

# SPAR Today

Magazine

Issue 70 | April | May 2021

## Make it a Summer to remember with SPAR

Great new SPAR Brand products  
and coordinated marketing  
campaign launching



Care and support  
through terminal illness

Marie Curie charity reg. no. 207994  
(England & Wales), SC038731 (Scotland)



*There for you*



# REFRESHMENT UNLEASHED!



**SUGAR  
FREE**

## NEW DARK BERRY



Time to **Tango**



## Editorial Lockdown a year on

On March 23 2020, the UK entered lockdown for the first time and SPAR stores across the country found themselves facing their toughest conditions ever.

In a year when we have all wanted to focus on those close to us, SPAR stores have continued to support their local communities.

I have taken the opportunity to reflect on all that SPAR has done. You kept colleagues and customers safe and by adapting quickly to local and national lockdowns, you brought a host of additional in-store services and supported your communities on an unprecedented scale.

Convenience has changed during the course of the pandemic. We have seen bigger baskets and less frequent visits. But one thing that has been a constant is how the entire industry has worked together for the benefit of local communities.

It has meant we have had to be agile, quick to react to changing customer needs and be very innovative. We have brought new products and ranges to stores catering for the changing needs of shoppers and we have been on hand to help other businesses in the community.

The speed of change and how quickly stores have adopted new technology will have a positive effect on the industry going forward.

The advent of home delivery, stores supporting charities and foodbanks, aiding volunteers shop for the vulnerable, brings home how much we are there for communities.

It is also important to remember those stores on the high street, travel hubs and in foodservice who have had to close and those families who have lost loved ones and



friends. The pandemic really has been a different time for them and we need to make sure they are offered the help and support they need to recover.

As a network of independent retailers and wholesalers, we have all demonstrated how we can meet an extraordinary challenge. We have shown how we care for the communities we serve all over the UK and we will continue to provide support where we can.

Let's keep going with the best practice sharing we have developed together - it will continue to make us stronger.

Thank you for your hard work.

*Louise Hoste*

**Managing Director  
SPAR UK**

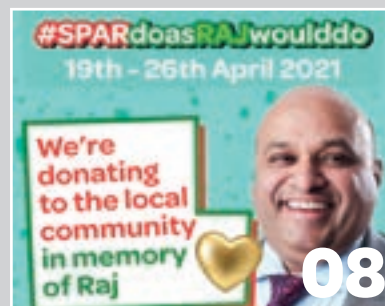
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# Make it your Summer

April sees the launch of SPAR's Summer marketing campaign 'Make it Your Summer' which will get customers excited for the Summer and inspire them to purchase SPAR's quality range of own-label food and drink products.

The new Summer season brings with it some delicious new product development from the SPAR UK team. Eight products join the range which capitalise on market trends and changing shopper habits as well as expanding on successful product formats. These include the launch of two national SPAR Brand Burgers (4s) and SPAR Premium Aberdeen Angus Burgers (2s), promoted along side a number of other BBQ meat products at either 2 for £5 and 2 for £7. Also launching will be two new dip products, new duo continental meat selections, an additional mini Spanish antipasti selection and year-round crispy potato fries.

2021 also sees the first year of SPARs limited edition products receiving a seasonal packaging treatment alongside our agreed summer in-store theming. The range of 10 products is split between six BBQ meat lines and four Summer prepared vegetable products, some are returning lines but many of the new additions capitalise on the season's best trends. Created to signpost key seasonal products from across the SPAR Brand range, these hero lines for the Summer will be easier than ever for our customers to see on shelf.

And of course, don't forget the return of some key limited-edition salads and sides, available until mid-September which are perfect for shoppers' BBQ occasions or alfresco dining needs.



# Frozen food sales set to sizzle this Summer

The frozen category will also play its part this Summer, having seen a resurgence as a result of the pandemic with the market up +16% and SPAR growing ahead at +24%. This trend is predicted to continue as shoppers trust the quality of frozen food available and younger shoppers buy into the category due to the reduction of food waste. There is a huge range of SPAR Brand products available to support this trend - from Frozen Pizza's, Chips & Burgers to Ice Cream Tubs & Cones - SPAR Brand Frozen is there for you.



# Current trends shaping Soft Drinks

SPARs soft drinks range features an option for every customer. With Ginger Beer and Tropical being the perfect summer flavours, SPAR also offers on-the-go varieties, perfect for those summer stay-cations!

All SPAR Brand soft drinks now feature clear bottles, which makes them significantly easier to recycle and enhances responsible retailing credentials. With restrictions easing into the Summer, stock up on the SPAR crisps and snacks range, perfect for the Euros! The range features premium products like the Mature Cheddar & Onion Hand Cooked Crisps and all of the classic favourites like Burger Bites.





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## Make it Your Summer of Food

As customers start to prepare for summer, some delicious and healthy recipes have been created to provide seasonal inspiration for people cooking at home.

By providing four easy-to-follow videos and updating the website recipe section, SPAR is helping customers to rustle up something new to try at home. The four video recipes included within this campaign are Buffalo Cauliflower, Salmon Poke Bowl, Chicken 'Taco' Wraps and a Summer Tray Bake.

These will be promoted during April across all SPAR social channels and website. By featuring SPAR brand products this will help drive footfall as customers will see the wide range available from their local store.

In addition there are also some incredible branded and SPAR own label customer offers available to bring the summer to life in-store.



## AL FRESCO WINES

The sun's shining, the weather is warmer and Bank Holidays beckon: so, sitting in the garden with a glass of wine seems like a great idea.

SPAR has always had a brilliant selection on shelf and in the chiller wines but sometimes customers fancy something a bit different. Here's a tasty new white wine which is perfect for Spring and early Summer sipping:

### SPAR Regional Selection Picpoul de Pinet from the South of France

With its distinctive bottle shape and availability on many restaurant wine lists and supermarket shelves, this is a great addition to all wine fixtures. As a fresh and delicate wine it makes a delicious sundowner or tasty match to seafood and salads.

Research shows this wine appeals to younger and older shoppers and more affluent customers. It has seen double digit growth over the last 12 months. Stock up now!



Make it your Summer

## Make it your Summer of BBQs

The 'Make it your Summer' campaign will launch in May and will run throughout summer with a big focus on BBQs.

Over the two bank holiday weekends SPAR will be amplifying its headline deals as well as the new SPAR brand BBQ range, showing customers they can get everything they need to enjoy a BBQ from SPAR.

To increase reach and social engagement, there will also be a competition in May for customers across all SPAR social channels, giving them the chance to win the Ultimate BBQ Bundle!

All customers have to do is share their own #SPARBBQs. By linking this digital campaign with the in-store creative, it will drive footfall and help customers find all the new exciting 2021 SPAR brand BBQ products.

SHARE YOUR BBQ SPREAD #SPARBBQ

USE THE #SPARBBQ AND UPLOAD YOUR BEST BBQ SNAPS TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE OF WINNING THE ULTIMATE BBQ BUNDLE.



Launched just in time for barbecue season is SPAR's hugely popular **Crisp White** and **Fresh Rose** in 2.25litre Bag in Box

- Eye-catching packaging
- Same great wines
- Equivalent to 3 bottles
- Merchandise in the chiller
- Convenient to carry
- Keeps wine fresh for longer
- Portion control

A first for SPAR brand wine as two new SKUs are launched in the revitalised and growing bag in a box

format. Just in time for the BBQ season, the two new bag in box wines are product extension from the popular **Crisp White** and **Fresh Rose**.

The bag in box wine has experienced double digit growth over the last year with this trend set to continue into summer 2021. These are a must stock with their eye-catching packaging, on trend format and perfect for the BBQ/garden party customer mission which is set to be huge this year.



# A.F. Blakemore Launches Charity Campaign in Memory of Raj Aggarwal

**A.F. Blakemore has launched a charity campaign in memory of much-loved SPAR retailer Raj Aggarwal.**

The company is calling on convenience retailers across the UK to join its #SPARdoasRAJwoulddo and #doasRAJwoulddo campaign by donating products or goods to those most in need in their local communities.

Raj Aggarwal, who owned SPAR stores in Wigston, Leicester, and Hackenthorpe, near Sheffield, sadly passed away from Covid-19 in April 2020 at the age of just 51.

Always at the heart of his stores' communities, Raj was renowned for putting the needs of others first. His sense of charity was best demonstrated by his large charitable donations to the Glenfield Hospital in Leicester in March 2020. He was supporting his local NHS team at the beginning of the pandemic, when they needed it most.

Now A.F. Blakemore, the SPAR community and Raj's wife, Sunita, want to recognise and remember him for his commitment to helping others.

Sunita explained: "Raj was always doing things for other people, and he would love to know that he is still continuing to help others now.

"Please help keep his memory alive by supporting this campaign, supporting your community and making a difference to those who really need it."

From 19th to 26th April, A.F. Blakemore is encouraging convenience retailers to 'do as Raj would do' by donating goods, supplies and products to the charities, organisations or individuals most in need within their communities.

Retailers will be invited to talk about what they are doing in Raj's honour on social media, using the hashtags #SPARdoasRAJwoulddo or #doasRAJwoulddo to help inspire others.

A.F. Blakemore's charitable trust, the Blakemore Foundation, is also offering to match charitable donations from independent SPAR retailers across the Meridian & Welsh Guild up to the value of £200.

A pioneer of the retail industry, Raj was a member of A.F.



Blakemore's Meridian & Welsh Guild Board of retailers and also the Association of Convenience Stores Independent Retailer Board.

A.F. Blakemore Group Commercial Managing Director Jerry Marwood commented: "The feeling of sadness that has overwhelmed our team since hearing of Raj's passing is testament to the role that he played in the life of our business.

"Whether as a Guild Board representative, a customer or friend, Raj was ever-present in the world of SPAR and convenience retailing. To say that he is missed by all of us is an understatement of massive proportion.

"Please help continue Raj's legacy by showing our neighbourhoods that convenience retailers truly do make a difference in the communities they serve."



## Colleagues Celebrate GroceryAid Awareness Day

**Colleagues across A.F. Blakemore helped the company raise awareness of GroceryAid as it marked GroceryAid Awareness Day on 2nd March.**

GroceryAid is the national charity that supports colleagues working across all areas of the grocery industry, including in stores, wholesale, distribution, sales and support functions.

A range of free welfare support services is offered via the organisation's 24/7 helpline and website and is available for everyone in SPAR. This includes financial assistance, Covid-19 advice and support, emotional support, health and wellbeing support, relationship advice, debt advice and counselling.

Visit [groceryaid.org.uk](https://groceryaid.org.uk) to find out more.

On the charity's third annual Awareness Day, grocery colleagues were encouraged to spread the word about the free support available to staff members in need.

Group HR & Strategy Director Ian Diment commented: "GroceryAid Awareness Day is all about promoting the fantastic confidential support available to colleagues, from counselling to financial advice.

"GroceryAid has been supporting AFB colleagues throughout one of the hardest years the industry has faced, and so it is vital that we show our support in return.

"Without companies raising awareness, the charity wouldn't be able to help as many colleagues as it does."

A number of fundraisers were organised to help raise money for the charity on the day.

Blakemore Retail colleagues were invited to participate in a rainbow colour fancy dress day, where they had the opportunity to show off their wackiest and most colourful outfits.

Meanwhile, more than 50 office-based colleagues took part in an online general knowledge quiz led by HR Operations Director Pamela Watts.

The company also organised a rainbow bake off, inviting colleagues to bake cakes and send in photos of their creations.

Ten brave colleagues and retailers will also be fundraising for the cause by embarking on GroceryAid's five-day Coast to Coast Cycle Challenge in July this year, so keep a lookout!



## RAINBOW BAKE OFF COMPETITION

**Congratulations to Katie Poole in Retail Operations, Chris Sabine from SPAR Melton Mowbray and Kathrine Bubb from SPAR Wath upon Dearne, who have all been crowned winners of AFB's Rainbow Bake Off.**



## A.F. Blakemore Launches Store Energy Reduction Programme

**A.F. Blakemore has introduced a new energy reduction programme to help save energy across its SPAR store estate.**

The aim of the initiative, which launched in autumn last year, is to reduce energy usage across Blakemore Retail stores by 5% by encouraging colleagues to switch off air conditioning, lighting and non-essential items when they are not needed.

The programme has already delivered some impressive results, with stores managing to reduce their energy usage by 4.8% in the scheme's first three months.

From October to December stores conserved 377,952 kWh of energy, which is equivalent to saving 96 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. This has also saved the business £53,000 in energy costs.

AFB Head of Procurement Michelle Walton, who has been overseeing the scheme, commented: "This is a fantastic result considering that the programme is new to the business.

"Thank you to all colleagues who have played their part in cutting down on electricity usage. Reducing our energy consumption is one of the most important things we can do to help the company cut its carbon emissions, and collectively, everyone's efforts have made a massive difference.

"A.F. Blakemore is committed to minimising its impact on the environment – as is outlined in the company's Blakemore Way values – and this is just one initiative that can help us work towards a more sustainable future."

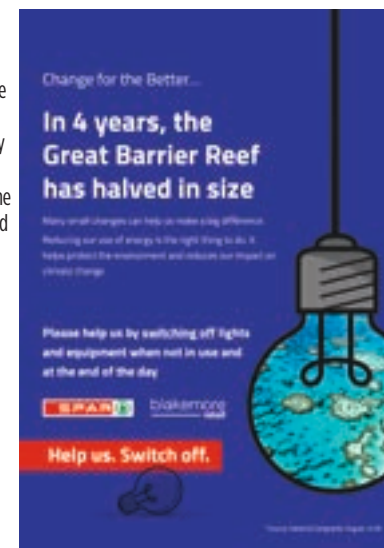
To help promote the energy reduction programme, the company has been running an energy awareness campaign with Blakemore Retail stores and energy efficiency workshops with area managers.

The next steps are to develop a heat and cooling policy for stores, draft new recommendations for refrigeration and roll out energy training to colleagues.

Blakemore Retail Area Manager Dave Parry commented: "My team of managers has fully embraced the 'Switch off' campaign. Posters and stickers have had the desired effect of generating interest and conversation among management and staff alike.

"I can clearly see the changes when I go into stores, and there is a much higher awareness about switching off lights and heaters etc.

"I've even had staff chasing after me to 'politely remind' me to switch off the lights when I have left a room without doing so! The environmental impact is as important to staff as the cost savings are to managers!"



## Blakemore Foundation Covid-19 Support Reaches Value of £176,000

**Charitable donations awarded to Covid-related causes via the Blakemore Foundation have now reached the incredible value of £176,000.**

Colleagues from across A.F. Blakemore have supported more than 2,400 Covid-related good causes throughout England and Wales during the coronavirus crisis.

Donations of essential groceries have been awarded to numerous food banks, soup kitchens and volunteer groups to support vulnerable people. Meanwhile, donations of bottled water and treats have been given to hundreds of frontline key workers in hospitals, schools and care homes.

The Blakemore Foundation has helped to support vital care and community support services offered to those in need during the pandemic. To date, the Blakemore Foundation has awarded more than 2,000 in-kind donations worth around £114,000.

Some of the recent beneficiaries include Black Country Food Bank, Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Ashgate Hospice Care, Grimsby Food Kitchen, Abergele District Food Bank and Reephams Soup Kitchen.

As well as goods, the Blakemore Foundation has helped to sustain and replenish funds for vital specialist services offered by charities across England and Wales.

To date, the Blakemore Foundation has helped 393 good causes with monetary donations worth more than £69,000. Some of the recent beneficiaries include the Sunny Days Children's Fund in Essex, Maggie's Centres (for Cancer Support), Wolverhampton MS Therapy Centre, St Andrew's Hospice in Grimsby and the Indian Muslim Patel Society near Wakefield.

Community Affairs Officer Kate Senter commented: "It's clear that A.F. Blakemore has played a key role in local communities throughout the coronavirus pandemic – not only supplying essential goods and services via its stores and helping local councils feed vulnerable people, but via charitable giving.



"When you look at all of the company's charitable initiatives collectively, the value of donations awarded to causes that have supported people during the pandemic actually far exceeds £300,000.

"Backing from the Blakemore Foundation has enabled many much-loved charities to continue their amazing work and voluntary groups to support those in need at a time that has been challenging for many.

"All of this couldn't have been achieved without the vital support of colleagues, who have played an essential role in recommending good causes and supporting the logistics of our charitable giving operation, both in stores and behind the scenes."





## QUIDS IN with SPAR

Between January and March, The Northern Guild hosted a £60K text-to-win competition, aimed at supporting SPAR customers during these difficult times and aligning with SPAR's commitment to delivering outstanding value throughout 2021.

Over 37,000 SPAR customers entered the competition, with 23,610 winning £1 SPAR vouchers, 63 customers enjoying £100 SPAR vouchers and at the time of writing, one lucky customer is due to win the £10,000 jackpot prize.

Many customers expressed their gratitude at receiving vouchers and one shopper, Deborah Grogan, used her winnings to spread a little community cheer, purchasing 35 Easter Eggs for local children.

Marketing Manager, Tom Murphy, said: "Throughout the campaign we have seen fantastic in-store implementation, great consumer engagement and have clearly highlighted SPAR's value credentials at a time when value is of great importance to our customers."



## SPARKling refurbishments for two company owned stores

G&E Murgatroyd, James Hall & Co.'s company owned store division, has re-launched two of its stores, SPAR Wolsingham in County Durham, and SPAR Maryport in Cumbria.

SPAR Wolsingham has relocated to a purpose built forecourt site on the edge of Wolsingham after 26 years trading from a smaller store right at the heart of the village. Fiona Drummond, Company Owned Stores Director at James Hall & Co. said: "We took the decision to invest in a new site to create a larger, purpose built SPAR store with additional services that will bring value and convenience for local people. By extending the shop floor, we have been able to include a larger range of products and the addition of a Graham Eyes butchery counter and Clayton Park Deli." The new site also now boasts forecourt facilities and customer parking.

SPAR Maryport has also benefitted from a brand new store built on the existing forecourt site, allowing for the addition of a Graham Eyes butchery counter, Clayton Park Deli and a refreshed range of fresh, frozen and ambient produce including Tango Ice Blast, F' real milkshakes and Cheeky Coffee.

Fiona added: "In a time where many supermarkets are scaling back on their deli and fresh meat counters, we have found an increase in shoppers wanting to pick up quality, fresh foods from their local SPAR store. We have reconfigured the store layout to include extra services for local people and look forward to welcoming new and existing SPAR customers when shopping for their essential items."



## Baking the world a better place

James Hall & Co.'s company owned bakery, Clayton Park Bakery, has partnered with a local recycling company to prevent aluminium pie trays from reaching landfill.

Sold in SPAR shops and football stadiums across the north of England, including Liverpool Football Club, aluminium trays will now be recycled and converted into community funds. The scheme has already raised £1,000 for Accrington Stanley's Community Trust, which aims to improve local people's lives through sport, exercise and participation.

Paul Bradley of Clayton Park Bakery commented: "We're hoping this project will make a big difference, not only to the local area but also in a broader context. By sharing resources and working together, businesses can lead the way in protecting the environment and fighting climate change."

## Celebrating inspiring female role models in sport

The SPAR Lancashire School Games hosted a virtual festival for 2021 International Women's Day, motivating women and girls across the county to engage with regular physical activity through inspirational case studies, activities and resources from female role models in sport.

Inspirational role models included Shelly Woods (British Paralympian Sprinter), Holly Woods (British Olympic Pole Vaulter) and Zuleikha Chikh (an undergraduate student who was named on the Muslim Women in Sports Powerlist 2019), and Ibtihaj Muhammad who was the first American Olympian to compete in a hijab.

This event forms part of the virtual SPAR Lancashire School Games 2021. Find out more at [www.lancshireschoolgames.co.uk](http://www.lancshireschoolgames.co.uk)



## Four new sausages for Northern Guild retailers

James Hall & Co. has added four new sausages to its SPAR own brand range, released on a rotational basis to bring variation and excitement to the category.

Available in 400g packs of 6 thick sausages with a RSP of £3, the sausages are also available through a 2 for £5 promotion and include Pork and Chorizo, Pork and Black Pudding, Pork and Chilli, and fiery Pork and Three Chilli sausage, which includes capsicum, jalapeno and habanero chillies.





## Airdrie retailer becomes part of the SPAR Scotland family

**SPAR Scotland continues its growth trend and welcomes independent retailer Jignesh Chauhan and his store in Airdrie.**

Having been with Day Today for more than four years, Jignesh was interested in becoming part of SPAR Scotland after visiting stores and experiencing first-hand the positive feedback from SPAR stores south of the border.

Mike Leonard, Sales Director for SPAR Scotland, said: "We're delighted Jignesh has made the decision to join our increasing ranks of independent retailers. The feedback from other SPAR retailers is proof just how important word of mouth is as we continue to attract new business into SPAR Scotland."

"With our expert team on hand to support, we look forward to celebrating the success of the new store with Jignesh."

The 695sqft store on Stirling Street in Airdrie, North Lanarkshire, has undergone a substantial conversion, dramatically improving not only its range but also appearance. Customers can now look forward to picking up food-to-go options in-store such as Smoking Bean Coffee, Tango Ice Blast, F'real frozen milkshakes, Fwip ice cream, Stuart's bakery products and Rollover hot dogs amongst its comprehensive offering. Jignesh said: "Customers absolutely love what we have done with the shop and are delighted with how professional it looks with the increased range and the competitive prices."

"I personally cannot believe the support and guidance you get from SPAR Scotland, with the regular visits, contact and so much help and advice. Business development wise they really know what they are doing."

"I really do feel like part of the SPAR family already and I cannot wait to grow my own portfolio of stores with SPAR Scotland!"



## SPAR Scotland gives cash back to communities

**SPAR Scotland has launched its second Community Cashback campaign to giveaway a further £30,000 to community groups and charities who provide a variety of worthwhile services to communities around the country.**

Twenty four charities benefitted from the first Community Cashback campaign held last October when shoppers and staff of SPAR stores placed nearly 7,000 votes for their most deserving local causes.

This spring 108 SPAR stores will take nominations for 24 winning local groups and charities to have a chance to win one of the four monetary prizes ranging from £750 to £2,000. The £30,000 is being donated by SPAR Scotland.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "We received such a great response to our first ever Community Cashback campaign that we felt obliged to do it again to support small local groups who have been affected by the pandemic. It is very important that we continue to give back to the local communities and customers who support our stores."

"We set up the Community Cashback campaign to recognise the vital work many local community groups and charities do around Scotland. These small organisations have suffered financially due to the pandemic and we hope our donation will help the winners benefit in some small way."



## SPAR Scotland first retailer to Cook with Welby

**SPAR Scotland was chosen by the Healthy Living Programme as the first retailer to launch its new instore promotion - Cooking with Welby for Families.**

The Healthy Living Programme is looking to encourage children and their families to have fun with some healthier recipes at home.

"Cooking with Welby" is an instore promotion which allows SPAR stores to give away a free reusable shopping bag and recipe cards with every bag of bananas sold, giving parents and carers something different to do whilst staying at home during lockdown.

The campaign launched in February in SPAR Mastrick and took place in 21 SPAR stores across Aberdeen and Dundee.

Gillian Edgar, Field Manager for the Healthy Living Programme said: "We were delighted to launch this promotion in a selection of SPAR stores on Pancake Day and give families the opportunity to cook a healthier banana pancake!"

Paula Middleton, Marketing Manager for SPAR Scotland, added: "We were delighted to support the Healthy Living Programme with its Welby Club and we have no doubt this new campaign will encourage children and young people to make healthier choices."



## Rollover Chicken Hotdogs launch in SPAR Scotland stores

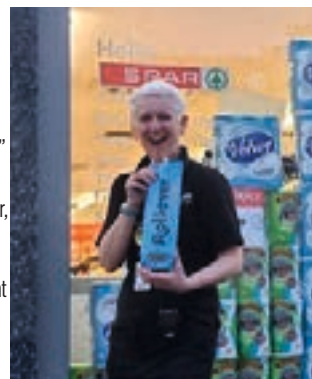
**SPAR Scotland launched the new Chicken Hotdog from Rollover in 100 SPAR stores in March.**

The six-week exclusive launch with SPAR Scotland was available in all CJ's food-to-go counters and a number of independent SPAR stores.

Stephen Brown, Head of Food-to-Go at SPAR Scotland, said: "We were delighted work with Rollover on this new product development launch. Choosing SPAR to be its exclusive launch partner is great for our stores. Rollover products form part of our CJ's food to go range and the new Chicken Hotdogs allow us to expand on our current offering."

"With a RRP of £2.20 the product is a good option to customers whilst delivering great taste and innovation within the category. We look forward to working with Rollover in the future by developing further ranges and opportunities within the food-to-go category," Stephen added.

Tony Owen, Rollover Sales & Marketing Director, commented: "We are equally delighted to be working with CJ Lang & Son as a partner on this launch. Chicken is very much the dominant protein in the food-to-go category and it's exciting to add this to our range for SPAR Scotland customers."



## SCOTTISH RUGBY TEAMS UP WITH CJ LANG & SON LTD TO DONATE IPRO HYDRATE TO NHS HOSPITALS

**Scottish Rugby, a long-term partner of healthy hydration drinks company iPRO, has teamed up with C J Lang & Son Ltd and donated iPRO Hydrate drinks to NHS Tayside to keep staff healthy and boost morale on hospital wards.**

With NHS staff working tirelessly to administer vaccines and running busy intensive care wards, the long hours and every day demands on the wards can result in staff neglecting their own health and wellbeing by skipping meals, lack of sleep and reducing their hydration intake.

Over 6,000 healthy iPRO drinks have been delivered to help NHS staff, as keyworkers continue the fight against the pandemic.

Jenny Alexander, Employee Director for NHS Tayside, said: "I would like to thank everyone at Scottish Rugby, CJ Lang and iPRO for thinking of our staff as we all respond to Covid-19. This thoughtfulness and generosity reminds all our staff how highly they are thought of across the country."

"We plan to distribute the iPRO drinks through our rest, relax

and recharge rooms. These areas are designed as dedicated spaces away from busy environments encouraging staff to unwind, read a book and just relax. I'm certain that the iPRO drinks will go down a treat with our staff."

Colin Chapman, CJ Lang & Son Ltd Distribution Director, added: "We're absolutely delighted to be working in partnership with iPRO and Scottish Rugby to deliver iPRO Hydrate drinks into NHS Tayside. We are very aware of the outstanding work staff within the NHS right across the UK have undertaken, not just during the Covid-19 pandemic but indeed any day of the year. We're incredibly proud to make this first delivery into NHS Tayside and look forward to delivering more of the iPRO Hydrate drinks in the weeks to come."



## The Beast from the East brings out the best in team SPAR Scotland

**SPAR Scotland has applauded dedicated staff who went above and beyond during the Beast from the East 2.**

The heavy snowfall in February did not daunt staff at the depot in Dundee who assisted over the course of the week to ensure service went as smoothly and as efficiently as possible. Round the clock snow clearing and gritting by staff, daily, kept the depot operation moving.

Over the week 650,000 cases were scanned in, replenished, picked, loaded and delivered to SPAR convenience stores around Scotland ensuring SPAR was there for all communities during Beast from the East 2.

Colin McLean, CEO from SPAR Scotland, said: "Extraordinary situations called for extraordinary responses and I am so proud of how our entire team pulled together to ensure community SPAR stores received their deliveries."

"We had staff members who walked up to 2.5 hours to get to and from work and others

who drove around in their own car collecting stranded colleagues to help them get in and out of work."

"The depot has put out larger volumes in the past but never have we faced such adversity. Weather warnings, blizzards, jack knifed lorries in car parks and closed roads proved extremely difficult, but everyone rose to the challenge and we delivered the goods."

In addition to all depot workers assisting, staff at SPAR Scotland stores cleared pathways and accesses around stores to allow customers to get safely in and out as well as enabling large vehicles to deliver.

"It showed us what a great team we have at SPAR Scotland. Everyone really has pulled together to play their role in helping communities while combating the Beast from the East. They are our unsung heroes," Colin concluded.



## SPAR Scotland collection tins bring donations in for Marie Curie

**SPAR Scotland has raised £59,350 during 2020 for Marie Curie from collection tins sited in 108 company owned SPAR stores.**

Marie Curie collection tins sit on counter tops in SPAR Scotland company owned stores to encourage staff and customers to donate any loose change to the charity and as a result 108 SPAR stores have raised £59,350 over the last 12 months.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "The beauty of the SPAR partnership with Marie Curie is that it allows us to utilise the huge number of SPAR stores within our organisation. Whether that's through collection tins, in-store fundraising events, SPAR own-label product donations or daffodils sold in our stores, we look to raise awareness of the charity in every way possible."

SPAR Scotland is also delighted to announce that Marie Curie Nurses will feature as part of its 'Behind the Scenes' campaign which launched earlier this year. "Along with colleague stories, we feel it is important to share the stories from Marie Curie Nurses and recognise their hard work and all they are doing to support our communities," added Colin.

Christine Connor, Corporate Partnerships Manager Scotland for Marie Curie, said: "The partnership between Marie Curie and SPAR

Scotland is very special. In a year like no other when fundraising opportunities across Scotland have been decimated by the Pandemic, the monies raised in 2020 by SPAR Scotland and their customers is nothing short of exceptional!"

"This fantastic figure of £59,350 showcases the power of loose change, be it a penny or a pound, every coin dropped into collection cans across the stores makes such a difference to the lives of vulnerable patients and families who are living with or bereaved by a terminal illness across Scotland."

"Thanks to each and every one of you who contributed from everyone at Marie Curie and from the patients and families we care for. You are amazing!"





# Double the Daffodil Donations as SPAR NI supports Marie Curie Spring Appeal

With the hope of spring in the air, SPAR NI has launched its support of Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal, doubling the donations for this vital year.

The local stores have been donating 20p from every bunch of the seasonal blooms that are sold in store to their charity partner, Marie Curie NI, as part of SPAR's Buy A Bunch to Give A Bunch campaign.

Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group said this year it is more important than ever to

support the vital services of Marie Curie here; "The charity sector has suffered immeasurably due to the past 12 months of Covid-19 restrictions. So many events have been cancelled, and unfortunately those doing the most for our communities, and those they are helping, are bearing the brunt of that.

"This year, we have doubled our donations to continue the support of Marie Curie services in our local communities as part of the Great Daffodil Appeal and our continued partnership with Marie Curie and the SPAR brand."

Conor O'Kane, Senior Partnership Manager at Marie Curie added; "The local support that Marie Curie has received from the teams behind SPAR NI has been immeasurable, particularly in the past year. They have ensured we were front and centre in their Covid-19 contingency plans and we are so grateful for this additional push for our Great Daffodil Appeal this year."



Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing launches SPAR NI's annual campaign for Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal with Marie Curie nurse Jacqueline Belshaw.

## The CHEF cooks up range expansion

The CHEF range created by Henderson Wholesale's Executive Chef Carl Johannesson, in collaboration with local suppliers, has added three new dishes to its Under 500 calorie range.

The new meals include Mango Chicken, Rice and Spinach, Spicy Beef and Black Bean with Noodles and Spinach, and Thai Inspired Green Curry, Rice and Spinach, all coming in at under 500 calories, specially developed by Chef Carl and his team of 17, after four new roles were created to keep up with demand.

The range is now available at over 90 stores and supermarkets across Northern Ireland.

Neal Kelly, Fresh Foods Director at Henderson Group commented; "Our local own-brand fresh ranges are going from strength to strength. The Chef range will be a £2m retail brand in NI during 2021 and we will continue to invest this year in both the facility and the Brand to allow our customers to enjoy more quality options for tonight's tea.

"The Under 500 calorie range launched in June 2020, and Carl and his team of cooks in our specially built kitchen in Randalstown are continuing to create dishes which celebrate flavours from around the world, using the best meat, poultry and produce from our local suppliers. The nutritious range is portion controlled to ensure the correct amount of protein and carbohydrates to make a well-rounded meal."



## Boojum ready meals now available at SPAR

SPAR has made Boojum loving shoppers' dreams come true, with hundreds of stores in Northern Ireland now stocking the popular Mexican burrito bar chain's delicious beef chill and three bean chilli.

Now available in a ready meal, the products are prepared fresh daily by Boojum's own chefs using the same high-quality ingredients, seasoning and spices used in their restaurants, supplied by Henderson Foodservice. The new range will offer a choice of a rich, spicy beef chilli made with 100% Northern Irish beef or a smoky, saucy, three-bean chilli that is ideal for vegans, vegetarians and flexitarians. Both come with a side of fluffy basmati rice and are high in protein and low in fat, saturates and sugar.

The move is the latest in the restaurant's

pandemic pivots which also saw them convert to Boojum at Home meal kits due to restaurant restrictions over the past year. Henderson Wholesale Fresh Trading Manager, Stephen Kennedy commented; "We know the Boojum brand very well and know the draw it has, especially to a younger shopper – those looking for convenience but also quality and value. This range ticks all those boxes so we're delighted to be bringing them to our shelves, providing further growth opportunities for the business thanks to our Wholesale distribution network."

## Local stores' vision leads to free TV for Friends of the Cancer Centre patients

Eleven local EUROSPAR supermarkets have dug deep and raised funds to help install 30 TVs in the Friends of the Cancer Centre Unit at Belfast City Hospital.

Chris Hamilton who works at Henderson Retail received treatment at the unit in 2019 and after having to pay to watch TV, he thought how beneficial it would be for patients to have access to entertainment without the pain of paying for subscriptions.

Appealing to his colleagues from across County Down and East Belfast, almost £4,000 was raised which went towards helping purchase 30 TVs for the Friends of the Cancer Centre Unit.

Pictured are Hannah Harvey from EUROSPAR Moat Street in Donaghadee, Ava Wilkinson from Friends of the Cancer Centre and Megan Crawford from EUROSPAR Hardford Link in Newtownards.



## VALUE, FRESHNESS AND LOCAL PEOPLE AT HEART OF SMART NEW CAMPAIGN FROM EUROSPAR

EUROSPAR has launched a new campaign, keeping community, convenience, value and their fresh credentials front and centre.

Be a Smart Shopper aims to highlight the on-going value proposition at EUROSPAR, the supermarket brand that can be found in the heart of communities across Northern Ireland.

It comes off the back of new 2020 Shopper Insights\* in which the supermarket brand outranks the multiples in Northern Ireland in customer service levels, locality and price perception.

Jade Manning, Brand Manager at Henderson Group, commented; "This past year has seen a clear indication that shoppers now prefer to shop locally, even when it comes to the 'big trolley shop' traditionally reserved for the multiples.

"Our shopper insights show that EUROSPAR customer service was ranked above other multiples in the area and 45% of those surveyed said EUROSPAR was their first preference supermarket where they live, a jump of 27% since 2019."

The campaign aims to reach shoppers who may have had to change the way they shop over the past year, whether that be because of Covid-19 restrictions or because they want to buy more local produce. Over 75% of fresh produce available at EUROSPAR is sourced locally, with Henderson Wholesale own-brands experiencing growth in 2020, working with local suppliers to produce stand-out products.

\* Shopper Insight combines online and on-street surveys of 777 EUROSPAR shoppers conducted by The CARD Group, plus monthly shopper trackers.





# Company-owned stores prepare for busiest summer ever

**Appleby Westward is moving ahead with an active refit programme in its Gillett's company-owned stores, giving all stores a spring deep clean/ standards reset and preparing for what could be its busiest summer season ever.**

Steve Goswell, company-owned stores director, said: "It's been an exceptionally busy time and on top of preparing our stores for the huge summer influx of visitors, we continue to buy new ones at a rate of one every four to six weeks. We are excited to be growing the SPAR brand and scale in the south west, which will benefit everybody associated with SPAR now and in the future.

"We feel fortunate to be in a position where we can talk confidently about acquiring and growing amidst a backdrop of uncertainty out there in the high street and remain steadfastly committed to developing community neighbourhood stores. It's an exciting time to be at SPAR."

With the pandemic, the business has been redoubling its efforts to minimise risk by putting strict protocols in place. These measures include strict rules on mask wearing, enhanced store cleaning protocols, restricting numbers during busy times, sometimes closing stores during delivery windows and doing all that we can to keep communication and awareness levels high across the workforce.

"Luckily, our infection rates have been relatively low, and we hope, like everyone else, that the worst is truly behind us," said Steve. "We believe we have put customer safety and community right at the top of our priority list throughout the pandemic."



# Community award for SPAR retailer

**Longstanding SPAR retailer Sim Kaur has been recognised for outstanding community service in her neighbourhood on the outskirts of Bristol.**

Sim has run the SPAR store at Mangotsfield since 1998 and received the award, signed by local councillors, from the Mangotsfield Residents Association. She is pictured here with colleague Alison Woodward.

"We operate a Post Office service as well as the convenience store and have been able to maintain a high level of service, open all hours, to the people of Mangotsfield and Staple Hill throughout the pandemic," said Sim. "We were very happy to receive the award."

Clive Heath, Chairman of the Association, said: "We were formed three years ago to make the community and area a better place to live, working closely with councillors. This is a locality with a big heart and a fantastic community spirit."



# Refrigeration upgrade project gets underway

**Appleby Westward is to carry out a major refrigeration upgrade project in 30 of its company-owned Gillett's stores.**

Across the estate, chilled cabinets are about 11 years old and contribute to approximately 50% of energy bills. "The majority are outdated and energy inefficient, so this is an energy improvement exercise," said project lead Rob Young. "The total refrigeration annual energy cost for the co-owned estate is in excess of £1.1m and the plan is to introduce new energy efficient airflow system cabinets and inverters to the most relevant 30 stores."

The 30 stores have been selected against criteria including their energy usage and the existing condition of cases. The aim is to reduce annual energy bills by £270k in the 30 stores.

"As well as a positive environmental impact, the new refrigeration will also help to convey improved brand perception, and additional range in some stores will support better sales," said Rob.

# CONNOLLY FAMILY SIGNS NEW CONTRACT WITH SPAR

**The Connolly family, which owns three convenience stores in Wiltshire, has marked its 60th anniversary in business by signing a new five-year trading agreement with Appleby Westward.**

The family began business with a small newsagency in Tidworth in 1961 and today owns two SPAR stores in Tidworth and one in Pewsey, employing 35 people.

Sales director Susan Connolly said: "The collaboration with Appleby Westward has worked well for us and our relationship continues to flourish. SPAR has a relevant offering, great support and values that match our family business."

Rod Tucker, Group Sales Director for Appleby Westward,

said: "We are delighted to have signed this new trading agreement with Connolly Group, securing the business with us until 2026. The business moved to SPAR in 2008 and the Connolly family are model retailers, playing a vital role in the communities they serve."

Since joining SPAR, the family has opened the store in Pewsey and four years ago co-invested with Appleby Westward in a £1m redevelopment project which more than doubled the size of the store in Pennings Road, Tidworth. And to mark the 50th anniversary this year of the opening

of its other store in the town at Beech Hill Road, the family will be embarking on a redevelopment here in the spring.

Susan's father Andrew Connolly said: "Times were hard when my parents Malcolm and Doris started the business in 1961 and it is thanks to their hard work and dedication that the foundations were laid for the successful group of SPAR convenience stores, we operate today for the local community."



# Major makeover for company-owned store

**Appleby Westward has completed a £100,000 makeover of its award-winning store in North Hill, Plymouth.**

The store, popular with younger shoppers and the local student population, is noted for having won several retail awards in the last few years and was one of the first convenience stores in the south west to operate 24-hour opening. It was also one of the first SPAR stores in the region to integrate a 24-hour Subway franchise in store.

Phil Darch, Operations Director for Appleby Westward's company-owned Gillett's stores, said: "The store was beginning to become a little dated and needed significant modernisation, new refrigeration and a complete realignment of all major product categories.

"As a result, we have created a high impact food-to-go hub at the front of the store, new energy efficient refrigeration with considerably more capacity for fresh foods and beers, wines and spirits, a new seasonal bay and a complete redecoration of the sales floor in the new SPAR format.

"Initial customer reaction has been very positive, and the introduction of new products like F'real milk shakes and smoothies along with a Swishee slush machine have been particularly popular with our younger customers," said Phil.

The store offers a selection of fresh baked pies and pasties throughout the day, fresh baguettes made each morning, Costa Express coffee and hot chocolate, fresh chilled fruit and vegetables and a wide selection of soft drinks, sandwiches, snacks and general household necessities. It also supports local suppliers, schools and charities and offers a Snappy Shopper home delivery service solution.





# SPAR delivers landmark 1 million pieces of PPE



**SPAR UK has now delivered 1 million pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Marie Curie Nurses working on the frontline, as part of their innovative 'PPE Click & Collect Service'.**

When coronavirus hit, Marie Curie faced immense challenges. Not only were nurses supporting drastically more terminally ill patients, their safety and protection became even more critical. Yet delivering the vast quantities of PPE to frontline staff was presenting a 'logistical nightmare' - shifts were cancelled, and nurses were unable to care for their patients.

But SPAR has since provided a lifeline to Marie Curie. In what has affectionately been called SPAR's 'PPE Click & Collect Service', SPAR Appleby Westward and SPAR James Hall now pick up and deliver thousands of PPE packages to local SPAR stores, for Marie Curie nurses to then pick up safely and reliably.

SPAR's support has been transformational. Since May 2020:

- **over 1 million pieces of PPE delivered**
- **over 40,000 day and night nursing shifts equipped**
- **150,000 nursing hours protected thanks to SPAR's vital support.**

A huge thank you to all of the logistics team, the lorry drivers and the stores who have made this possible. Nurse manager, Karen Burfitt summed it best when she wrote a letter of thanks to SPAR: *"You have made an incredible difference. You have prevented us having to cancel crucial shifts, prevented us having to make a phone call to an exhausted wife to say sorry no one is coming tonight. You have enabled us to catch our breaths and helped us keep going!"*



Marie Curie Nurse Flora Snape collecting PPE from SPAR Leyland

## James Hall & Co celebrate raising £400,000 for Marie Curie



**In February James Hall & Co celebrated reaching the phenomenal milestone of raising £400,000 for Marie Curie. Since our partnership began in 2017, SPAR stores across the North of England have hosted bake sales, dressed in fancy dress, donned their yellowest outfits and organised incredible fundraisers to help fund vital end of life care for people in their community.**

They also have a special meal deal in store which generously donates 1p from every sandwich sold which to date has raised over £170,000 for Marie Curie.

Thanks to their incredible efforts, the amount they have raised so far is enough to fund over 20,000 hours of vital care from a Marie Curie Nurse so that dying people and their loved ones can get care they need in the comfort of their own home.

A huge thank you to everyone involved from the company owned and independent SPAR stores, to everyone at the James Hall depot who have played a role in raising such an incredible amount.

## A big, bright yellow THANK YOU for your support

**Thank you to everyone who has got involved with this year's Great Daffodil Appeal, as well as our National Day of Reflection.**

March 2021 marked a landmark moment in the UK, with the anniversary of the first lockdown and over 3 million people newly bereaved. As an end of life charity, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on those we have lost, reconnect with loved ones it has been hard to stay in touch with, and show your support for the family members and co workers around you.

SPAR's support throughout has been incredible. Not only have you raised an incredible amount of money for our nurses and bereavement support services through the Great Daffodil Appeal, you have also been sharing your own experiences this year and getting fully involved in your moments to reflect and connect. A huge thank you from all of us here at Marie Curie!



To share your photos or stories, please feel free to get in touch through [SPARUK@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:SPARUK@mariecurie.org.uk)



## Austria

SPAR Austria reports food retail sales reaching €8.32 billion, an impressive sales growth of 16%. It has also gained 1.8% market share, making it the new market leader in Austria. Following SPAR International and Too Good To Go announcing a global partnership to tackle food waste in December 2020, SPAR is the first major food retailer in Austria to launch a partnership with the social impact company.



## Denmark

In February, SPAR Denmark opened a state-of-the-art SPAR Supermarket on St. Kongensgade, a well-known street in the centre of Copenhagen. The new store brings an expanded range of to-go, healthier choices, and local products to this vibrant area of the city. The range instore has an international character and features a large selection of SPAR Natural products. SPAR St. Kongensgade has incorporated the CENSA Coffee solution following recent CENSA Café launches in Russia and Saudi Arabia.



## Ireland

SPAR Ireland partner BWG Foods is to invest approximately €25 million in a four-year sustainability strategy to significantly reduce the environmental impact of its large-scale nationwide supply chain. As part of the ambitious new plan, the company is switching to cleaner energies and has committed to installing renewable energy solutions across its operations. The Group has just installed almost 800 solar panels at its National Distribution Centre in Dublin, making it one of the largest installations of solar panels in Ireland.



## Croatia

SPAR Croatia has opened a modern new SPAR Supermarket in Ivanic-Grad, 25km south-east of the capital Zagreb. Featuring a striking glass facade, the new store features fresh departments, including the fish and meat counters, as well as the extensive choice of local products. The large selection of sea and freshwater fish is offered in market style, highlighting the freshness of the products. Next to the fish market is a large butchery with a broad range of fresh meat, featuring premium and local products.



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