

Issue 6 | Winter 2022



RetailNI

Standing up for
Independent Retailers

The Retailer

The Magazine for **Retail NI**



Retail NI Launch The Wellbeing Plan for Retailers

INSIDE

High Street Card

High Street Heroes NI

Savage & Whitten Launch
their 50th Store

NORTHERN IRELAND HAS SPOKEN

69% CHOSE THE TASTE OF PEPSI MAX



MAXIMUM TASTE NO SUGAR



In a blind taste challenge in Northern Ireland from 24.05.19 to 26.09.19, 2,671 out of 3,847 people surveyed preferred the taste of Pepsi Max to NI's biggest selling cola. For more info see www.pepsimax.ie



Onwards and Upwards for 2022

Welcome to the first edition of The Retailer for 2022.

2021 was without doubt the most challenging year of trade ever for our members. Here at Retail NI we made it our priority to get as much Government support as possible to our members to enable them to stay open and serve their customers.



We successfully lobbied for a two year business rates holiday, a lost footfall fund, £5k digital grants and the High Street/Spend Local Card. In addition, we also helped over 300 members with Grants and Rates relief appeals and are continuing to assist our membership with a whole range of problems.

Retail NI also played a key role in establishing the new High Street Taskforce, we were also involved in extensive engagement on the NI Protocol and launched the first ever Wellbeing Plan for retail staff.

This year we have big plans to hold a major High Street Summit and to repeat our hugely successful High Street Heroes Awards. Currently our biggest policy challenge is to address the huge cost of doing business in Northern Ireland. With energy bill hikes, National Insurance hikes, the return of Business Rates, to name a few, the cost of trading in NI is increasing. We will continue with our lobbying across all the issues.

I want to thank all of our members for their consistent support and to remind them we are here to support you with problems large or small.

Don't hesitate to get in touch.

Glyn Roberts

Retail NI CEO

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RetailNI

Standing up for
Independent Retailers

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The Wellbeing Plan

ON 6TH DECEMBER RETAIL NI LAUNCHED THEIR WELLBEING PLAN AT A CHRISTMAS RECEPTION HELD IN THE LONG GALLERY, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS. THE RECEPTION WAS HOSTED BY ECONOMY MINISTER, GORDON LYONS.

The first-of-its-kind Wellbeing Plan seeks to offer employers practical solutions to the growing wellbeing and mental health issues posed by the pandemic. It was produced under the guidance of mental health experts including Mental Health Champion, Professor Siobhan O'Neill, Inspire Wellbeing, and the Association of Convenience Stores.

The Wellbeing Plan also included a call to Government to ensure that wellbeing was at the centre of all manifestos in the upcoming election and that the "Building Forward – Consolidated Covid 19 Recovery Plan" be fully implemented.

A copy of the report is available at www.retailni.com/resources or by contacting joelene@retailni.com.

The event was well supported with numerous MLA's, Assembly Candidates, Local Government representatives and Retail NI members.

Minister for the Economy, Gordon Lyons MLA said:

"Our local retailers have been among those hardest hit by the effects of the pandemic and as we begin to rebuild our economy the wellbeing of staff is now more important than ever. The Retail NI Wellbeing Plan is a very welcome resource for the sector, and I am pleased to see key stakeholders coming together to establish a resource that can be used for all employees and businesses in Northern Ireland.

"Our journey to recovery is gathering momentum and I have been told by businesses, chambers of commerce and trade representatives from all parts of Northern Ireland how important Spend Local has been in helping them recover from the severest impacts of the pandemic.

Northern Ireland Mental Health Champion, Professor Siobhan O'Neill said:

"It is vital that all employers support positive mental health and wellbeing in their workforce and ensure that their employees feel valued and protected.



Peter McBride (Retail NI President), Economy Minister Gordon Lyons, Siobhan O'Neill (Mental Health Champion) & Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO)

"Employers should create working environments where people feel safe and able to express their feelings. I would encourage retail employers and workers to have more open discussions about how together they can protect and improve the wellbeing of everyone working in retail. The Wellbeing Plan is a welcome steppingstone in starting these conversations and helping people get the support that they need. This guide is very timely, the Department of Health's 10-year Mental Health Strategy is currently being implemented, it is a strong plan to

transform services, and to focus on early intervention and the prevention of mental illness. I am calling for the political parties in the Executive to commit to providing the 34% increase in funding for mental health services so that the Strategy can be delivered in full and on schedule".

Retail NI Chief Executive, Glyn Roberts said:

"We are proud to be the first local business organisation to launch a plan supporting the wellbeing of retail workers. Retail is the largest sector in Northern Ireland's private sector economy; therefore, it is essential the retail workforce is supported appropriately.

"The wellbeing of staff is vital in the workplace and research continues to show that businesses benefit when their staff are happy at work. By

placing more of an emphasis on employees' wellbeing, businesses create a better relationship with their workforce.

"We have not seen the true impact of the pandemic on the population's mental health; however, statistics have shown 91% of managers noticed an increase in wellbeing concerns among colleagues during the pandemic. This is a shocking figure and highlights the need for the Executive to carefully consider the recommendations in the Wellbeing Plan and recognise their role in providing resources for increased workforce wellbeing."



Ronan Harper (Pivotal MD) & Peter McBride (Retail NI President)



Peter McBride (Retail NI President), Paul Givan (First Minister) & Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO)

High Street Card

BACK IN SEPTEMBER 2021 THE ECONOMY MINISTER LAUNCHED ITS £145M SPEND IT LOCAL PRE-PAID CARD SCHEME. THE SCHEME WAS DESIGNED TO KICK START THE HIGH STREET AND EVERYONE AGED 18 AND OVER WERE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR THE £100 PRE-PAID CARD.

The scheme went live on 27th September for a period of 4 weeks with the cards due to expire on 30th November 2021. An issue arose with confirmation of people's identity so an extension to 14th December was granted. The scheme was designed to encourage spending at retailers that had been severely affected by lockdowns.

RETAIL NI'S SPEND IT INDEPENDENT

Retail NI encouraged shoppers to "Spend it Independent" and support their local retail sector with their High Street Spend Local Pre-Paid Card. They launched a campaign on 7th October and the feedback was phenomenal.

At the close of the scheme total of 1.4m applications were received with 99% of the cards being process and issued.



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO), Memento Florists, Simon Hamilton (Belfast Chamber of Commerce)



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO) & Gordon Lyons (Economy Minister)

High Street Heroes NI 2021

THE 2021 HIGH STREET HEROES NI CAMPAIGN IN ASSOCIATION WITH RETAIL NI, IRISH NEWS, TRANSLINK AND CAMELOT WAS LAUNCHED BY THE FIRST AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTERS JUST IN TIME FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY IN JULY 2021.

The online vote enabled shoppers to recognise their favourite independent retailer and local high street. In this year's competition there were 12 different categories; from favourite convenience store, deli, butcher to favourite street and Covid 19 Champion.

At the launch the First Minister, Paul Given said "Our independent retailers have provided amazing support to communities over the last year, and this is a timely opportunity to show our appreciation to them."

"The challenges of the pandemic resulted in fundamental changes within the retail sector. Our local business owners responded with energy, creativity, and a determination to keep providing high quality products and services for their customers."

"I also know that many provided a lifeline for those who were dealing with isolation. There is no doubting the power of a friendly word or a kindly action. This is what makes our Northern Ireland retailers so special."

The deputy First Minister, Michelle O'Neill said "there is so much to celebrate within our local retail sector. Our independent business are part and parcel of our society and give so much to the community."

"From the early days of the pandemic, retailers and retail workers have been on the frontline, delivering essential services for people, including vulnerable members of our society."

"This has undoubtedly been the most challenging of times for them and they have made a huge effort and significant investment to ensure the safety of customers and staff. Now is the time to say thank you and recognise their contribution."

Retail NI President, Peter McBride commented "we are delighted to launch High Street Heroes NI to highlight and celebrate the huge contribution independent retailers make to our local high streets and the economy. High Street Heroes NI gives consumers the opportunity to vote for their favourite independent retailer and high street."

Camelot's Retail Director, Jenny Bloggs said "from small corner shops to local newsagents and well stocked convenience stores – our 44,000 retail partners are the backbone of the National Lottery and, to most players, our public face."



Peter McBride (Retail NI President)

"For that reason, we are delighted to support High Street Heroes NI, to help highlight some of the fantastic independent retailers who continue to serve communities across Northern Ireland – day in, day out."

Annette Small from the Irish News commented "we have heard countless inspirational stories of local independent retailers adapting and innovating to not only survive, but thrive, in response to the devastating impact of Covid 19 on shopping habits, socialising and everyday life."

Translink Chief Executive, Chris Conway said, "it's never been more important to support our local independent retailers and we're ready to bring more people into cities, towns and villages to enjoy the fantastic choice, quality and personal touch on offer."

The campaign saw an increase of 35% in the total number of votes. The Winners were announced in August 2021 and various events were held across the province to congratulate the winners.

The Winners

BUTCHER



- 🏆 Brolly's Butchers, Cloughmills
- 🥈 K & G McAtamney, Ballymena
- 🥉 Hodges Butchers, Larne

COFFEE SHOP



- 🏆 McCrums Motorcycles, Portadown
- 🥈 Glasshouse Coffee, Lisburn
- 🥉 Corner Bakery, Ballymena

CONVENIENCE STORE



- 🏆 Crawfords, Maghera
- 🥈 Urban Fresh, City Centre, Belfast
- 🥉 Mace, Ormeau Road, Belfast

DELI



- 🏆 Two sisters, Ardenlee Avenue, Belfast
- 🥈 Arcadia, Lisburn Road, Belfast
- 🥉 K & G McAtamney, Ballymena

FASHION RETAILER



- 🏆 Wraps Fashions, Newcastle
- 🥈 Couture Grandeur, Crossmaglen
- 🥉 Menarys, Newtownards

HEALTHCARE RETAILER



- 🏆 Harkins Pharmacy, Maghera
- 🥈 Andersons Pharmacy, Newtownards
- 🥉 Randalstown Pharmacies

HOMEWARE RETAILER



- 🏆 Rosies Emporium, Lisburn
- 🥈 Neptune, Ormeau Road, Belfast
- 🥉 Fiddlesticks Fabrics, Ballymena

RETAIL EMPLOYEE



- 🏆 Andy Hazley, Learning Space
- 🥈 Philip Coulter, Bethany Fruit Market
- 🥉 Clive O'Neill, Clive's Country Corner

OFF-LICENCE



- 🏆 The Vineyard, Belfast
- 🥈 Swifts Eurospar, Lisnaskea
- 🥉 Brodericks, Omagh

HIGH STREET OF THE YEAR



- 🏆 Ormeau Road, Belfast
- 🥈 Main Street, Maghera
- 🥉 Runner Up Main Street, Larne

COMMUNITY COVID 19 CHAMPION



- 🏆 Crawfords, Maghera
- 🥈 Two Sisters, Ardenlee Avenue, Belfast
- 🥉 Mace, Ormeau Road, Belfast

OVERALL INDEPENDENT RETAILER



- 🏆 Crawfords, Maghera

CAMELOT THE IRISH NEWS



High Street Heroes Winners from the Mid and East Antrim Area



High Street Heroes Winners in Newtownards



Brodericks Omagh



High Street Heroes Winners in the Belfast Area

The Labour Party Annual Conference 2021

RETAIL NI ATTENDED THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE BACK IN SEPTEMBER 2021.

Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO) was invited to take part in the final panel at party conference. The panel was entitled: What do post pandemic high-streets look like? Lessons from Northern Ireland. The session was chaired by Sonny Leong from SME4Labour. Along with Glyn on the panel were, Lou Haigh, Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, Bill Esterson Shadow Trade Minister and Ed Woodall from ACS. The response to this session was overwhelming with people queuing out the door to get in.

Glyn Roberts opened the session by discussing the work of Retail NI. He noted that he was delighted to be at an event on Northern Ireland and not discussing the troubles or Brexit. He made clear that he was there to pitch for Northern Ireland PLC, to encourage people to visit and shop in Northern Ireland. Glyn discussed the positive impact that High street vouchers had in Northern Ireland. He elaborated that the Northern Ireland Executive have done a good job of pushing a localist agenda that empowers communities to repurpose their high streets to be at the centre of communities and towns. Glyn argued that the Retail sector should be seen as a partner by government when deciding policy, rather than someone to simply be consulted. On Brexit, Glyn noted that it was necessary for politicians in London, Belfast and Brussels to work on solutions rather than problems. He felt that Northern Ireland could be the gateway to the EU and to the UK, and that Northern Ireland could become an economic powerhouse in the future.



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO)



SME4Labour Panel

The Brand

behind the Brands

Allegro Sales and Marketing,
Innovation Factory
Forthriver Business Park,
Springfield Road,
Belfast,
BT12 7DG

Savage & Whitten Launch their 50th Store

MCGRANE'S NEARBY, KEADY

In April 2021, after more than a century in the wholesale business, S&W rebranded their offering and promised 'A Whole Lot More' for their symbol customers. More than a year later, the group have made good on their promise as they launched their 50th Nearby symbol store - McGrane's Nearby in Keady.

Completely exclusive to S&W Wholesale, Nearby played a vital part in a wider modernization strategy to help independent retailers forge deeper connections in the local community. Despite the extensive challenges faced during the pandemic, Nearby continue to operate to the highest standard of safety precautions with the opening of even more new stores planned across the island of Ireland.

"Since the opening of the very first store back in April, we've been working to create a high quality service for both Nearby retailers and their customers in-store. The new Nearby stores have been very well received in their local communities with retailers noticing an increased level of footfall in their stores as a direct result of the conversion to Nearby." Maurice Little – Sales Manager at S&W Wholesale

With a strong focus on local communities, it was especially fitting that the launch of their 50th store was with a family-run business in the heart of Keady, Co.



Tom McGrane (McGrane's), Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO), Dermot McGrane (McGrane's)

Armagh. Owned by brothers Tom and Dermot McGrane, the store has been in safe hands for over 40 years and today customers can expect the same great service with the added benefit of it being part of a symbol brand.

With everything in one place, the store now sits proudly in the heart of the local community.

"We've been serving our local community for over 40 years and can't wait for our customers to reap the rewards of our new venture as a Nearby store. As part of the Nearby family, we look forward to working with the team to bring great customer service and unrivalled value to the people of Keady and beyond." Tom McGrane – Owner at Nearby, Keady.

To celebrate the ongoing success of the brand and the opening of their

50th store, the team held a fun-filled launch event at McGrane's Nearby in Keady. On the day, customers took part in a 'basket dash' for the chance to win instore vouchers, prizes from local suppliers and the latest Apple iPad. For those who didn't manage to win a prize on the day, there was also delicious hot food sampling from their deli, wine tasting and Nearby goody bags with lots of tasty treats.

"The opening of the 50th Nearby store is a big day for us all. We started this journey during the pandemic and to get to this point so quickly is a reflection of the hard work and passion from both our retailers and those behind the scenes at S&W Wholesale. We have big plans for the rest of the year and can't wait to continue the growth of Nearby – watch this space." Daniel Comiskey – Brand Marketing Lead at S&W Wholesale.

DRAFT BUDGET 2022-25

The NI Executives Draft Budget was published in December 2021. After reviewing the budget Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

"It is to be welcomed that Minister Murphy has outlined a further three months rates holiday for smaller businesses from April 2022. This may have to be extended if the Executive brings forward new Covid regulations that impact on their ability to trade"

"We look forward to working with the Minister on his new proposals to increase to 24 months rates relief for retailers who occupy vacant properties. This has been a long-term policy priority for Retail NI and is important if we are to address the huge problem of dereliction on our high streets"

"It is disappointing that the Executive could not agree on this budget and does make it difficult for business and civic society to respond to the document if there is not consensus amongst the five parties"

"If the parties do agree a new budget in the next few weeks this consultation will be stopped and a new one started?"

RETAIL NI STAFF CHANGES

We were sad to say goodbye to Lisa McMaster back in July 2021 after 13 years as Office Manager.

She has moved to pastures new within the Civil Service. We wish her every success for the future and thank her for all her hard work over the years.

In August we welcomed Joeline Poole to the team. Joeline has come to us from BSD Training Ltd and before that Construction Employers Federation. If you need anything you can contact her as follows

Landline **028 9022 0004**
Mobile **07542 845 834**
Email **Joeline@retailni.com**

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Ministerial Meeting Update

OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS RETAIL NI HAS BEEN MEETING WITH VARIOUS EXECUTIVE MINISTERS TO EMPHASISE ISSUES AFFECTING THE RETAIL SECTOR.

BUNCRANA ROAD

Glyn Roberts and David Barbour (Retail NI Board Member) met with both Colum Eastwood and Junior Minister Middleton regarding issues affecting members due to the redevelopment of the Buncrana Road.

The meetings with both Mr Eastwood and Minister Middleton were very positive.

SECRETARY OF STATE BRANDON LEWIS MP

At the end of 2021 Glyn Roberts met with Brandon Lewis Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the NI Protocol proposals and provide industry feedback to take forward to the EU negotiations.

FINANCE MINISTER – CONOR MURPHY

A meeting with the Finance Minister Conor Murphy was held in Enniskillen with local businesses. It gave attendees the opportunity to discuss business support, Reveal 2023 and the ongoing impact of Covid 19 on town centres.



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO) and Brandon Lewis (Secretary of State for NI)

EU AMBASSADOR – JOÃO VALE DE ALMEIDA

Glyn Roberts met with Joao Vale de Almeida for a positive discussion on NI Protocol challenges impacting upon Retail NI Members.

After the meeting Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

"It is welcome that both the UK Government and the European Union have brought forward proposals and are now in solution mode in relation to addressing challenges around the NI Protocol. This moves the situation forward and hopefully to a long-term solution

which gives our members greater stability in trading with GB suppliers and wholesalers."

"There is much to recommend in the EU proposals and is clear that they are listening to the concerns of the local business community. We will take time to examine them and consult with our members before we give a considered final view."

"A deal is possible if the political will is there, and I would be hopeful that progress toward that can now be made."



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO) and Joao Vale de Almeida (EU Ambassador)



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO) & Peter Kyle MP (Shadow Secretary of State)

SHADOW SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND – PETER KYLE

Peter Kyle MP visited the Retail NI Offices prior to Christmas to get a feel for how retailers had been affected by the Covid Pandemic and the effects they were feeling following Brexit. It was a very productive meeting.



Kenny Bradley (Greens of Lisburn), Conor Burns MP (Minister of State for NI), Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO) & Dr Katrina Collins (Lisburn Chamber of Commerce)

MINISTER OF STATE – CONOR BURNS MP

Retail NI were delighted to host Minister of State Conor Burns MP on a visit to member stores prior to Christmas. It was an opportunity to raise issues and concerns regarding the NI Protocol. Further discussions with the Minister have taken place since this meeting to provide further information to the Minister on the specific issues.



Interview with a retailer

JONATHAN CRAWFORD

Lockdown was a strange time for us all, did you manage learn a new skill during lockdown?

For someone who thought he was reasonably fit. I discovered I wasn't by joining a local gym's online classes. Good thing was my embarrassment was kept within my living room.

What do you do when you are not working?

I'm know I struggle to 'turn off' from work so it's a conscious effort to spend time with my family.

What is the biggest misconception people have about you?

That I'm always nice.

Who are your biggest role models in life?

Without doubt my Parents boring answer but that's it.

If you had a superpower, what would it be?

Omnipotence, well there is no point in asking for a simple one.

Where do you see things going in the next 12 – 24 months

It's difficult not to be pessimistic about the economy with rising inflation, increased corporation tax, increased NIC however I feel people really want to get back to normal and the world will learn to live with covid 19 for a very long time.

What's happening in the Retail Sector

AIB BUSINESS EYE AWARDS – COVID BUSINESS HERO AWARD

Retail NI were delighted that Glyn Roberts was recognised at the AIB Business Eye Awards for all his hard work through out the Covid 19 Pandemic. He was awarded the Covid Business Hero Award. This was a new award reflecting the Covid era and recognising the outstanding contribution made by an individual on behalf of a specific sector or the wider business community during the crisis.



Glyn Roberts (Retail NI CEO)

HIGH STREET TASKFORCE FUTURE OF OUR HIGH STREETS

The Executive Office formed the High Street Task Force (HSTF) late in Autumn 2021, to identify the challenges and issues that our high streets face and to oversee the development of solutions and actions that could be taken to support our high streets.

As part of this process the Executive Office launched a Call for Evidence and held a series of six workshops around the country.

The HSTF are currently collating all the information gathered and will create a draft report, with recommendations. This document will be subject to consultation and equality considerations before a final.

COVID 19 EFFECTS

Covid 19 has stayed with us now for 18 months. Despite various lockdowns, restrictions and hiccups retailers have remained on the frontline keep us all fed and clothed.

Retail NI worked hard on behalf of their members and were able to secure:

- 2 Year Rates Holiday
- Online Fund for Retailers
- Footfall Fund
- Spend Local Pre-Paid Card

Make it your business to make a difference.

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Stephens Catering – Fullan Job

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Fullan's Eurospar have invested in Rational Self-cleaning iCombi Pro's, the latest energy efficient and labour-saving technology. Ubert Hot & Cold Deli's with retractable glass for back service and quick conversion to self-service in the same unit and the latest Ubert S4elf Cleaning Chicken Rotisserie for chicken cooked and served on the day. This was a full turnkey design project that included a total bespoke counter

and cladding solution along with the plumbing and electrical fitout and equipment supplied and managed by Stephens Catering Equipment.

The butchery and deli sectors have faced challenging times in recent years, but with the diversity into "hot hold & Grab and Go" offerings, these markets have excelled and aligned with the new customer trends of buying on the go. With new innovative designers and products that allow food products to be held at a safe temperature for long periods of time without compromising on quality.

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Retail NI Staff & Board

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- NI Butter segment seeing +22.8% YoY growth*
- NPD launch supported with shopper campaign

*Source Nielsen 27th March 2021

Nisa welcomes new lead for Northern Ireland



Nisa Retail is pleased to announce the appointment of Nigel Maxwell who joins the business to head up the Northern Ireland team.

Nigel will take over from 1st January 2022, supporting Nisa partners across Northern Ireland and leading Nisa's Irish team.

He brings with him more than 30 years' experience in grocery retailing, largely in Northern Ireland, as well as the Republic of Ireland and England. And 20 years of his career has been spent working with independent retailers.

Most recently Nigel held the position of Sales Director for Supervalu and Centra in Northern Ireland, part of the Musgrave retail and wholesale group.



Nigel Maxwell (Nisa Regional Retail Manager)

Victoria Lockie, Head of Retail at Nisa, said: "I'm excited to welcome Nigel to the team. He is a well-respected figure in the industry with a wealth of knowledge, particularly about the independent sector

in Northern Ireland and a track record of working with independent retailers and helping them to grow their sales and profits.

"Nigel is a valuable addition to the Nisa team and I'm very much looking forward to working with him as he supports our Irish partners and helps to drive forward their businesses."

Speaking about his new role, Nigel said: "I'm really looking forward to working with the team at Nisa and our retail partners to continue to grow and develop the business. I can't wait to get out to meet the retailers and build on the successful relationships that are the core of the Nisa business model."



Can you afford the energy price increase in 2022?

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