land & Property Services on 028 9025 2111.

For a question about the policy behind the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme, contact the Rating Policy Division on 028 9127 7606.



The winners in the Independent Retailer Category - Michael Downey, The Good Food Shop, Hillstreet, Newry (3rd); T Logue, Loughmore Meats, Parkgate (1st) and Seamus O'Hanlon, McAnerney Bros, Armagh (2nd) are pictured with Robert Overend, UP&BF Chairman; UTV's Lynda Bryans, who compered the awards presentation; Glyn Roberts; former Miss Northern Ireland Catherine Milligan; and Sean Owens, UP&BF Development Chef.

Independent sausage champions

The 2009 National Sausage Competition Awards were presented at a celebratory dinner in the Templeton Hotel, Templepatrick on Tuesday 3rd November. The awards were organised by the Ulster Pork & Bacon Forum and followed on from National Sausage Week promotions throughout participating butchers and grocery stores across Northern Ireland

The awards which are supported by NIIRTA are designed to reinforce the message that 'local' and 'pork' are a winning combination with quality assurance and welfare standards second to none. And, of course, pork offers great versatility in cuts and cooking styles, as well as excellent value for money.

Some 183 individual businesses from all over Northern Ireland participated in this year's awards, many with multiple entries across the different county and special awards categories.

Commenting, Keith Smyton, Chief Executive of the Pork & Bacon Forum said, "Northern Ireland pig producers and processors have been encouraged by the efforts of the local butchers and retailers who took part in this year's National Sausage Competition and who supported National Sausage Week and the ongoing marketing and promotional activities initiated by the Forum to support the local pork industry."

"Our annual National Sausage Competition is a real showcase for the wealth of innovative and highly skilled butchers we have throughout Northern Ireland who are using 100 per cent

Northern Irish pork to provide their customers with the great taste experience that is inherent in the quality produce from our local pig industry," he continued.

"The only pork products that consumers can be assured are genuinely Northern Irish and reared and processed to the highest health and safety standards are those from the Ulster Pork & Bacon Forum's processor members – Cookstown, Dunbia, FC Robinson, Pinkertons, Sprotts, Wm Grant and Foyle Meats. Our aim is to ensure that consumers are aware of this and that retailers give genuinely 100 per cent local pork products the space and promotion they so deserve on-shelf," concluded Keith.

Glyn Roberts NIIRTA Chief Executive said: "NIIRTA is once again delighted to show its support for these awards, but also for the superb work that Keith and all his team do in the Pork and Bacon Forum."

"Northern Ireland Pork is world class and we are justly proud of the vital route to market that the independent retail provides to the sector."

“Tobacco display ban will be most expensive and inflexible in the world”

UK Ministers are planning the most costly and disruptive tobacco display ban of its type in the world if they implement draft regulations published on 12 October, say the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association. These plans were unveiled a few hours before the crucial parliamentary debate on the issue on the same day.

The UK Government has published a consultation that sets out what a retailer would have to do to implement the new law banning tobacco displays. In it the Government will require retailers to fit doors or flaps that only allow an area slightly larger than a sheet of A3 paper to be seen by a customer when they are being served tobacco. This would mean that a typical small shop would be required to fit at least 20 separate doors or flaps to their existing unit.

It is expected the Northern Ireland Executive will follow the proposed Westminster regulations.

In the Health Bill Report Stage Debate the Government defeated an opposition attempt to remove the tobacco display ban from the proposed Health Bill in a whipped vote.

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive said: "The Minister has proposed regulations that are the most inflexible of their type anywhere in the world. It makes a mockery of the repeated reassurances that Ministers have made to Parliament and businesses that they will take a light touch approach to compliance."

Government's official estimate is that the cost of compliance will be £1000 per store, although Ministers have repeatedly

suggested to MPs and media that the cost would be much lower for smaller stores. Mr Roberts continued: "The technical challenges in fitting a solution to existing units that meet the Ministers' demands could be insurmountable. This would mean retailers having to rip out and replace existing units and the costs will be far higher than previously suggested."

Mr Roberts also questioned the evidence for why such an approach was necessary: "The evidence that a display ban affects smoking rates is weak, but there is absolutely no evidence to suggest that a tiny permitted display area during transactions is necessary for the policy to succeed."

"NIIRTA will make a strong case to the UK Government and Minister McGimpsey that sets out how damaging the proposed approach to regulations is."

"In Northern Ireland, small businesses are facing an even more difficult situation given that they only have until next year to make these costly changes, despite the rest of the UK having until 2013. Surely it is not unreasonable for local small businesses to be given the same lead in time to make the changes as the rest of the UK?"

Mr Roberts also expressed disappointment at the outcome of the tobacco display ban vote: "We remain convinced that if MPs were presented with credible alternatives to this measure such as proper deterrents to those that are complicit in giving tobacco to children and effective measures to tackle the illegal trade in communities, they would agree that the display ban is unnecessary."

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Local Shopper is a full colour 8 page advertiser which is delivered directly into **16,000 homes each month** in nine areas throughout greater Belfast.

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Northern Ireland Water



Northern Ireland Water are the providers of Northern Ireland's most essential public service

Created in April 2007 as a Government Owned Company (GoCo) with the Department of Regional Development as the sole shareholder, the organisation supplies more than 800,000 customers with 614 million litres of high quality drinking water every day. Equally importantly, NI Water also treat 134 million cubic metres of wastewater, each day, via a network of 14,500 km of sewers.

Since the establishment of NI Water, investment in water and waste water infrastructure has been unprecedented and the organisation has also delivered equally significant efficiencies.

There are however likely to be funding challenges for NI Water over the coming three years when, for the first time, the Utility Regulator (NIAUR) determines the funding arrangements for the organisation through the 'Price Control Process for 2010', known as PC10. These funding arrangements will be set out on the 18 December in the Utility Regulator's Final Determination.

Chris Mellor, NI Water Chairman commented: "Northern Ireland Water has come a long way in the last two and a half years. We have invested nearly

£1million every working day in our water and waste water infrastructure and as a result we are now delivering the best ever water and waste water standards to the people of Northern Ireland."

"However, we know we still have a way to go. We are not yet a mature utility and we have not yet reached the levels of efficiency that we want and the public demands. Part of the problem is of course the legacy of chronic underinvestment that we inherited, but we also understand the need to continue to transform the way we do business and continue to drive out unnecessary cost. Much progress has already been made. Since the beginning of the reform process, we have achieved significant operational efficiencies – more than £1 in every £4. We will continue this focus on costs and have undertaken to continue the trend within our Business Plan."

The Utility Regulator's Draft Determination was issued on the 18 September and acknowledges the progress that has been made by the company but suggests considerable efficiencies on top of those proposed by NI Water.

Chairman Chris Mellor said: "We welcome the price control process and agree with the Regulator that it provides the best mechanism for setting NI Water revenues. We have considered the substance of the Regulator's proposals and from our review of the document it is clear the Regulator is proposing very significant further reductions and these appear very challenging indeed."

"We have a shared agenda with the Regulator in that we want to deliver an excellent service, in a way that gains the trust and confidence of our customers and narrows the efficiency gap between NI Water and the water companies in Great Britain. Any difference of opinion that we may have with the Regulator is likely to be on the timeframe over which we believe such efficiencies can be delivered safely and sustainably."

Over the final weeks before Final Determination, NI Water will be engaging and consulting with the Regulator in an effort to arrive at an appropriate final settlement.

Further information can be found on NI Water's website www.niwater.com or the Regulator's website www.niaur.gov.uk



photo - Kevin Cooper

Traders hold Lisburn Road summit with local politicians



(from left to right) Glyn Roberts (NIIRTA CEO), Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA, Hugo Finlay (Lisburn Road Trader) and Peter Carrington (Chair, Lisburn Road Business Association)

ATM Robberies Are Getting Out Of Control-NIIRTA

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association has expressed serious concern at further ATM robberies in the Province.



There have been 16 in less than five months and the most recent Kells robbery is the first one in Co Antrim, with the majority of previous incidents taking place in Fermanagh and Tyrone.

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive said: "These ATM robberies are now getting seriously out of control. We are now seeing them occur on a weekly basis which is a major cause for concern for local small business owners across Northern Ireland."

"I am extremely disappointed that the PSNI have not yet been successful in tackling these robberies."

"The criminals who steal these ATM machines are not just stealing from small businesses, they are stealing from the whole community who, in rural areas, rely on these machine to withdraw salaries, benefits and pensions."

"Our concern is that continued robberies of this nature could force banks to call a halt to installing these machines or even removing them, unless action is taken."

"We repeat our call for the PSNI to establish a special taskforce to tackle this problem before many more of these robberies occur. We would call upon anyone with information on these robberies to contact PSNI"

Facilitated by the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association, the Lisburn Road Business Association has recently held a mini summit with local politicians to set out its policy priorities for the future of the road as a centre of retail excellence.

Dr Alasdair McDonnell, South Belfast MP chaired the event at NIIRTA's office. Representatives from Belfast City Council, City Centre Management, DRD, South Belfast Partnership Board and Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau attended the meeting.

Peter Carrington, Lisburn Road Business Association Chairman said: "Today's mini-summit is an important step forward in our campaign for the NI Executive and Belfast City Council to give real recognition

to the contribution Lisburn Road makes to the local economy as a centre of retail excellence."

"The Lisburn Road boasts an unparalleled range of independent retail stores for those in search of 'something different'. There is quite simply no comparable road anywhere in the UK or Ireland that has the breadth, quality and value that customers will find on a visit to the Lisburn Road."

"We set out our agenda which includes the need to address issues such as car parking, urban clearways, rates, streetscaping and better marketing of the road in relation to retailing and tourism."

"Overall we need a co-ordinated strategy which addresses all of these issues to ensure the full potential of the Lisburn Road."

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief

Executive said: "Lisburn Road is one of Northern Ireland's centres of excellence for independent retail which complements Belfast City Centre's retail offer and we need to see Belfast City Council and the NI Executive doing more to support it."

"Lisburn Road makes not just an invaluable contribution to the economy of Belfast, but provides a shared space and a vital service to the local community."

Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA who chaired the event said: "It is very clear that we need a multi-agency partnership approach to address the concerns raised by Lisburn Road Traders. I would be keen to see more festivals and cultural events and also we need to ensure better transport linkages between Belfast City Centre and Lisburn Road."

Taking control of your energy costs

At a time when the requirement for local retailers to reduce energy costs has never been greater, Integral Energy Solutions has developed an Energy Management Program specifically tailored to meet the needs of multi-site organisations.



It has been proven that between 5% and 20% energy savings can be achieved through ongoing monitoring and targeting, with little or no capital outlay.

While the need for good practice Energy Management is now commonly recognised, employing a full time Energy Manager is often not a viable option for many local businesses. However, outsourcing this requirement to Integral Energy Solutions, an independent energy consultancy, will ensure energy consumption and costs are optimised at a fraction of the cost.

Annual Energy Report

The first step in implementing any effective Energy Management Plan is to establish a base from where to measure improvements. An IES annual report will provide that base along with establishing achievable targets for reduction in the coming year and an assessment of the value for money you are currently receiving from your Utility Providers. Also included are the following elements:

- An individual site Energy Performance League Table.
- Best practice benchmarking comparisons.
- Identification of sites which require immediate attention.
- Total Energy Consumption Analysis 2007/08 – 2008/09.
- Individual fuel consumption & cost analysis (Electricity, Oil, Gas, LPG).
- Water consumption analysis.
- Utility tariff analysis.

- Guidance on how best to comply with new legislation i.e. CRC (Carbon Reduction Commitment) April 2010.
- Recommendations for areas to target in order to lower future energy consumption & costs.

Independent Site Energy Audit

A recent study showed that average savings of 21% on each energy bill were identified during a Energy Audit. In sites where a detailed Energy Audit has not taken place within the past 5 years this figure can rise above 60%.

- Identifying main energy consumers and comparing these to best practice guides in a performance league table.
- Establishing potential for energy savings.
- Identifying practical, low cost measures for achieving instant savings.
- Presenting a business case for implementing recommendations, including a financial payback plan.
- Advice on possible grants and finance options available.
- Establishing any additional benefits e.g. environmental, comfort etc.
- Advice on project implementation with minimal disruption to occupants.

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Website: www.integralenergysolutions.co.uk

VAT price concession small consolation for shops faced with disruption

Government has recently published a consultation on its intention to increase from 14 to 28 days the regulations that allow retailers to inform customers that they will be charged a higher rate of VAT by means of a general in-store notice rather than changing the price of every item on the shelf.

Glyn Roberts Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association said: "The decision to reinstate a 17.5% VAT rate on the 1st January 2010 will cause major and costly disruption for retailers on a bank holiday in the middle of the busiest trading period of the year. We have called on Government repeatedly to delay in the changeover of the rate to 1st February 2010 - this small concession would provide some greater flexibility for retailers and we would support it."

"This VAT cut was a complete waste of money and could have been put to better use in helping recession hit small retailers and businesses by giving them a national insurance holiday for year."



Why charity needs retailers

Corporate support is a vital tool in the fundraising armoury of charities. It can help to launch new initiatives, ensure the survival of existing projects and – from the company's point of view – create a vital link between business and customer.



TRACY MARSHALL, Director of Fundraising at NI Chest, Heart & Stroke, outlines the importance of the relationship between commerce and charity.

Corporate support is a vital cog in the funding of charities in Northern Ireland today. Many of the services provided by charities which assist and support the local community would not exist without initial set up, revenue support or budget relieving help from the corporate and business world. In times of recession this focus and need has become stronger and more vital.

In the past, organisations such as Phoenix Natural Gas, Bushmills Distillery, Northern Bank, Sainsbury's, and Irwin's Bakery have all helped NI Chest, Heart & Stroke raise vital funds for our work. I can't mention everyone individually and those above are just a sample, as I simply don't have room but our gratitude goes out to all of them.

There is a misconception that supporting a charity must always involve raising cash. This is not the case, take an example; Gordon's Chemists have

helped us to provide blood pressure measurement and lung function tests – an important part of our health promotion message to the public.

So how does working with a charity make everyone in the relationship a winner? Firstly, and most obviously, the charity wins because it benefits from the funds raised. Secondly, the business wins, because the events staged by staff help to build teamwork and strengthen the link between them and the customer. It's also a strong demonstration of the business's commitment to the community in which it operates. And last, but not least, the customer wins. It may be through a health promotion event at a store, or it could be through one of our services in the community that the money we collect helps to fund.

The importance of the corporate partner has come to the fore largely because of the size and complexity of charity services nowadays and the extent of competition for statutory funding. NI Chest, Heart & Stroke, for example, provides stroke services and other support for people on behalf of the Health Service after they have left hospital to return home. We are spending £500,000 this year alone on research in

our local hospitals and universities. None of this comes cheaply and there are large gaps in funding the vital services and support needed for these services and others like them.

In NI Chest, Heart and Stroke our task is huge. The need for our support is becoming wider and more extensive. Although fewer people are dying from coronary heart disease, it means more people are having to live day-to-day with its effects. We aim to support them with self management and rehabilitation. In addition around 80,000 people in Northern Ireland have the lung condition Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD, which is predicted to become the third leading cause of death worldwide by 2030. We are working not only to support these people but to undertake awareness raising for health promotion and prevention. Stroke too, is affecting more people in Northern Ireland and a in younger age groups. This needs addressed in the form of support, service provision and rehabilitation.

When people ask me why corporate support is vital, I point to all of the above and then explain that every penny we raise is vital for the benefit of local people in Northern Ireland."

How the Assembly works seminar

Thursday 14th January 2010 • Stormont Hotel, Belfast



agendaNi is organising a seminar on How the Northern Ireland Assembly works, offering all those with an interest in influencing the Assembly an insight into what goes on in Parliament Buildings. The seminar is aimed both at season practitioners and those new to the area of lobbying and engaging elected representatives.

Key elements of the seminar include:

- How the Assembly is working in practice at Stormont
- How do organisations get involved with the Assembly?
- How to build and develop relationships with the Assembly
- How to practically engage with MLAs and Committees
- Overview of the role of the Speaker / MLAs / Committees.

- Declan O'Loan, MLA
- Dr Sydney Elliott, former lecturer in politics, QUB
- Jim Wells, MLA, Chair, NI Assembly Health Committee
- Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive, NIIRTA
- John McMullan, Chief Executive, Bryson Charitable Group

Speaking before the event NIIRTA Chief Executive said: "I would encourage NIIRTA members to consider attending this conference as it is important the independent retail sector and the broader business community learn the techniques

of lobbying and engagement with the Assembly in order to get their policy agenda across."

agendaNi is offering a discounted rate of £145+VAT (full price £245+VAT) for NIIRTA members who wish to attend the conference. To avail of this NIIRTA rate, simply email registration@agendaNi.com and mention the offer or register online at www.agendaNi.com/events and quote 'NIIRTA' in the Comments field on the booking form. Alternatively you may register by telephone on 028 9261 9933.

Speakers include:

- Tom Frawley, NI Assembly Ombudsman

Calling all retail managers and aspiring retail managers in Northern Ireland.

Foundation Degree in Retailing

Do you believe you have what it takes to:

- Lead and manage in the growing and exciting world of Retail
- Enhance your personal and professional ability
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One of the main features of this course is to enable students to learn at a time that is convenient to them. Students will be able to access course materials on-line with materials produced specifically by My Knowledge Map, a specialist software company.

What is a Foundation Degree?

- Vocational higher education qualification that can help you progress professionally and academically
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- Designed by the six NI Colleges and validated by The University of Ulster (Subject to approval)
- Fast becoming an industry qualification with large and small employers

What's involved?

- A two year programme delivered on a part-time basis, within the six NI Colleges
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... if so read on...

Interested? Then contact: Nicola Reel (028) 3026 1116 / 07815 79766

Retail Security Solutions

In recent months the increase in ATM robberies and tiger kidnappings has left many retailers a little on edge in regards to their current security safeguards.

Effective management of risk has become a retail issue and it is essential that you have a business partner who has the expertise and resource to understand the threat, minimise the risk, and let you focus on the smooth running of your operation.

Have you ever considered the following issues?

- Do you have employees who work late?
- Who ensures that your intruder alarm system is set at the end of a working day?
- How can you be sure that the last person out locks the doors?

At G4S Northern Ireland we provide a comprehensive range of security solutions for retail clients throughout Northern Ireland. We have made significant infrastructure investments locally which enable us to protect and monitor your business around the clock by utilising the most effective processes, techniques and the latest technologies.

G4S Northern Ireland specialise in all aspects of retail security including the deployment of SIA licensed security personnel, mobile patrols & key holding, event security, specialist training and risk consultancy. As part of a bespoke retail security solution design, we can also integrate electronic security including intruder & fire alarms, access control, CCTV and vulnerable worker protection.

G4S Northern Ireland now provide a specific Risk Consultancy Service, providing advice and training for business continuity, crisis management, abduction, kidnap for ransom and extortion. We focus on the provision of expert security services to protect vulnerabilities within your environment to minimise your security risk. We'll talk to you about your specific issues and work with you to deliver innovative solutions that really meet your business needs.



For reasons of cost efficiency and greater control, we have found increasing numbers of companies are seeking to integrate their security systems into one centrally monitored, controlled and networked system.

For more information on our tailored Retail Solutions, please telephone: Paul Irwin on 0844 811 0118 or email paul.irwin@uk.g4s.com

NIIRTA Engages Carbon Trust to help members reduce energy bills



NIIRTA members collectively spend in excess of £12 Million per year on energy bills.

This produces in excess of 62,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, the equivalent of 250 million miles of driving in a standard car or 3 days output from Ballylumford power station. Recent Carbon Trust studies have identified opportunities to reduce this carbon output by over 20,000 tonnes a year. This will lead to significant cost savings on energy bills for NIIRTA members. To highlight opportunities for energy savings the Carbon Trust will be producing a bespoke publication exclusively for NIIRTA members.

Also NIIRTA members may be interested to know that the Carbon Trust provides energy saving surveys, free of charge (but typically worth between £500-£2,000), to businesses with an annual energy spend of c.£30,000 or more. (This threshold includes all energy resources - electricity, oil and gas and takes into account all premises within a group). An Accredited Consultant with expertise in energy efficiency will survey your premises and provide an authoritative, independent (and obligation free) report with recommendations for energy savings initiatives. When it comes to implementation of energy saving initiatives, members may wish to avail of the Carbon Trust Interest Free Loan service. This is available for projects ranging between £3,000 and £400,000 with repayment periods up to four years. To date nearly £12 million has been lent interest-free to 170 local businesses that are enjoying annual energy cost savings of over £4.5 million.

For more information, on either the surveys or loans, please visit the Carbon Trust Website <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk> or call the Customer Centre on 0800 085 2005.

NIIRTA

GALLERY

lobbying for its members

photo - Kevin Cooper



Shadow Secretary of State, Owen Paterson MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary, William Hague MP, Glyn Roberts and UUP Leader Sir Reg Empey MLA at UUP conference

photo - Kevin Cooper



William Hay MLA, Speaker of the NI Assembly with Glyn Roberts at 10th Birthday celebrations of NI Government Affairs Group

Ulster Unionist party leader Sir Reg Empey MLA at the NIIRTA reception at UUP conference

photo - Kevin Cooper



David Ford MLA, Glyn Roberts and Rt Hon Charles Kennedy former leader of the Liberal Democrats at a meeting in Belfast city centre



Andy Stephens - Matrix Planning Consultancy, Barry Turley - Asitis Consulting, Glyn Roberts, Des Stephens - Matrix Planning Consultancy who were all instrumental in the successful 'Save Banbridge Town Centre' campaign

photo - Kevin Cooper



First Minister Peter Robinson MP addresses the end of DUP conference reception hosted by NIIRTA, Asitis Consulting and NI Chamber of Commerce

photo - Kevin Cooper



Nigel Dodds MP MLA, DUP deputy leader and Glyn Roberts at DUP conference