



SAVE OUR JOBS

SAVE OUR COMMUNITY

SAVE OUR TOWN!

OPPOSE THE HYPERMARKET!

**BANBRIDGE
CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED**



Save our Town Centre!

Banbridge campaign launched

Banbridge Chamber of Commerce, the Ulster Chemists' Association, the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association and the Federation of Small Businesses have jointly launched the 'Save Banbridge Town Centre' Campaign.

The business groups have made the call after confirmation that developers announced that they are to appeal last year's DOE planning decision for the 130,000 sq ft out of town Tesco Hypermarket application which would be the largest store on this island of Ireland and one of the biggest in the UK. 29th June has been set for the Planning Appeals Commission hearing.

Talking at the campaign launch, Roisin McAleenan, President of the Banbridge Chamber of Commerce said: "As we have said on many occasions, this is not about Tesco. It is about the proposed location of the store which is out of town and would cause commercial and retail devastation to Banbridge Town Centre.

"Going on all the independent research conducted by groups such as New Economics Foundation, National Retail Planning Forum and the All Party Group on Small Shops on similar developments in the rest of the UK, Banbridge would lose dozens of small businesses and there would be a net loss of nearly 300 jobs if this application for the hypermarket is successful."

Ms McAleenan stressed that the campaign would be positive and added: "We are calling upon Banbridge Council and local MLAs to support our campaign to protect jobs, small businesses and above all our town centre. Banbridge cannot be allowed to turn into a retail ghost town."

Glyn Roberts NIIRTA Chief Executive said: "Not only are we appealing to everyone in the local community to get behind this campaign to save Banbridge Town Centre, we are asking for support right across Northern Ireland."



Roberts likened the campaign to a "David and Goliath battle" and added: "we are appealing to all small businesses in Northern Ireland to show their solidarity with their counterparts in Banbridge."

"If this out of town hypermarket is allowed to go ahead then it will open up the floodgates threatening many other town centres throughout Northern Ireland."

"Banbridge politicians have a choice to make- having the hypermarket which will destroy more jobs than it will create or having a dynamic and vibrant town centre- Where do they stand?"

James McKay, President of the Ulster Chemists' Association said: "We fully support this campaign as local pharmacies, like any other retailer in Banbridge Town Centre, are at risk from this proposed hypermarket. At present the existing pharmacy network in Northern Ireland, with a very high level of success, provides accessible healthcare in a very community-orientated environment. This is in direct correlation with DHSSPSNI's own Health strategy to relieve the burden that exists on Acute Healthcare Services. Therefore any potential disruption to this must be very carefully considered.

"This proposed development has potential to disrupt the existing Banbridge town centre which is worth fighting for given its diverse range of retail and the employment and investment it currently provides."

Fellow campaigner and FSB Regional Chair John Friel said: "This development and others like it threaten the unique and diverse range of small businesses in our



From left to right: Jim Nicholson MEP, Sam Gardiner MLA, Owen Paterson MP (Shadow Secretary of State) Glyn Roberts (NIIRTA), Sir Reg Empey MLA, Minister for Employment and Mark Francois MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Europe) meeting with Banbridge Traders in the Windsor Bakery



Ballycastle Traders Express Concern Over New Tesco Application

The Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association have expressed their opposition to the new Tesco application for an out of town store at Leyland Road in Ballycastle. Local traders expressed the view that they want to work with Tesco and Moyle District Council to find a more suitable site in Ballycastle Town Centre.

The two organisations made the call following the joint meeting of the Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce and NIIRTA to discuss the new application by Tesco.

James McCaughan, spokesperson for Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce and NIIRTA member said: "As we have said on many occasions this is not about Tesco - it is about the proposed location of the store which is out of town and would cause retail devastation to Ballycastle Town Centre."

"At a time of recession Ballycastle cannot afford to see long-standing small businesses close and jobs lost as a result of this unsustainable proposed store."

"Tesco have reduced the size of their proposed store at Leyland Road, but they have failed to realise that the central point of opposition is the out-of-town location of the store. While we will be vigorously opposing this application at Leyland Road, we are keen to work with Tesco and Moyle District Council to find a suitable town centre site for a Tesco store appropriate for



Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce and NIIRTA representatives meeting with the MP and MLA's for Ballycastle at the Assembly.

Ballycastle," he added.

"We will be seeking meetings with local MLAs and Councillors and would be prepared to meet Tesco to set out our concerns."

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive who addressed the meeting said: "NIIRTA will be fully supporting its members and our colleagues in Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce in their opposition to this application. Our members in Ballycastle welcome investment in their town, but not at the expense of their businesses and the loss of local retail jobs. We hope that all locally elected representatives will support their local traders and take on board their concerns about this proposed out of town store."

Ballycastle Chamber of Commerce and

NIIRTA have also held discussions with all of the local MLAs and with Tesco to see if a more suitable town centre store can be found which will be good for the town and local traders.

James McCaughan added: "We were delighted at the very sympathetic response from all the MLAs present at our meeting where we outlined our objections to the proposed out of town Tesco store in Leyland Road."

"We are not opposed to a town centre location for an appropriately sized Tesco store and we indicated our willingness to engage with Tesco, Moyle District Council and local MLAs to achieve that objective."

town centres and could well lead to the sad demise of the traditional town centre and all it has to offer in Northern Ireland.

"The FSB fully recognises the role larger retailers have to play in the overall economy but would encourage them to complement and support smaller existing businesses in more suitable town centre locations."

Senior politicians and European Election Candidates have visited the town centre to meet Banbridge Traders. Sir Reg Empey MLA, (Employment Minister) Jim Nicholson MEP, Shadow Secretary of State Owen Paterson MP, Bairbre De Brun MEP and Alliance Euro Candidate are among those who have visited.

Roisin McAleenan added:

"We are delighted to welcome senior

local political leaders as well as two Shadow Cabinet Ministers to our town which has a strong and vibrant mix of independent retailers that make a huge contribution to the local economy and community in Banbridge."

"We briefed both delegations on our "Save Banbridge Town Centre" campaign and our concerns with the proposed out of town 130,000 sq ft Tesco store which would create retail devastation in the town, resulting in the loss of hundreds of jobs and the closure of dozens of small retailers."

"Both political parties told us that they did not wish to see Banbridge become a ghost town and we are delighted at how supportive they were to us."

"Our campaign is gaining more and more

support, not just from local traders, but from right across the local community who do not want to see their town centre ruined."

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive who met both delegations said: "We are very keen to encourage all candidates in this election to visit Banbridge and hear firsthand the very real concerns of local small businesses in relation to the disastrous impact this proposed out of town hypermarket would have on local jobs and businesses."

A FACEBOOK group entitled Save Banbridge Town Centre has been set up and the four business groups would urge those who support the campaign to become a member.



Lisburn Road retail: A jewel in Belfast's Crown

BY JOE NAWAZ

Walk down Lisburn Road in the heart of South Belfast and two things immediately strike you.

One, that the shops, the sheer numbers and the variety of them, seem inexhaustible. Hi-class boutiques, coffee shops and even chocolate emporiums nestle comfortably alongside wine bars, delicatessens and supermarkets in an endless retail boulevard which puts the wildly misnamed "Golden Mile" to shame.

The second impression one gets when strolling along this perennially busy thoroughfare is how, it is still very much a residential area. Lisburn Road is possibly unique in the city for its successful accommodation of both commerce and family living.

One such trader and outgoing chair of the Lisburn Road Business Association is Paul Maconaghie. As the proprietor of Framar Health pharmacy as well as a local resident, Paul is a leading force behind the drive for close cooperation between independent retailers in the area.

I meet him in Cargoes coffee shop, one of the many attractions for shoppers in the area, just after a Lisburn Road shoppers map has been produced, detailing many of the 200 plus independent businesses that make up the area.

"With the recent launch of our map and also our website, there's a real buzz about Lisburn Road. It's really recognised as a single entity." Says Paul And it is strength in numbers, Paul feels, that will ensure the continued success of independent retail in the area.

"There were 100 businesses that took part in the recent road map, but there could easily have been 100 more. We're very keen to get more local businesses on board with the Lisburn Road Business Association. I really do believe that we all benefit by cooperating. I want independent retailers to understand the great importance of unity. Our strength is in numbers, rather than thinking independently. The Lisburn Road already has a powerful branding and it makes sense for us all to work together to consolidate and strengthen that."



Belfast Lord Mayor Cllr Tom Hartley launches the new Lisburn Retail Road Map

Fiercely proud of the Lisburn Road, Paul describes it as *"the biggest outdoor shopping centre in Belfast"*.

"Lisburn Road is simply a phenomenally great shopping area. If it was under the one roof like the Victoria Centre, you would be amazed at the variety and diversity of business that exists here. That's why we're delighted to be identified so closely with the area."

The issues in question are those that affect small businesses every where – parking, rates, rents and reduced customer spending, but, as Paul points out, being based on the Lisburn Road carries its own set of challenges.

"The rates problem in South Belfast in general and Lisburn Road in particular is different than for most other areas. Because the rates are based on the saleable value of a property, that often means that they're crippling for local business – it's like we're being punished for having a BT9 post-code. There's a misconception that because the area's perceived as affluent with big houses, etc. that people can afford these crippling amounts, but in a lot of cases that's just not true. When business is slowing in the current climate, how is any independent retailer expected to meet ever increasing rent and rates attached to property value?"

"Our worst possible scenario is being forced into making redundancies, which nobody wants, but it's the easiest way to cut overheads if faced with crippling bills."

"Such is the underlying success of the Lisburn Road that while the pinch is being felt, local business has weathered the financial crisis better than in most other areas."

However, Paul is adamant that a change

in attitude by landlords and local government is essential to ensure that that success continues.

"When times are good, it's understandable that we should be paying more rates and rents, but in the current climate a little understanding wouldn't go amiss. We need forward thinking from council and landlords."

And he reiterates that it is local business solidarity that holds the key to survival.

"I'll say it again and again: I believe we stand or fall as a collective group. There's a worry that a lot of independents don't always look beyond their front door but we're trying to encourage people to look either side of their neighbours. Ask them how they do things. We can learn so much from each other and there's a true strength in numbers. I would say to local businesses who haven't joined us yet to get in touch. We have so much more that unites us than divides us. The area is the King's Road of Belfast. You have men's fashion, women's fashion, wine bars, art galleries, coffee shops. There's something for everyone. That is our unique factor and I believe we have a duty to try and maintain that."

And what of the plans for the future? Paul says: *"I'd want to see more local retailers join the business association. We're look to raise money for a fighting fund for everything from Christmas lights and flower baskets to PR representation."*

"We're also planning to have a number of themed weeks this year; a Jazz festival, a fashion week and a food week. We have so many great features at our disposal here and we all have a stake in keeping Lisburn Road a real jewel in the crown of Belfast."



Business Community Must Engage More With Europe

NIIRTA, CBI, IoD, NI Chamber of Commerce and NI Food and Drink Association organised a joint event on behalf of its members to quiz the seven European Candidates on their priorities for business.

Glyn Roberts NIIRTA Chief Executive said: *"It is absolutely vital the ever growing burden of EU Regulation and Red Tape for small businesses and retailers is made the top priority for whoever is elected on June 4th."*

"The European Commission should call a moratorium on all business regulation to ensure that businesses struggling with the recession can put their full energy into surviving and maintaining jobs rather than have to spent time complying with these burdens."

"Given that 99.8% of EU Companies are SMEs we would also like to see a dedicated EU Commissioner for small businesses who can take the lead for promoting sound policies for this vital sector of the economy."

"It is also important that we see a more joined up approach with the NI Executive and our local MEPs in dealing with the European Commission so that we gain the maximum benefit for Northern Ireland's business community."



(From left to right) Alban Maginness MLA (SDLP), Bairbre De Brun MEP(Sinn Fein), Glyn Roberts (CEO NIIRTA), Steven Agnew(Greens), Ian Parsley (Alliance), Diane Dodds (DUP) and Jim Nicholson MEP (Conservative and Unionists)

"Given that most business regulation originates from Brussels it is important that the local business community engages with our MEPs and question them on their policy agenda."

Shadow secretary visits newest NIIRTA members



Hugo Thomas (LRBA) Owen Paterson MP, Eavan Kennedy (LRBA) Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA CEO and Paul Maconaghie (outgoing LRBA Chair)

The Shadow Secretary of State Owen Paterson MP has visited local traders on the Lisburn Road. Mr Patterson was invited as a guest of the Lisburn Road Business Association and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association to hear first hand their concerns about the recession and the other challenges facing their businesses.

In a further development, the Lisburn

Road Business Association has now formally joined NIIRTA as an associate member.

Peter Carrington, Chairman of the Lisburn Road Business Association said: *"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. However we face many challenges, whether it be the recession, high rates or lack of car parking. Belfast City Council and the Northern Ireland Executive must take action if our members are to continue to provide investment and employment for the local community."

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive said: *"We are delighted to support our new colleagues on the Lisburn Road in addressing their concerns. Lisburn Road is one of Northern Ireland's centres of excellence for independent retail which complements Belfast City Centre's retail offer."* Mr Roberts continued: *"NIIRTA has lobbied Belfast City Council for action to tackle the problems of the city's main arterial roads like the Lisburn Road. We have called for a greater joined up approach with the Council, key government departments and local traders to address these concerns."*

"Having the Lisburn Road Business Association join NIIRTA adds considerable value to our expanding role as the representative voice of the independent retail sector in Northern Ireland. Despite the current downturn our membership has steadily increased with many new retailers from across Northern Ireland joining our association."



Green light for Lisburn city-centre masterplan

Lisburn City Council has warmly welcomed a visit by Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie MLA, to launch the preparation of a Masterplan for Lisburn City Centre.

During the visit Minister for Social Development, Margaret Ritchie met with representatives from Lisburn City Council, including Chairman of Economic Development Councillor Allan Ewart and Chairman of Lisburn City Centre Management, Alderman Edwin Poots MLA, to discuss the process leading to the creation of a Masterplan for the City Centre.

Preparation of the Masterplan has awarded to GVA Grimley Planning Consultants and will involve a significant investment by DSD, and will identify opportunities for development of the City centre to attract private sector and increased public sector investment. GVA Grimley Planning Consultants have been involved in the development and resulting substantial economic growth of other prominent cities throughout the United Kingdom.

Councillor Allan Ewart, Chairman of Lisburn City Council Economic Development Committee said: "The study, which will take six months to complete, will identify strategic opportunities for growth. The Master-plan builds on the ongoing efforts, to identify and promote further investment within the City Centre."

"To stay competitive, we must review and strengthen our position as a regional economic centre of excellence. The City of Lisburn has already attracted UK wide retailers and boasts some of the top names



(From left to right) Cllr Alan Ewart, DSD Minister Margaret Ritchie MLA, Cllr Ronnie Crawford and Alderman Edwin Poots MLA

in the local retail and manufacturing industry. However we must continue to build on this. This report will be the foundation for future economic initiatives and will play a vital role in the future development of the Council's economic development strategy. I look forward to reviewing the results in six months time," he said.

Alderman Edwin Poots, Chairman of Lisburn City Centre Management said: "A positive relationship exists between DSD, Lisburn City Council and LCCM and this is the latest in a number of major benefits for the City which have been realised, from this partnership. I am convinced that the results of this study will have a significant contribution towards laying the foundations for future economic growth and public sector investment in Lisburn City Centre."

Margaret Ritchie said: "This is good news for the people of Lisburn. Now is the

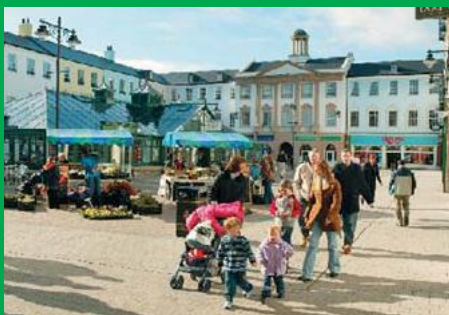
right time to focus on regenerating Lisburn's city centre. Lisburn like many other urban centres must review and reinvent itself in the face of changing economic, social and lifestyle trends. I am pleased that my Department has been able to make this happen by providing the funding to enable this master plan to be prepared."

The Minister continued: "Lisburn has the opportunity to become an inspiring city centre and act as a catalyst for urban regeneration within Northern Ireland. This Masterplan will build on the work that is already ongoing to help identify and promote further investment needed and development opportunities within the Historic and Laganbank Quarters. It will also compliment the Council's economic strategy for the wider city over the next decade to sustain Lisburn's strong reputation as a major retail, social and cultural destination."

NIIRTA Welcomes John Lewis Public Enquiry

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association has welcomed the recent announcement that Environment Minister Sammy Wilson is establishing a public enquiry into the proposed John Lewis store at Sprucefield.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said: "We hope that the public enquiry will not be rushed and will take its time to hear all points of view, particularly from local traders in Lisburn City Centre and surrounding towns. It is also important the enquiry should not be seen as a mere 'tick



the box' exercise with a pre-determined outcome already agreed."

"Our top priority is that local independent traders in Lisburn City Centre,

who after all are the backbone of the local economy, are not disadvantaged in any way by this proposed new development and can continue to attract shoppers from across Northern Ireland. Our preference for this type of store is always a 'town centre first' approach in relation to its location. That being said John Lewis is clearly very different from an out of town Tesco store which impacts on every type of retailer and so requires a different approach. We want an outcome from this public enquiry which is good for local traders, consumers and above all the local economy."



Local Pharmacist Prevails at Chemists' OSCARS!



The Superintendent Pharmacist of a well-known and popular pharmacy group based in Leghory, Craigavon has emerged triumphant from a glittering awards ceremony held in Belfast.

Recognising a pharmacist who has consistently and selflessly dedicated his time and resources to his profession is no easy task, but the Ulster Chemists' Association's Executive Committee, who are continually presented with examples of outstanding professionalism, were delighted to present Gerard Greene with a very fitting tribute to his loyalty and commitment to pharmacy so far.

The Outstanding Contribution to Pharmacy Award, sponsored by Winthrop Pharmaceuticals, was presented to Gerard, who is currently the superintendent pharmacist at Northern Pharmacies Ltd. Gerard has served on the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee for seven years, while representing Northern Pharmacies, and became chairman in 2006 after only one year as vice-chairman.

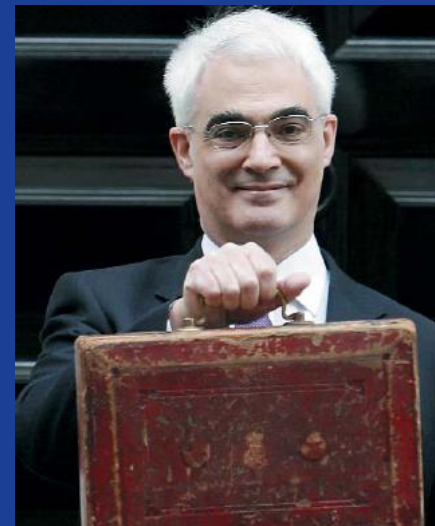
In praise of Gerard's tremendous dedication, outgoing UCA president Paul McDonagh said: "Gerard made this commitment to the PCC out of respect for his profession and employers and that commitment to both PCC and Northern Pharmacies did not waver despite his wife

Rita having two children during his tenure as chairman of the PCC. He has served community pharmacy well, attending numerous meetings and functions on behalf of PCC. He has steered the PCC through an extremely difficult and turbulent period during which the PCC also moved offices to Annadale Avenue."

The independent judging panel last year awarded Northern Pharmacies the Business Development Award for its approach to healthcare provision, through its connections with the Rural Development Council on making the most of IT to market pharmacy services such as smoking cessation, the Minor Ailments Service and providing advice on healthy lifestyles.

Accepting the Award, Gerard said; "I am absolutely thrilled and very surprised and humbled to have been named the recipient of this wonderful Award and I am very thankful to the UCA Executive Committee. This tribute is really something I am accepting on behalf of everyone I have worked with in PCC, particularly the Board, chief executive Terry Hannawin and Rosy Meadow and Karen Douglas. Continued lobbying and political engagement will hopefully help PCC and contractors to negotiate a draft contract for consultation in the near future."

Disappointment with the Budget Statement from the Chancellor



Reacting to the budget, NIIRTA Chief Executive, Glyn Roberts said,

"On balance this is a disappointing budget with very little for small businesses that are struggling with the recession".

"During this challenging economic climate, we would have liked to have seen targets designed specifically to stimulate consumer spending and to encourage businesses to take on more staff.

Although the targets set to improve the situation for under 25s through training are to be welcomed, it will have in reality little impact on unemployment".

"The VAT Cut of 2.5% has failed to stimulate consumer spending - why did the Chancellor not consider reducing income tax for businesses and hard pressed families instead? The Government would have been far better introducing a National Insurance holiday of six months for small businesses to encourage them to take on additional staff".

"It is not just the independent retail sector which will suffer - the local economy as a whole will be adversely affected due to the extra efficiencies required. In the longer-term, the NI Executive risks taking its share of the £15bn efficiency savings. On the whole NIIRTA are apprehensive that this budget will have any real impact of helping our members at this difficult time. The only good news is that the Chancellor did not make the mistake of increasing direct taxation on businesses which does in no way make up for the failings in this budget."



New Partnership Approach Against Business Crime

In order to develop a partnership approach to business crime, representatives from the business community and the Police Service have created a Business Advisory Forum.

Chief Superintendent Nigel Grimshaw, who leads the meetings, explained how input from such a representative cross section of disciplines allows issues which impact on businesses to be addressed. *"The forum first met in January 2009, with members receiving a presentation and advice on tiger kidnaps. This was particularly topical, with concern voiced about an increase in this activity. Attendees were provided with a direct contact with local crime prevention officers that could be approached by individual businesses to provide tailored advice or if desired visit business premises to review current procedures.*

"The second meeting, held in April 2009, included a presentation on crime trends that are impacting on businesses in particular fraud and identify theft. It is clear that a partnership approach is crucial - it allows prioritisation of issues and appropriate channelling of limited resources."

The forum will also assist in the delivery,



Members of the Business Advisory Group with ACC Duncan McCausland)

monitoring and ongoing review of the Business Crime Strategy.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts who is a member of the Business Crime forum said: *"Given the extent of crime against retailers in Northern Ireland, this*

new group will play an important role in ensuring the views of retailers will be heard in assisting the PSNI in combating this problem."

The CBI, FSB and a number of business groups are members of the group.

Larne Economy Needs Investment Say Local Traders



Larne Traders and the MLA's at their meeting

A meeting of Larne Traders and the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association has taken place at Parliament Buildings recently, with all six MLAs and the MP for Larne to discuss the ailing economy of the town.

David Hunter spokesperson for the Larne Traders Forum said: *"This was a*

productive meeting where we covered the decline in public sector jobs and the pressure on independent retailers in Larne Town Centre from the recession and out of town retail development."

"We need to see an enhanced local master plan and an economic action plan for Larne which brings together all the

relevant government departments, agencies, the local council and the business community."

"This will be the first of a series of meetings we will be having with our political representatives and we will be requesting meetings with the Ministers for Enterprise, Social Development and Regional Development to discuss the future of our town."

Glyn Roberts, NIIRTA Chief Executive who was also at the meeting said: *"Larne is not without its problems, but it would have huge potential if more were done to support local retailers in its town centre. These businesses are the backbone of the economy providing hundreds of jobs and investment in the area."*

"Larne Town centre needs to see more retailers setting up new stores and an end to any further out of town retail developments which will take away local trade and jobs."

THE GALLERY

NIIRTA lobbying for Independent Retailers

- 1 Former First Minister and North Antrim MP & MLA Dr Ian Paisley with Glyn Roberts at the recent joint meeting of Ballycastle Traders and local MLAs
- 2 Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness MP MLA meeting Glyn Roberts at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in Dublin
- 3 David Ford MLA, Leader of the Alliance Party with Glyn Roberts at the Alliance Party Conference in Antrim
- 4 Alban Maginniss MLA and Mark Durkan MP MLA, SDLP Leader at the joint NIIRTA/Chamber of Commerce Drinks Reception at the SDLP Conference
- 5 Sinn Fein MLA John O'Dowd meeting Banbridge Traders
- 6 From left to right: Business Secretary Lord Mandelson talking to Glyn Roberts and NIIRTA President Paul Stewart at the NI Assembly and Business Trust Dinner in Parliament Buildings





Local Entrepreneurs Point Way to Economic Revival of Most Deprived Part of Northern Ireland

A new approach to unlocking the economic potential and assets of the most deprived part of Northern Ireland was launched recently by the West Belfast & Greater Shankill Enterprise Council.

The Council which is made up mainly of entrepreneurs from the area is calling for the immediate implementation of a series of wide-ranging measures across the fields of enterprise, investment and education to tackle what they regard as the untapped potential and underperformance of West Belfast & Greater Shankill. Actions aimed at creating more start-up enterprises, encouraging small business growth, attracting inward investment, growing tourism and stimulating regeneration are proposed.

The establishment of a framework of support initiatives to spring-board local enterprise include dedicated and appropriate financial support to encourage the growth of micro enterprises; the creation of a Business Incentive Zone with relaxation of planning restrictions and reduced rates in order to stimulate and support the growth of indigenous businesses; the immediate development of the Invest NI Forthriver site on the Springfield Road as part of a clearly defined Enterprise Arc; plus the location or relocation of a government department or agency that would bring at least 200 jobs to an area that is home to 50% of the city's unemployed. In addition, the Council is calling on Invest NI to develop a dedicated three-year plan, similar to the North West Action Plan to meet agreed targets for drawing inward investment to the area and to change the criteria for incentives so as to support a 3 or 4 star hotel in the area.

The establishment of a Development Corporation that would draw on the successes of other delivery vehicles such as Dublin Docklands Development Authority and Laganside Corporation is recommended to give impetus and focus to the various initiatives.

The full set of recommendations are contained within an Outline Enterprise Regeneration Programme document, entitled 'Think Enterprise: A New Approach'



From left: West Belfast & Greater Shankill Enterprise Council Chairman Padraic White with Council Secretary Prof. Ken O'Neill University of Ulster and its Vice Chairman, Dr Mark Brotherston of Adfab Engineering Ltd.

which the Council launched at Andor Technology. It is intended to complement their Masterplan published last November which outlined seven visionary, large-scale spatial regeneration projects for the area. Speaking at the event, the Enterprise Council's Chairman, ex IDA Chief, Padraic White said: "We are mindful that these proposals are set against a backdrop of recession. We believe it makes their implementation all the more urgent to ensure that the economic divide does not widen for the people of this area. Given a third of the city's population resides in this area, stimulation of an active and flourishing private sector here will in return contribute substantially to Belfast's economy and beyond."

Presenting the Council's views to guests at the event, Enterprise Council Secretary, Professor Ken O'Neill of the University of Ulster said the Council believed the people of the area have the potential to exhibit the degree of enterprise needed to transform their economic prospects:

"The Council does not believe that in

any modern economy that incrementalism in government intervention in an underdeveloped region produces meaningful change to the conditions of its population. In seeking change therefore it is change of a quantum nature which is sought, argued for in this document and deemed appropriate."

To reinforce the Council's position, he stated that for the last three decades the area had been synonymous with social deprivation and underinvestment and pointed to recent research into employment and work trends carried out for Belfast City Council by Oxford Economics which states that on the basis of current policies that situation will not change significantly.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts who attended the launch of the report said: "The West Belfast and Greater Shankill Enterprise Council should be congratulated for a well researched report with common sense objectives for the economic regeneration of the area."

"I hope that the NI Executive respond positively to its recommendations."



Employment Law - Know Your Rights

Grievance Procedure

Employment Law Journals have been enthusing about the Repeal of the Statutory Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures. Alas, there is no cause for celebration in this jurisdiction as the 6th April 2009 did not see any change in Northern Ireland. Whilst the Statutory Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures were repealed in other parts of the United Kingdom, no such change occurred here. It remains crucially important that the Statutory procedures are properly followed otherwise a dismissal will be automatically unfair and an award against an employer may be increased by the Industrial Tribunal.

This underlines the importance of obtaining advice and representation within Northern Ireland. Murlands have been providing high quality legal advice to local businesses for 175 years. We are committed to supporting small businesses and the local economy.

Achieving a Fair Dismissal



The economic downturn has inevitably led to an increase in all types of claims to the Industrial Tribunal. Irrespective of how carefully Employers consider and implement their redundancy procedures a disappointed employee may still bring a claim to an Industrial Tribunal.

Many small employers have not given sufficient thought to their procedure for selection for redundancy. Others have not examined whether their procedure is potentially unlawful, given the impact of anti-discrimination law.

In a recent Court of Appeal decision, *Rolls Royce Plc v UNITE (a Union) 2009 EWCA*, it was held that Last In First Out is likely to be "objectionable" under age discrimination laws. However, in the same judgment the Court of Appeal held that a redundancy procedure, agreed with the Union, which

awarded one point for each continuous year of service under each criterion employees were to be assessed against, was lawful. *"The length of service criterion was included for the principled reason that it was employees who had served longest who were likely to find it most difficult to find new employment."*

If you find yourself having to make staff cutbacks it would be prudent to carefully consider your redundancy policy (if you have one) to ensure that it is not directly or indirectly discriminatory. If you have any doubts, seek advice before you implement what could be a defective procedure.

Murlands Solicitors provide employment advice and representation. We also offer a full range of commercial services including commercial conveyancing and litigation at competitive rates. Contact us for an initial no obligation discussion and to obtain further details of our services.

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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).

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.

To find out more about any of NIIRTA's services e-mail admin@niirta.com, visit us at Facebook or telephone 028 9022 0004



Access Needs
.co.uk

Making Access Happen

Access Needs can help.

for the supply of portable and
ent access ramps.

for easy and safe access.

Throughout Ireland include:

ms
Trusts
Leisure Centres
Post Offices
Banks
Libraries
Churches

sities
Stations
Theatres
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CRAIGAVON COMPANY RECEIVES 100TH INVEST NI INNOVATION VOUCHER

A Craigavon-based company has been presented with the landmark 100th Invest Northern Ireland Innovation Voucher.

Access Needs Ltd, which supplies bespoke portable and semi-permanent access ramps, intends to use the voucher to exploit business opportunities within the Republic of Ireland marketplace.

Presenting the voucher to Access Needs, Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster said: "Invest NI's Innovation Voucher initiative enables small businesses to use specialist knowledge providers to explore a business problem or opportunity. Access Needs is seeking to build on its success to date by engaging with experts to assess the commercial opportunities for its innovative product range in export markets, initially in the Republic of Ireland."

Kenny Moffett, Managing Director of Access Needs, said: "As a small company we recognise the significant potential benefits to be gained from being innovative and conducting research. We have built a strong reputation locally for both portable and semi-permanent access ramps and, with disabled access legislation and provision now commanding increased attention, there are opportunities to grow further."

"The expertise available to us under the Innovation Voucher initiative will be a strong tool in our decision making process as we seek to expand, and will help us to establish a foothold in new markets."



Local Retailers Leading On Tackling Climate Change



Independent Retailers are leading the way in tackling Climate Change—that was the message the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association gave in its May presentation to the Assembly Environment Committee enquiry on Climate Change.

NIIRTA also outlined the need for the expansion of the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme to provide rate relief for small businesses who invest in renewable energy systems for their shops.

Paul Stewart, NIIRTA President said to the Environment Committee: *"Our members have a real commitment to the environment and the desire to play their part in protecting it. Not just because they are local community based small businesses,*

but because it adds value to their business."

"NIIRTA members, because they are small, emit on average three times less carbon dioxide per square ft than a large multiple retailer. They are in the main situated in a town centre or a local neighbourhood with easy access for consumers either on foot or by public transport."

"In England and Wales due to the growth of big box out of town multiple retailers; the average person travels 893 miles per year for food shopping. Just imagine how much carbon is pumped into the atmosphere every year as a result of that. It underlines another reason why we need to see draft PPS5 published and a real focus on retail led regeneration of our town centres."

"Our members source 100% of their meat and poultry from local farmers. They also source as much local foodstuffs as possible from local suppliers and processors. This radically cuts down the amount of food miles and to us the example of how this impacts on Climate change –food from Mexico emits 5,278 kg of CO2 compared with only 17kg if food is sourced locally."

"Another recommendation for government is to label food with the amount of food miles travelled to help consumers make an informed decision on

their food. Moreover, it will also encourage retailers to source locally to meet the demands of consumers."

"Local retailers significantly reduce their carbon footprint by the way they pack their produce. Packaging makes up nearly a quarter of household waste, and 70 per cent of it is food related. In contrast, buying fruit and vegetables from independent shops can produce an estimated 75% less waste in terms of packaging and food waste."

"We have seen dramatic hikes in energy costs for small businesses in recent years, with many of our members seeing their bills going up by as much as 60% as well as trying to stay afloat in a recession which has seen consumer spend decrease."

"Minister Dodds has to be commended for introducing the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme which will see a 25% rates reduction for some 16,000 local small businesses."

"We would recommend that the scheme be expanded to provide additional rate relief for those small retailers who invest in renewable energy systems for their businesses, which in our view is the only real way in which we will reduce our reliance on high cost fossil fuel and reduce energy costs for small businesses and retailers."

NIIRTA Urge More Time For Tobacco Ban Implementation

The Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association has expressed concern that jobs could be lost and small businesses close if Minister McGimpsey presses ahead with forcing through by next year a ban on all Tobacco displays, despite small retailers on the mainland having until 2013 to make the changes.

NIIRTA Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said: *"We are very clear that we are not opposing this legislation and fully acknowledge that our members as responsible community retailers have their role to play in tackling the problem of smoking and the damage that it does to the health of our community."*

"However, we are very concerned that unlike England and Wales, where small businesses have until 2013 to make the necessary changes to their shops and



counters in relation to removing all tobacco displays, Minister McGimpsey has stated that he wants to force these changes through by next year on local small businesses"

"NIIRTA estimate that this will cost recession hit small businesses an average of £5000 to make the changes to their counters and shops. This could impact on over 3000 local shops and cost our economy nearly £15 million at a time of recession."

"Given the dramatic reductions in these businesses' cash flow and the fact the next 12 months will be make or break for them, we are simply asking for small businesses to be given the same lead in time as the rest of the UK in relation to its implementation."

A NIIRTA delegation has met with the Health Minister and a further consultation on the timing of the implementation of the ban is due in early summer.



Model Jenny Curran is pictured with Bernard Rooney from Bank of Ireland at the launch of the Neighbourhood Retailer Awards 2009

SEARCHING FOR THE STARS OF THE RETAILING INDUSTRY!

The search is on to discover the shining stars of the independent grocery retailing industry as the 2009 Neighbourhood Retailer Awards are launched. Platinum sponsor Bank of Ireland is once again supporting these prestigious awards, which celebrate, and reward grocery-retailing excellence and are Northern Ireland's most definitive and longest standing retailing awards for the industry.

Since their inception over a decade ago, the Neighbourhood Retailer Awards have made a significant contribution to the grocery retailing industry across the province by marking key achievements and highlighting all that is great about the sector. Designed primarily to recognise and reward professionalism, these highly esteemed awards help to raise industry standards by honouring and acknowledging a broad reach of retailers from local supermarkets, independent grocers, garage forecourts and symbol groups, as well as manufacturers and suppliers who together all form a crucial part of the Northern Ireland economy.

At the awards launch managing editor

and publisher Bill Penton commented:

"During the current economic climate it is essential for independent retailers to be proactive and innovative in order to accommodate the changing needs of today's consumer. The Neighbourhood Retailer Awards help to build confidence within the industry and showcase the quality, depth and strength of independent retailing in Northern Ireland. They also reinforce the important role that these traditionally family owned independent retailers play in each of the local communities they serve. I would like to take this opportunity to give a sincere thank you to all of our sponsors and entrants alike."

Also speaking at the launch, Bernard Rooney, Regional Manager, from platinum sponsor Bank of Ireland said: *"Bank of Ireland is thrilled to be involved with these prestigious awards for what will be our fourth year running as we recognise the great importance of the local grocery industry in Northern Ireland. As this industry continues to evolve and develop we are pleased to have assisted many of these retailers with financing their businesses and*

offering them a comprehensive service specially tailored to suit their needs and we look forward to helping many more."

Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive of NIIRTA added: *"These prestigious awards are a highlight of the retailing calendar in Northern Ireland and are a key industry initiative which help to keep standards high. I would certainly encourage local retailers to support this event and also enter these important awards."*

Guests can look forward to a fun filled evening as the Neighbourhood Retailer Awards 2009 promises to be a night of fun and celebration, showcasing its triumphs and successes. The awards are judged independently and the deadline for entries is Friday 3rd July 2009 at 5pm and all companies, retailers, shops and individuals are encouraged to send in their entries as soon as possible.

This year's presentation of awards will be held on Friday 16th October 2009 at the Ramada Hotel, Belfast. For further information on the Neighbourhood Retailer Awards 2009 please contact Pamela Beers on 028 9045 7457 or email pamela.beers@pentonpublications.co.uk.



Minister Ritchie Approves Over £220,000 to Extend Current Public Realm Scheme in Coleraine

The Social Development Minister Margaret Ritchie has announced £223,000 of additional funding for an extension of the current public realm scheme in Coleraine.

The extra money will allow work to be undertaken in New Row, alongside the work already completed in Church Street and Kingsgate Street in the town. Minister Ritchie said: "I welcome this announcement for Coleraine. I want our urban regeneration projects to deliver shared public space, places that people from all communities can access and enjoy and this is another example of that."

"This additional funding now means that a large part of Coleraine's pedestrianised town centre has benefited from a public realm scheme in the past few years. Coleraine will benefit greatly from this extension of public works as this kind of regeneration makes our towns places which provide opportunities for all, visitors, residents of rural areas and the town dwellers themselves."

The Minister went on to say: "The inclusion of New Row in this scheme is also significant, as it provides an important linkage between the prime retail frontage in Coleraine Town Centre and the Abbey Street development site."

The scheme in New Row will involve the replacement of the main pedestrian surface, the replacement of the existing street furniture and the planting of trees. It will also involve the introduction of an integrated lighting initiative with the



erection of street lighting columns.

Mayor of Coleraine Councillor David Barbour said: "This announcement is extremely welcome as it is important for both residents and visitors coming to Coleraine town centre to enjoy their shopping experience. The extension of works to New Row ensures our pedestrianised town centre is more user friendly, while attracting families of all ages to shop in the area. It also brings a welcomed boost to local businesses and services located in the town centre, and I look forward to its completion."

Ian Donaghey, Chairman of the Coleraine Town Partnership, said: "Coleraine Town Partnership welcomes this announcement by DSD Minister Margaret

Ritchie to extend the refurbishment to New Row. This area of the town centre is establishing a unique independent retail offer and is one of the main access routes to the proposed Abbey Street development. We recognise that it is essential to continue the refurbishment work in preparation for the proposed development schemes at Abbey Street and the Mall to create an environment where people want to come and shop and Coleraine Town Partnership will continue to work with the various agencies to ensure that this happens."

The total package of £1.3million is made up of just over £1.2million from DSD and also includes a £66,000 contribution from Coleraine Borough Council with Roads Service contributing £25,000.

Does the Tax Man Owe you?

Are you aware you could be owed a significant amount from the tax man and you may be paying more tax than you are legally required to do?

- If you purchased your business premises less than 15 years ago and are paying tax on trading profits you could qualify for a retrospective capital allowance claim.
- By carrying out a capital allowance site survey to locate, identify and record qualifying items, a typical claim should produce 20% to 28% of the purchase price in previously unclaimed capital allowances.
- This is an opportunity not to be missed and could have significant cash flow and tax mitigation advantages for your business. You do not even have to change your present accountant.

With no up-front fees and based on a no-win no-fee arrangement - contact Billy Drake or Alistair Wells at Lynn Drake & Co Chartered Accountants to see if you qualify. This is not a tax avoidance strategy and is completely risk free.

Lynn Drake & Co, 40 Main Street, Moira, BT67 0LQ.

Tel: 028 9261 2262, Fax: 028 92617103, email: billy@lynn-drake.com

PSNI REPORTS 18% RISE IN SHOPLIFTING

We are in the middle of a "recession crime wave" according to many leading analysts.

PSNI figures published May 2009 show a significant increase in the incidence of robbery, shoplifting and fraud.

(http://www.psni.police.uk/1_08_09_recorded_crime.pdf)

Shoplifting rose nearly a fifth (+18.2%). Armed robbery rose by 14.4%. Fraud and forgery offences rose by 28.4%. Counterfeiting increased by a massive 154%. Thefts by employees are also up by 4.2%.



All of this will be eating into your profits and threatening your livelihood and future viability.

What is to be done?

- **Review** your existing security arrangements.
Does your CCTV attain Home Office Standards?
There is no point in having a CCTV system unless the PSNI can utilise the images to secure a conviction in court.
- **Maintain** - Cutting essential maintenance is not sensible cost cutting as the system will not perform at its best. A camera with a dirty lens or which is badly focused may as well be turned off.
- **Upgrade** – if your existing system is not suitable. Insist on seeing example footage of any new proposed equipment. Look closely at the specifications.
- **Link POS data from tills to cameras** A searchable database makes it easy to search void transactions/ unusual transactions helping to identify possible fraud. Consider covert recording if you suspect internal fraud.
- **Access and Storage** Are your CCTV images stored securely? Can you view live CCTV remotely or download recorded footage? Remote access allows you to keep an eye on your premises from home.
- **HD Technology - Megapixel IP CCTV**
This records at full 1080P resolution and higher. These latest HDcctv cameras offer exceptional value for money in that a single 3MP camera provides 10 times the resolution of a conventional camera and can be used to cover a much greater area. Megapixel cameras are ideal for Garage Forecourts, and wide areas like loading yards. A 1.3 Megapixel camera used at entrance points give excellent High Definition images which greatly aid police in identifying offenders.



Image courtesy of Carlisle's Fresh Foods, Ballynahinch.



Contact us now and we will carry out a free survey and provide our recommendations without obligation.

We are offering a 10% discount on all services and equipment to all NIIRTA members.

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