

SPAR Today Magazine

Issue 69 | February | March 2021



SPAR celebrates success



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Editorial

A new year offering a unique opportunity

A new year is always a time for taking stock of what's gone before and making plans for what lies ahead. 2020 was an exceptional year and the pandemic's impact continues to impress upon all our lives.

The last 12 months have been filled with creativity in the convenience industry. Never before did we embrace technology and innovation so quickly. Everyone in the SPAR family demonstrated their true grit and came together in an example of solidarity and innovation which has inspired our customers.

As a result of this hard work, our stores have been rewarded and are shining examples of why choosing SPAR as your convenience partner is the right decision. Congratulations to every store which reached the finals of the annual Forecourt Trader and Retail Industry Awards. There can always only be one winner in a category but seeing so many nominated it is obvious SPAR is leading the way.

I know all our success stories are a result of how we have responded to the new ways of dealing with the unprecedented challenges we have recently faced. I am under no illusion of how hard it is on the retail front-line, but you can rest assured that SPAR, that in collaboration with your RDC and SPAR International, we are working hard to continue supporting you with new opportunities every step of the way.

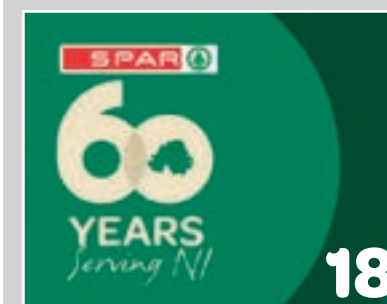


Finally, on behalf of everyone in SPAR, I would like to congratulate Henderson Group and SPAR in Northern Ireland on reaching its diamond anniversary. Wishing you all many more happy and successful years retailing.

Louise Hoste
Managing Director
SPAR UK

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SPAR UK has the winning formula

SPAR and EUROSPAR across the UK enjoyed a phenomenal evening at the 2020 Retail Industry Awards taking a total of TWENTY ONE accolades - ELEVEN award wins and TEN highly commended praises.

In addition to the huge number of wins for SPAR, all grocery retailers were recognised for their valiant efforts during the pandemic at the Retail Industry Awards 2020, which took place as a virtual event on 26 January 2021.

Mulkerns EUROSPAR, Newry, County Down, picked up an outstanding three awards and two highly commended accolades. The store received Independent Community Retailer of the Year; it was also selected for the Most Sustainable Retailer Initiative of the Year - Independent award. The Retail Industry Awards judges loved Mulkerns' Zero Waste Wednesdays and its "huge range of sustainability initiatives".

In addition, Mulkerns EUROSPAR was selected as Food-to-go Retailer of the Year.

In the over 6,000sqft category, JC Stewart, Magherafelt, County Londonderry, took the trophy home. The judges described JC Stewart as a "stand-out store" offering fabulous quality and an amazing own-brand range. JC Stewart also scooped Fresh Produce Retailer of the Year.

The 3,000 to 6,000sqft award was secured by SPAR Eat 17, Walthamstow, London, in one of the closest-ever three-way contests in the history of the awards. "This is a fantastic store driven by a passionate and innovative team," said one judge. The Forecourt Retailer of the Year - Independent award went

to Parkfoot SPAR, West Malling, Kent.

There were individual awards for SPAR Kexborough's Clare Hale (Store Manager of the Year), and Mulkerns SPAR Jonesborough's Enya McAteer (Newcomer of the Year).

Louise Hoste, SPAR UK Managing Director, said: "It was great to see so many SPAR stores as winners and highly commended, especially this year when they have had to concentrate on many additional measures in order to be well-equipped for their communities. This national recognition of their different achievements is a great boost for our stores and their teams."

SPAR Parkfoot

David Charman: "SPAR Parkfoot is absolutely delighted to be the Retail Industry Awards, Independent Forecourt Retailer of the Year. It's been the most extraordinary year in convenience retail. We have all had to learn how to run our businesses all over again. This award though is dedicated to all my staff who have worked tirelessly to keep our customers safe and fed throughout the pandemic. As 2021 settles down we will endeavour to build on the success of our online platform and those elements of our business that make us stand out in the industry."



SPAR Malone Road

Mark McCammond, Retail Director, Henderson Group said SPAR Malone's team had seamlessly integrated the grocery side of the business with the Post Office. "To win this award against some of the top Post Office retail outlets from across the UK is a fantastic achievement, congratulations to everyone involved!"



JC Stewart

Pearce and Shaun Kelly, owners of JC Stewart said: "The Retail Industry Awards are often known as the benchmark of excellence throughout the industry, so to take home two of the top awards from the night is such an honour and one we are very proud of."



Produce Manager Beverley Atkinson is pictured with Laura Purvis from JC Stewart and their Retail Industry Award for Fresh Produce Retailer of the Year.



Gary McCulloch, Manager at JC Stewarts with Assistant Manager, Jourdan Steadman with their Retail Industry Awards.



P&G EUROSPAR

Lynn Smiley, store manager at P&G EUROSPAR said: "This award was a real team effort and it's a fantastic way to kick off the year after one of the most difficult in our history."

SPAR winners included:

Independent Food-To-Go Retailer of the Year - Mulkerns EUROSPAR, Newry, County Down



Independent Forecourt Retailer of the Year - Parkfoot SPAR, West Malling, Kent



Independent Community Retailer of the Year - Mulkerns EUROSPAR, Newry, County Down



Company-Owned Forecourt Retailer of the Year - P&G EUROSPAR, Portadown, County Armagh



Independent Most Sustainable Retailer Initiative of the Year - Mulkerns EUROSPAR, Newry, County Down



Independent Retailer of the Year 3,001sqft to 6,000sqft - SPAR Eat 17, Walthamstow, London



Newcomer of the Year - Enya McAteer, Mulkerns SPAR Jonesborough, County Armagh



Company-Owned Post Office Retailer of the Year - SPAR Malone Road, Belfast



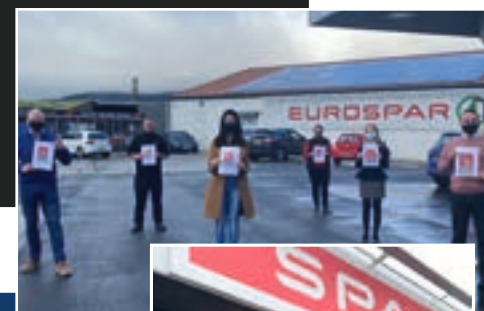
Independent Fresh Produce Retailer of the Year - JC Stewart, Magherafelt, County Londonderry



Independent Store Manager of the Year - Clare Hale, SPAR Kexborough, South Yorkshire



Independent Retailer of the Year over 6,000sqft - JC Stewart, Magherafelt, County Londonderry



Newry's Mulkerns EUROSPAR

Terry Mulkerns is bowled over to have such a fantastic start to the year: "I am so proud of how the team has brought the store and the whole community through the past year. These awards just go to show that we are performing at a level that sets the standard for community retailing across the UK."



Highly Commended:

Independent Store Manager of the Year - Kelly McKeown, Mulkerns EUROSPAR, Newry, County Down



Independent Retailer of the Year over 6,000sqft - Swifts EUROSPAR, Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh



Independent Best Use of Technology - Mulkerns EUROSPAR, Newry, County Down



Independent Food-To-Go Retailer of the Year - SPAR Eat 17, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire



Independent Drinks Retailer of the Year - SPAR Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire



Independent Forecourt Retailer of the Year - Daly's Service Station, SPAR, Eglish, County Tyrone



Independent Fresh Produce Retailer of the Year - SPAR Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire



Independent Retailer of the Year 3,001sqft to 6,000sqft - EUROSPAR Fintona, County Tyrone



Independent Chilled Retailer of the Year - Swifts EUROSPAR, Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh



Company-Owned Post Office Retailer of the Year - SPAR Brunswick Road & Post Office, Buckley, Flintshire



SPAR Kexborough

SPAR Kexborough's Clare Hale (Store Manager of the Year) said: "I'm extremely overwhelmed! I said to all my dedicated staff that my belief as a store manager is that there is no 'I' in team and this last year, we have certainly grown more mutual respect and a better understanding of all our abilities and strengths. I cannot wait to see what another challenging year brings. We will carry on working together as TEAM. I couldn't have done it without them."

Forecourt Trader Awards 2020

What an amazing night for SPAR at the Forecourt Trader Awards!

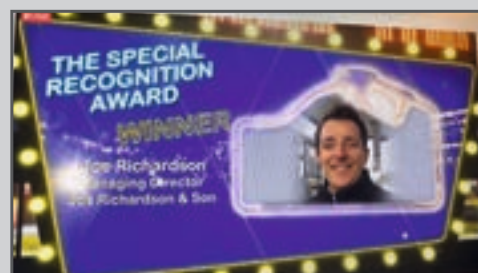
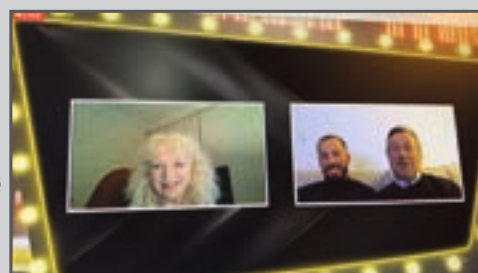
Once again, the Forecourt Trader of the Year Awards honoured the hard work, innovation and creativity of forecourt retailers nationwide at a virtual awards evening held on Thursday 14 January 2021.

This year's host, Stephen Mulhern, presented the awards, which covered nearly 30 specialist and regional categories, and included an award for Special Recognition which went to Joseph Richardson of Jos Richardson & Son, as well as the overall winner of Forecourt Trader of the Year – The Stage Service Station in Leicester. Congratulations too to Abbiecraig Services in Freuchie, Fife which picked up a fantastic three awards on the night.

The Stage Service Station is a worthy winner with its huge pear-shaped, solar panel-covered canopy, spacious forecourt and 300sqm building – encompassing a SPAR convenience store, insomnia barista coffee bar, seating area and 'healthy' all-day food offer from Irish brand Freshly Chopped – as well as its many 'green' attributes, The Stage promises to stand out among today's modern forecourt developments. Built during a pandemic, this circa £2m project in Wigston is now taking 'centre stage' in the community. As we move through the pandemic, never has Peter Hockenfull's vision of this site becoming a destination – the place to meet up with friends and sit in pleasant surroundings – been more relevant.

A fantastic development and a very worthy winner, judges said.

Louise Hoste, SPAR UK Managing Director, said: "Congratulations to all the SPAR forecourt winners. We continue to be impressed with how well forecourt sites respond to consumer needs and based on the results we are seeing, we remain confident that forecourt operators will continue to have a positive future with SPAR."



SPAR Fortfield in Carrickfergus picked up the award in the Best Forecourt award in the Northern Ireland regional category, for the second year in a row.

Adrian Mellon, Manager of SPAR Fortfield said; "We opened just over two years ago with a brand new concept for convenience retailing in Northern Ireland. Our store is a hub for the community and we're very proud to have picked up this award two years in a row now. As the judges said, we are setting the standard for the future of forecourt retailing."



Congratulations to all the SPAR finalists and our ELEVEN winners!

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Forecourt Trader of the Year –
The Stage Service Station, Leicester, Leicestershire</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Best Community Engagement –
Mulkerns EUROSPAR Newry – Newry, Co. Down</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Northern Ireland up to 4mlpa –
SPAR Fortfield, – Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> |
| <p>Best Car Care & Lubricants Outlet –
Abbiecraig Services – Freuchie, Fife</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Best Forecourt Innovation –
SPAR Parkfoot Garage – West Malling, Kent</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Scotland up to 4mlpa –
Gulf Forfar – Forfar, Angus</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> |
| <p>Best Forecourt Loo of the Year –
Abbiecraig Services – Freuchie, Fife</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Midlands over 4mlpa –
The Stage Service Station – Leicester, Leicestershire</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Special Recognition Award –
Joseph Richardson – Jos Richardson & Son</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> |
| <p>Scotland over 4mlpa –
Abbiecraig Services – Freuchie, Fife</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>Northern England up to 4mlpa –
SPAR Townsend Garage – Warton, Lancashire</p> <p>★WINNER★</p> | <p>In addition a big congratulations to SPAR's National Account Partner, Certas, on their win of Best Oil Company Initiative with Gulf – Oomph Forecourt Loyalty Platform.</p> |



Everything from SPAR for Mother's Day

As part of the wider Selling Plan Activation, SPAR is providing an exciting link deal for stores, to get behind the sales opportunity that Mother's Day presents.

As a key activity in the spring calendar it is perfectly situated between Valentine's Day and Easter keeping the strong spring theme throughout. This is being brought to life via a beautifully created and consistent suite of POS across stores and will be supported across digital channels and SPAR radio.



Protein a trend for convenience in 2021

Protein is a well-established category in convenience and with health an increasing focus for consumers, good-for-you foods are the front of mind.

Retailers are seeing how the protein category can grow sales and SPAR's range of own-label added value chicken lends itself to this trend. The chicken has relaunched, following a product reformulation and a packaging redesign to bring the artwork more in-line with the market. The range receives a boost with some lines boasting higher pack weights, and all of the chicken is 100% British.

A delicious range of four breaded chicken lines also boosts SPAR Brand's portfolio of added value poultry this February. The range caters to a number of customer missions and age groups, with the entire range strengthening the at-home dinner occasion, and with some items such as SPAR Chicken Nuggets appealing to a younger audience. The meat within all four lines is 100% British and whole muscle.

All of the NPD is packed in the UK through K&G McAtamney, a family-run business which has supplied a variety of tasty, high-quality wholesale meats to Henderson stores in Northern Ireland over the years. K&G McAtamney brings a wealth of knowledge to the wider SPAR business dating back as far as 1953 by extending the supply of added value poultry and breaded chicken to other SPAR wholesalers.

At SPAR we are invested in operating sustainably, and retailers and customers can rest assured that all of our SPAR Brand chicken sold in the UK is British. As well as this, all SPAR Brand fresh and frozen salmon, white fish and prawns are responsibly sourced to standards set by the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC).



SPAR Brand supports Marie Curie

SPAR's on-going support for Marie Curie includes a number of different fundraising activities and has raised over £100,000 for the charity in the last 12 months. Since Marie Curie became the official charity partner for SPAR UK, the SPAR Brand team has raised over £307,000 which is the equivalent of providing over 15,300 hours to Marie Curie to carry out their exceptional work for the community.

A number of fantastic fundraising events took place this year, from the support of SPAR Brand product like the SPAR Brand Christmas sandwich which delivered over £3,685 to Marie Curie from the 10p donation with the sale of each pack, the fantastic Daffodil appeal and the Marie Curie Tea Party.

2020 saw the second year SPAR Brand partnered with Marie Curie to generate sales and donations on selected products with the help of SPAR suppliers. SPAR delivered over £60,000 in donations during this time and these selected products delivered £586,000 worth of SPAR WDS sales.

Spring 2021 (P16) sees the return of more support for the partnership with a variety of SPAR own-label lines supporting Marie Curie – donations between 2p and 5p per product from the sale of seventy-two of products from 11 – 31 March 2021 will go to Marie Curie.

Myles Mersh, SPAR UK Brand Manager, said: "We are delighted seventeen of our own brand suppliers are backing this charitable campaign covering the biscuits, snacks, grocery, soft drinks, confectionery and petfood categories. Our shoppers care that we are supporting Marie Curie especially in March as we mark the anniversary of the first lockdown. Over the last 12 months, Marie Curie Nurses have been on the front line of the pandemic providing vital care for dying people and their loved ones and we are confident that shoppers will wholeheartedly support this campaign by buying these SPAR own label lines."



SPAR launches its first Fairtrade Wines in time for Fairtrade Fortnight



We are proud to introduce SPAR's very first Fairtrade certified SPAR Brand wines with newly re-sourced SPAR Regional Selection Chenin Blanc and Pinotage which will be on shop shelves in time for Fairtrade Fortnight, 27th February to 7th March.

Both wines selected and blended by Master of Wine Philippa Carr, will be on promotion at £5.49 with the Chenin Blanc chosen as Philippa's P16 Pick of the Bunch

Fairtrade supports decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world, making a difference to the lives of millions of people.

For more information about Fairtrade and the projects supported visit: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

Win a Year's Supply of Wine competition for SPAR customers

Over Easter in P17, SPAR brand is giving customers the chance to 'Win A Year's Supply of Wine' to encourage trial of the re-packaged and refreshed Letter Collection varietal range, which is a re-branding of our popular Alphabet Range: same grape varieties that SPAR customers love but with great new labels.

The Letter Collection will be on promotion over the competition period and we will support the activation with instore POS, a retailer brochure giving full details of the campaign plus online adverts targeted at wine-loving customers living within a 2km radius of a SPAR store.



SLR Perlezza Rose Award Win!

The SPAR Perlezza sparkling Rose has been awarded 'Product of the Year' for 2020 at the Scottish Local Retail Awards (SLR). Independent retailers across Scotland selected the award-winning products and chose SPAR Perlezza Rose as the Best Product of The Year. This accolade further celebrates the excellent quality of our SPAR own label wine range and in particular the ever-popular Perlezza brand.



A Great Daffodil Appeal like no other

Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal means even more to Marie Curie in 2021 than previous years.

This March marks the anniversary of the first lockdown, and in that time over **three million people** have been bereaved, often for the first time. Throughout this year, Marie Curie Nurses have been on the front line of the pandemic providing vital care for dying people and their loved ones. In the last 12 months alone, Marie Curie is proud to have:

- Cared for **42,000** people at home and in hospices
- Provided vital information through **1.7M** sessions
- Supported **1,175** households through the Helper Service
- Launched a bereavement counselling service to give expert one-on-one support

Despite all of this, coronavirus has meant that fundraising has ground to a halt, and that's why Marie Curie would love SPAR's support this March, to make a month that matters for thousands of families across the UK.

Daffodil pin badges will be sent to each store, along with ideas for covid-safe fundraising. Every daffodil sold helps Marie Curie be there for more families who need us during one of the toughest times any of us will face. With SPAR's incredible support, we can ensure that more people get to pick up a daff, and even more families can be given the essential care they so desperately need at this crucial time.

Please make sure daffodil boxes are highlighted loud and proud at till point from **1-31 March** and encourage customers to make a suggested £1 donation for a daffodil. Every daffodil makes a difference, so please do come and get involved!

Four super simple ways to support the Great Daffodil Appeal

- 1 Display the daffodil box in a prime spot on the till area and pick some fantastic fundraising ideas from the Marie Curie pack, or take on their incredible **Step Into Spring** walking challenge (mariecurie.org.uk/stepintospring)!
- 2 Put up posters, use in-store radio and get in touch with your local paper to let customers and the community know how you're getting involved.
- 3 Don't forget Marie Curie is here to help! Simply email spar@mariecurie.org.uk to request any support, advice or materials you need to make your event the best it can be!
- 4 Bank the money you raise by 15 April 2021.

Other ways you can get involved:

- Dress to impress in store with Marie Curie's **Hello Yellow Day** and don your best yellow outfits in store to encourage donations
- Sadly, this year, Marie Curie has had to cancel the daffodil pin collections to ensure the safety of supporters, so they are holding their **2 hour Challenge** to make every second count for Marie Curie Nurses this March. Simply Google Marie Curie **2 hour Challenge** to find out more!
- Promote the number of products in store which donate to Marie Curie when purchasing from SPAR **own brand popcorn** and **cake tubs**, to **fresh daffodil bouquets**!

Tom Heron, Senior Corporate Partnerships Manager at Marie Curie, said: "A huge thank you to everyone in SPAR for your incredible support, and the amazing work you all do on the frontline of this pandemic, helping to feed us, our nurses, and the wider public. We couldn't get through this without you."



A fond farewell to Alan Hargrave

Blakemore Trade Partners wishes Alan Hargrave well as he retires from SPAR.

The Hargrave family have been involved in Meopham since 1964 when Alan's father took the leasehold of a store at number 2 The Parade, Meopham. In 1967, the Hargraves joined SPAR and by 1975 both sons Colin and Alan joined their parents working in the store.

In 2000, Alan and Colin ran the store when their parents retired. Over the years there have been a number of mini refits and remerchandises to head off the competition and the brothers have introduced several local suppliers as a point of difference along with being regular supporters of local causes and events. Alan introduced a Butchery Club loyalty card scheme to grow the butchery and deli department, and over the last few Christmases, have taken orders of around 130 turkeys.

Alan now joins Colin in retirement and we wish him well after 46 years working in SPAR.



SPAR Store Manager Receives New Year Honour

Blakemore Retail is incredibly proud of SPAR store manager Linda Carrington who received a British Empire Medal (BEM) in The Queen's New Year Honours for 2021.

Linda manages Lacey Lodge forecourt convenience store in Grimsby, has been deservedly recognised for her exceptional services to the community during Covid-19. She has almost 40 years of service with the company.

Linda commented: "I am truly honoured to receive this award. When I first found out about it I couldn't believe it – in fact, I actually deleted the Honours email as I didn't think it was real!"



"I couldn't have achieved this recognition without the hard work of my SPAR team, so I see it as an honour for all my colleagues who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to keep essential services going for the community. It's fantastic to know that we're really making a difference."

Throughout the year Linda has shown outstanding commitment to supporting vulnerable members of her local community, going above and beyond with her store colleagues to deliver essential goods to people's homes.

One of the SPAR customers who Linda delivered to, Steve Trist, whose wife has been shielding, commented: "As lockdown

took its toll, the team literally became our lifeline. Living in a rural area and having no close family or friends who were not themselves in isolation, we were not well-placed to get through.

"I can only start to tell you how important and how valued and appreciated their help was and still is. In such difficult times it is clear that Mrs Carrington and her team were themselves on the frontline. I feel very privileged to have met such helpful, kind, caring and supportive people."

Linda's work, however, does not stop at SPAR. She works closely with A.F. Blakemore's charitable trust, the Blakemore Foundation, to support local good causes, and tirelessly

volunteers to help homeless charities in Grimsby. All year round, including Christmas Day, she hands out hot snacks to the homeless community. Linda is the Charity Champion for Blakemore Retail's Hull and Humberside region, coordinating the fundraising efforts of 15 SPAR stores in the area.

Blakemore Retail Operations Director Chris Bacon, said: "This award recognises Linda's immense dedication, kindness and talent for bringing her store closer to its community. In the words of one of her close colleagues, she is truly unique.

"Linda is a much-valued colleague, and here at Blakemore Retail we are bursting with pride."



Blakemore Retail Continues Snappy Shopper Van Rollout

Blakemore Retail has invested in 40 new delivery vans to keep up with demand for Snappy Shopper home deliveries.

The business now has 24 vans in service and is awaiting delivery of a further 20, which are scheduled for rollout in March or April.

Home Shopping Operations Controller, Jamie Parkman, commented: "Customer demand for home deliveries continues to be strong. We are now receiving between 4,000 and 4,500 orders per week on the Snappy Shopper app, and year to date we have delivered over 80,000 orders." "Having more vans will enable us to keep up with demand and increase our catchment areas so that we can serve more local communities."

Blakemore Retail currently has more than 90 stores registered on the Snappy Shopper app, including 46 hub stores, which the vans will be assigned to.

The new vans are expected to create circa 120 full- and part-time jobs for drivers and store colleagues.



Shawburch Store Relaunched after Major Refit



Blakemore Retail has relaunched its Shawburch store in Telford, Shropshire, after carrying out a major refit.

The site has a brand-new Greggs counter, Post Office counter, Costa Coffee Express machine and County Bridge fresh meat range.

Blakemore Retail, Managing Director Matt Teague, commented: "Our Shawburch store has undergone a major refit that has included the installation of Blakemore Retail's fourteenth Greggs unit."

The store has proved popular with the local community, especially as this is the first time that Post Office services have been available in Shawburch.

The SPAR store was reopened on 27 November 2020 by Mayor of Wellington Councillor Pat Fairclough, who commented: "The residents of Shawburch owe a debt of gratitude to the staff of our local SPAR. Since the start of the lockdown in spring they have kept the shop open and well stocked."

A defibrillator has been fitted to the store's exterior, for anyone in the local area to use in an emergency.

A.F. BLAKEMORE JOINS KICKSTART SCHEME

A.F. Blakemore has joined the government's Kickstart Scheme as part of its on-going commitment to helping young people into the workplace.

The Kickstart Scheme is designed to help people aged 16 to 24 who are currently on universal credit to develop the skills and experience they need to find work, through valuable six-month job placements.

A.F. Blakemore is currently advertising more than 190 Kickstart vacancies across England and Wales. These positions include part-time home delivery support assistants and fresh food champions in Blakemore Retail and warehouse assistants in Blakemore Fresh Foods.

Group HR & Strategy Director, Ian Diment, said: "We are excited to be welcoming young people into A.F. Blakemore on the government's new Kickstart Scheme.

"As a business that is committed to building a diverse workforce and investing for the future, it is vital that we help foster the next generation of talent."

Each individual on a placement with the company will be supported with on-the-job training and employability skills training, which will include guidance on CV writing, applying for vacancies and interview techniques.

A.F. Blakemore has also applied to become a Kickstart gateway organisation, which, if successful, will mean that its independent retailers will be able to access the scheme via the company too.



Spreading Christmas cheer across the company

Staff across James Hall & Co. raised over £26,000 for Marie Curie during the 2020 festive period, by hosting a number of COVID-19 safe and virtual fundraising activities.

G&E Murgatroyd, James Hall & Co.'s company owned stores division, raised an incredible £24,839 through a fortnight of festive fundraising in-store, the equivalent of 1,241.95 hours of care.

In addition, staff across the company took part in a festive fundraising video (SPAR Dance Challenge 2020), Christmas jumper day, Mince Pie Friday and a staff raffle. All monies were collected through the company's Just Giving page and you can still view two fabulous festive fundraising videos at www.vimeo.com/jameshallco



New vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free range

In time for Veganuary, James Hall & Co. launched eight new delicious sandwich flavours to accommodate SPAR customers shopping with dietary requirements: three vegetarian, two vegan and three gluten-free options.

Gluten-free options include: Egg mayonnaise and mustard cress on a gluten free roll, Tuna and sweetcorn on a gluten free roll, and Chicken tandoori on a gluten free wrap. For those looking to avoid or reduce their meat intake: a falafel and red pepper hummus wrap, spicy dahl wrap with sweet mango chutney, and a BBQ Jackfruit and coleslaw wrap. Two mouth-watering vegan options include an onion bhaji and Bombay potato wrap, and a vegan cheese salad wrap.

Peter Dodding, Sales and Marketing Director at James Hall & Co., said: "James Hall & Co. launched its first vegan and vegetarian range in February 2019, and after a fantastic response from SPAR customers, later extended the range to include vegan and vegetarian salads. The ranges have proved so popular that our new product development team have been focussing on developing the range further and are delighted to introduce eight new flavours for 2021.

"Many customers are looking for lighter, meat-free options that are full of flavour and we think they will be delighted with the new range of fusion food-to-go options."



£60K giveaway for Northern Guild customers

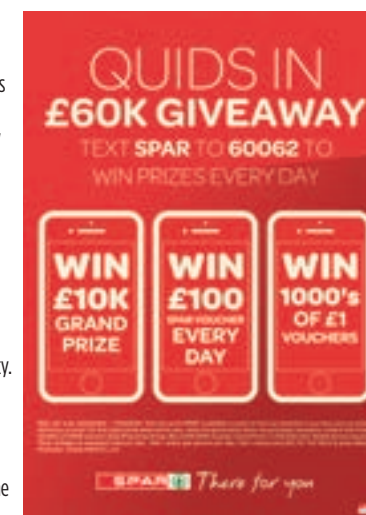
SPAR customers across the north of England are benefitting from a £60,000 giveaway as part of the Northern Guild's focus on delivering outstanding value throughout the New Year.

Designed to help families in what traditionally can be a financially tough period, customers have the chance to win £100 every day, redeem 1,000s of digital vouchers across the majority of products in north of England SPAR stores, and benefit from a range of value driven, in-store initiatives between January and March 2021.

Peter Dodding, Sales and Marketing Director at James Hall & Co., said: "January is often a very difficult month for families across the UK and there is bound to be added pressure after a very challenging year. QUIDS IN is a value driven initiative that will offer customers the chance to win a fantastic sum of money, 1,000s of vouchers to help with January shopping bills, and a bit of positivity to start off the New Year."

Complimenting in-store value initiatives such as the £5 frozen meal deal, 'Fresh 5' produce offer on key fresh lines, and a variety of competitive multibuy promotions, the campaign is supported by value focused POS and social media activity.

Customers enter by texting SPAR to 60062 and all entries will be automatically entered into a prize draw to win £10,000 at the end of the campaign, 10th March 2021.



TACKLING SOARING LEVELS OF INACTIVITY DURING LOCKDOWN

Building on the success of last year's virtual programme and in response to the UK's third national lockdown, the SPAR Lancashire School Games has launched a new virtual programme of activities, designed to keep children across the county active and achieve their 60 active daily minutes.

Dominic Holroyd, Children and Young People Development Officer at Active Lancashire said: "The number of children meeting the government's recommend 60 minutes of exercise has significantly decreased since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Without regular P.E. classes and competitive sport, there is a real danger that many children will not meet the recommended daily allowance, which is essential in maintaining good physical and mental health.

"The SPAR Lancashire School Games virtual programme offers downloadable resources for all age groups, in line with school P.E. curriculum and is designed to be fun and engaging. Our network of Lancashire School Games Organisers have created 'Stay at Home Heroes Challenge' videos and interactive activities that meet government guidance and can be adapted to small spaces with equipment found in the home."

Whilst designed for children in Lancashire, if you have children of school age, you can access the free P.E. resources at www.lancshireschoolgames.co.uk



Saying goodbye after 53 years with SPAR

Ian Procter, the Northern Guild's longest serving committee member, has retired after 53 years with SPAR.

Ian's father became a SPAR retailer in 1968, with Ian taking over the reins in 1970, alongside his brother. Later joined by his daughter, Susan, who managed the Post Office at SPAR Aspall, convenience retailing has remained a key part of the Procter family for an incredible 69 years.

In 1979, Ian purchased a second convenience store in Kitt Green, Wigan, joining the Northern Guild as a committee member in 1994. Ian has been instrumental in shaping change and development across the Northern Guild and will be missed by many.

Peter Dodding, Sales and Marketing Director at James Hall & Co. said: "Ian has always been highly respected by his fellow retailers and Guild Committee members. His passion for retail has certainly kept us on our toes at James Hall & Co., with his

detailed feedback, especially in regards to fresh foods.

"Seeing him with his customers' in-store, even on the day of handover, showed how much he was loved in his local community, a community he has supported with passion and pride.

"We wish Ian, and his wife Sylvia, a happy and healthy retirement."

The Procter family sold SPAR Kitt Green to James Hall & Co. in 2011, and have subsequently sold SPAR Aspall to another independent retailer who plans to continue the village's long found history with SPAR.

Ian is looking forward to spending quality time with his family, enjoying his garden and visiting Ireland when he can.



Pictured are Ian Procter and Susan O'Brien

SPAR Scotland gives cash back to communities

SPAR Scotland is launching its second Community Cashback campaign in March 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 in order 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 as a result of the pandemic and we hope our donation will help the winners benefit in some small way."



SPAR Scotland recognises colleagues working behind the scenes

SPAR Scotland is sharing stories of dedicated staff who have been supporting the business through these challenging times.

Unprecedented situations have called for unprecedented responses, with every day brings new practical challenges and dilemmas. Nevertheless every member of the SPAR Scotland team has played a vital role in protecting their colleague's safety and well-being at the same time as safeguarding business continuity, and for many, this has been a delicate balancing act of supporting better work and working practices.

As a result, a number of colleagues, many of whom work behind the scenes from all areas of the SPAR Scotland business, are being recognised for their hard work and service. These unsung heroes are the faces behind the SPAR brand in Scotland and at the forefront leading the change.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "We have a number of individuals who have gone above and beyond to support our business during the coronavirus crisis, working tirelessly to ensure people can work remotely for the first time, or field questions from colleagues concerned about their health, delivering supplies all over the country or serving customers in SPAR stores.

"We wanted to launch a new campaign to recognise the hard work and commitment of our people within SPAR Scotland and take some of our key workers and bring them to the forefront so our customers could also see the people behind the brand. "



SPAR Scotland back on TV with value campaign

SPAR Scotland launches a three month value campaign on Scottish TV screens. Started on STV in January with a number of value offers running for two weeks, the campaign is running in conjunction with its most recent in-store adverts highlighting the great value available in SPAR stores the length and breadth of the country. The new TV adverts will focus is on the everyday value offered in stores.

Brands advertised by SPAR Scotland on STV during this two week period included: Walkers, Robinsons, Aero, Baxters, Fray Bentos, Carlsberg and Budweiser.

In addition to the January campaign, another two week advertising slot will run during GMTV from 15 February 2021 which will feature a range of breakfast offers. 30 airtime spots will run over two weeks – 15 slots per week, 3 x 20 second adverts a day.

In March, SPAR Scotland will be back on STV from 29 March 2021 for another two week burst with the same advert design but with fresh new offers.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "We know investing in TV is a huge commitment but based on the compiled data, TV reaches a great number of the Scottish population especially now when we are encouraged to stay home and stay safe. The unique combination of this reach and the huge volume of time the population is spending watching TV makes it a powerful form of advertising for us. Value today is important to our customers and our new TV advertising campaign gives us a great opportunity to promote this message on TV for the first three months of the year."



SPAR on store recruitment drive in North Scotland

SPAR Scotland is celebrating success with 14 new stores joining during the second half of 2020. Four of the new sites are from north of the country.

One of the stores to join is run by independent retailers Pamela and Stephen McKay in Portgordon. Since re-opening the SPAR store with a range of services, the McKays said: "The excellent service and support we have received from the sales and development teams at SPAR Scotland has been fantastic."

The husband and wife team of SOS Enterprises took over the Smiddyhill Road SPAR store in Fraserburgh in August last year and have also been impressed with the development and help of the merchandising and sales team at SPAR Scotland. "We wouldn't be able to offer our customers this if we didn't have the guarantee of three deliveries a week and the support of the development, merchandising and sales team at CJ Lang," they said.

A number of new forecourt sites have also joined the group. Owned by Shyam Karthikeyan, the famous North Coast 500 route based Esso Blackpark Filling Station in Inverness and the Ord Filling Station at Muir of Ord 14 miles north of Inverness have moved across to SPAR.

Shyam said: "SPAR offer an excellent service and provide a quality SPAR own label range.

The team work closely together to maintain high standards throughout the process and we have been so impressed with their overall service since joining in October.

"I wanted to join SPAR because I wanted peace of mind. As an independent retailer based in Inverness, to know I will receive three deliveries a week, on time and complete is a huge benefit."

Shyam owns another Esso PFS site at Muir of Ord. The store manager, Kelly Mackenzie, said: "I am delighted we are with SPAR. The service from this family business is excellent. The staff across all departments are very friendly and helpful."



CJ Lang wins Scottish Green Apple Environment Award

CJ Lang and Son Limited in partnership with Gatechurch has won a Scottish Green Apple Environment Award for Environmental Best Practice in 2021 - beating off some 200 nominations.

As a result of this Green Apple Award success, CJ Lang has been invited to have their winning paper published in The Green Book, the leading international work of reference on environmental best practice, so that others around the world can follow their example and learn from their achievement.

Colin Chapman, Distribution Director said: "We're absolutely delighted to have received this Green Apple Award. Our internal teams have been working tirelessly on environmental and CSR initiatives for many years. This award goes some way to recognising all their hard work."



SPAR Scotland driving for profitable growth

SPAR Scotland announced plans to drive growth on a supplier video call on 4 February.



Over 250 suppliers across grocery, BWS, fresh, frozen, chilled, grocery, ambient and tobacco attended the supplier update where the executive team at SPAR Scotland provided an overview of the business since its annual conference was held on 5 November 2020.

SPAR Scotland CEO, Colin McLean, said: "SPAR Scotland business is celebrating three years of consecutive like for like growth but we are not complacent. We are planning to build on our success and are seeing positive confirmation that we have the right offer from both our shoppers and our independent retailers as we continue to attract new business into SPAR Scotland."

Suppliers heard how the business is building a SPAR Scotland future programme which will look to achieve better engagement with

existing and new customers; improve brand awareness, launch new model stores and invest in store formats, range development and lots more.

The next SPAR Scotland conference will take place on a virtual platform on 23 September 2021 where sustainability will be on the agenda.

"Like many businesses, we are dealing with the here and now, but we have the confidence and the courage to face forward and make changes," he added.

"Our business is unpredictable and always changing but we are very much focused on what we can control. SPAR Scotland has changed and we are looking to work with suppliers, building trust to build a customer focused business."



SPAR celebrates 60 years in Northern Ireland

2021 is off to a celebratory start at SPAR NI, as the brand celebrates 60 years serving communities in Northern Ireland.

And the Henderson Group has been going through its archives, asking local celebrities and those who helped put SPAR on the map, to recall their favourite memories from the past 60 years.

Well-known actress in Northern Ireland Olivia Nash, who famously fronted the “Fred, we’ve no bread” ad from the ‘80s, recorded a [special message to say happy birthday to SPAR NI](#), recalling “... there isn’t a week that goes by that someone shouts ‘Fred we’ve no bread’ at me! Filming the ad was one of the highlights of my career, and I’m delighted that I recorded many more voiceovers for the brand in the years after”.

SPAR NI has also launched a series of competitions and giveaways, putting the shopper firmly in the centre of the celebrations.

Paddy Doody, Sales & Marketing Director at Henderson Group added; “It’s a fantastic milestone to reach for the SPAR brand, which has gone from strength to strength over the years, thanks to the commitment of our retailers and our loyal shoppers. There are over 200 SPAR stores in Northern Ireland, which have grown and developed since the brand came here in 1961, and this year is going to see even further growth for this robust brand which is in the heart of every community and village in Northern Ireland.”

John Agnew, son of William Agnew who brought the SPAR brand to Northern Ireland in 1961 has been reflecting on the impact of SPAR in Northern Ireland, and how its Dutch roots and ethos of collaborative working are still strong today.

Mr Agnew said; “The business model of the SPAR Guild operated successfully on a regional, national and international level, and still does today. It supports the exchange of knowledge and information between retailers, as well as a structure to work together to grow the business. That is why SPAR is such a formidable force both globally and within our local communities; not only is our local SPAR Guild collaborating and driving the business forward, but we are learning and developing with our international retail colleagues too.

“Many of our retailers have built entire local networks under the SPAR brand and have been a real hub for their local communities. They trade independently but work with us through our wholesale business to gain access to promotions and our successful own-brand fresh and ambient ranges, a majority of which are sourced and developed with local farmers, growers and suppliers.

“It is incredible to look back over the past 60 years and see the impact the brand has had on retailing in Northern Ireland. We know that strong investment and innovation has really driven that impact, but the success lies with the great people and entrepreneurs we have had working for the business. This has been our true success, and the backbone to the future of SPAR, especially following

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SPAR GROCERS GIVE SAVING & SERVICE

SPAR TRADING



on from a year which has proven just how important community retailing is.”

The celebratory year will see a huge drive on value deals, trips down memory lane, competitions and giveaways for shoppers and even more well-known faces sharing congratulations and their memories from over the years.

More can be found at spar-ni.co.uk/60-years-serving-ni, including a [video with Mr Agnew](#), reminiscing and sharing the success of SPAR on its diamond anniversary with grandson Jonny.

Family connection ends after 65 years

Autoline Service Station and forecourt store in Melksham, Wiltshire is moving under new ownership after the retirement of Bruce and Audrey Sanders and his sister Diane Tandy, ending a 65-year association with the Sanders family.

Bruce said: "It's been our family business for 65 years during which we have had many happy memories with staff and customers. We say a big thank you to all our team and wish them and the new owners every success."

There has been a SPAR forecourt store at the service station for nearly 25 years and in 2016 the family boosted trade following a major redevelopment in a co-investment scheme with Appleby Westward.

The family business was a great supporter of local good causes over the years, most recently the Wiltshire Air Ambulance and Melksham Foodbank.



Family business switches to SPAR after 30 years

When the Thomas family were looking for a partner to help take their Cornwall forecourt store business forward, it was the enthusiasm and commitment of SPAR that won them over.

"We had been with Premier for 30 years and were due to open as a Premier Express," said Mark Thomas, who runs the Dover Service Station business at Connor Downs near Hayle. "But we were making a big investment in the whole site and felt we needed a new partner to take the business forward."

"We contacted all the main symbol groups, but it was the enthusiasm of SPAR led by David Slade, Helen Holmes and the team that really clinched it for us. Appleby Westward came up with a great deal and we are delighted we made the move."

The site was shut for 10 weeks while the store was gutted and the forecourt redeveloped.

"Our customers love what we have done and we have had nothing but positive feedback from the local community," said Mark. "The Connor Downs Residents Association put a message out saying we had done the village proud and urging people to support their new village store. The support and kind words we have received have been overwhelming."

SPAR move strengthens food retail offer for Torbay store

Retailers Tony and Christine Kirby have moved their Torbay convenience store under the SPAR fascia – and could not be happier for making the change.

White Rock Convenience Store and Post Office in Goodrington Road, Paignton had been trading as a Premier for the last six years, but the couple decided they wanted to develop a stronger emphasis on food retailing and sought a new supplier.

"We have Aldi, Lidl and Sainsbury's nearby and wanted to improve our food offer," said Tony. "We talked to Appleby Westward and were impressed with the SPAR range, and we are very pleased to have made the change."

The switch to SPAR was due to have taken place in March, but the pandemic intervened. "There have been a few humps and bumps along the way," said Tony. "We were hoping to take over the shop next door but after lockdown that didn't work out. But we have moved from a somewhat dated look to a new shop front for the 2020s, with an automated door and disabled ramp, and a refitted store with new refrigeration, double the freezer capacity, three metres of beers, wines and spirits and six metres of space for chilled foods, milk and drinks."

The 800sqft store is also a main Post Office, with a two-position counter at the back and a combi in the centre of the store. "Customers say the greatest change they have seen is that the store looks much bigger," said Tony. "In fact, it isn't, it just looks that way because of things like the new chillers, overhead décor and lighter aspect."

Tony and Christine took over the store 13 years ago when it was a Post Office and newsagent. "Having the SPAR name over the door has made a big difference and we are amazed and impressed at the range of own brand products, which have been well received," he said.



Appleby Westward reaches fundraising milestone

Congratulations to Appleby Westward which has reached a fundraising milestone with Marie Curie, passing the £100,000 mark since the partnership began in 2017.

Tom Heron, Marie Curie senior corporate partnerships manager, said: "On behalf of everyone from Marie Curie, I'd like to say a huge thank you to Appleby Westward and all its generous staff and customers who have helped raise this incredible amount for us. The

money you've raised is the equivalent of paying for over 5,000 hours of care from Marie Curie Nurses."

Appleby Westward, Trading and Marketing Director, Joe Dooley said: "We are thrilled to reach the £100,000 milestone for Marie Curie, and we extend a big thank you to all SPAR customers for supporting our fundraising initiatives and our independent retailers for being so enthusiastic."



Strength of own brand clinches move to SPAR

A family-run business has moved to SPAR in a bid to drive business and increase basket spend at its North Devon store.

Barton Tors Stores in Bideford had been with Best One and Premier before directors Michael Blount, his wife Sophie and mother-in-law Beverley Lilley decided on switching to Appleby Westward.

"There were a multitude of reasons why we decided it was time to move," said Michael. "Availability of a lot of lines was becoming difficult, for example, along with increases in the price of goods which was cutting margins."

After looking at their options, the offer from SPAR met their goals to drive the business forward and increase basket spend. "SPAR was undoubtedly best for us as a trusted well-known

brand, and the quality of the own label product range was way above the rest," he said.

The 1,000sqft store had been given a full refit in the last two years, which helped the remerchandising, change of layout and rebranding as a SPAR to be carried out without unnecessary upheaval.

"We can now offer a far greater range, weekly promotions and top-quality SPAR Brand label goods," said Michael. "Customers have been very positive, the feedback from them on SPAR Brand has been excellent and they have trust in our own label pricing."

Beverley Lilley and her late husband Clive took over Barton Tors Stores 18 years ago and it has been a family-run business ever since. Beverley still works in the store with daughter Sophie, with Michael responsible for the day-to-day running of the business.

There for those in need over the festive season

SPAR stores throughout the south west once again showed their tremendous community spirit by being there for those in need over the festive season.

Paul and Stephen Dash's store at Truro was one. Some 50 Christmas boxes were dropped off to the store before 1 December, each box capable of holding about 16 food goodies. "We were overwhelmed by everyone's generosity once again, and the kindness of our customers helped make a real difference to Cornwall families in need over the festive period," they said.

A raffle was held at the SPAR store in Wadebridge for a Christmas hamper with proceeds going to local charity, while at Poundbury, near Dorchester, a collection was carried out

in store for food banks. The SPAR Mote Park store in Saltash also had a weekly pick up of goodies donated by customers for the local food bank.

At the Connolly family's Pennings Road store in Tidworth, Ellen Rhodes reported: "We ran a shoebox appeal and still have the food bank going. We have received lots of donations of gifts for the shoeboxes as well as nominations for children to receive one."

In Torpoint, Kirsty Fowler at the Kingsand SPAR store said: "We set up a donation station in our store from which we donated all goods collected to a local charity, The Peninsula Trust."

At the SPAR store in Preston, near Weymouth, staff went online to thank everyone for their support and donations towards an appeal for Marie Curie, which resulted in the store receiving a Star award from the charity.

And at West Bay in Dorset, the SPAR store helped support the Help Brighten Up Bridport for Christmas initiative, which sought to benefit nominated people with a special gift for Christmas. Manju Vij said: "We were honoured to support this wonderful cause. This beautiful gesture made a real difference and helped put a smile on the face of people in the community."

Head of Sales Steve Thomas said: "There For You' is a core brand value of SPAR, and the commitment our local stores make to their communities is truly outstanding and sets us apart in the convenience market."



Russia

SPAR Far East has opened a new store in Nakhodka, a port city in Russia's Primorsky Territory. On a total store area of 1,500m², SPAR Nakhodka offers customers a variety of solutions for every eating occasion. This is the third SPAR supermarket in the Far East of Russia as the supermarket format is a relatively new idea in the eastern part of Russia. The local team have been very active working with SPAR International to gain a better insight into best practices; learning about food-to-go and food production centres, as well as category management and marketing communication.



Austria

The sugar reduction initiative, launched by SPAR Austria in April 2019 has proven to be a great success and will continue in 2021. So far, 44 partners have joined the sugar reduction initiative and it has become a relevant stakeholder in the discussion about healthy eating.

At the beginning of 2017, SPAR Austria started to reduce sugar in own brand products. In addition, sugar limits have been set for individual product groups. "We are constantly working on the reduction of sugar in our SPAR own brand products. In addition, we will continue to educate people about the effects of an unhealthy, high-sugar diet and point out alternatives," said Gerhard Drexel.



Gold for SPAR

SPAR UK has been recognised with a Gold GroceryAid Award for the incredible support given to GroceryAid during an exceptional 2020.

Grocery colleagues need emotional, financial and practical help now more than ever. In the last year GroceryAid has seen a 55% increase in applications for financial support, the value of grants paid is up by 87% and there have been 74% more calls to its Helpline. They have also doubled the number of Relate counselling sessions delivered.

Steve Barnes, Chief Executive of GroceryAid, said: "Thank you for the immense support of your trade charity and industry colleagues."



PROUDLY RECOGNISING OUR GOLD SUPPORTER

Checking Out on Plastics III

For the third year, the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and Greenpeace UK have surveyed the major supermarkets and grocery retailers in the UK on their efforts to reduce plastic pollution.

This third report analyses 2019 plastic use across the sector, with a view to understanding whether the companies were able to change course and make a tangible difference in reducing their plastic footprint.

The report has given the work SPAR has done in this area a positive mention in the report. It says:

"SPAR provided a breakdown of its activities, including eliminating black plastic and thus diverting 100 tonnes of black plastic from 47 products going to landfill, providing product refill stations for dry groceries, wine and household products and unpacking fruit and vegetable ranges.

"The examples from SPAR in driving down virgin plastic use through recycled content, coupled with the elimination of problematic plastics and the introduction of refill stations, provides a case study for the sector on the role convenience retailers can play in tackling plastic pollution.

"We urge convenience retailers to continue efforts to improve access to data in order to implement effective strategies for plastic reduction across their networks."

Cath McIlwham, Head of CSR at SPAR UK, said: "We are continuing to work with the RDCs and the UK Plastic Pact to develop detailed plans to further reduce our use of plastics."



China

The local government of Dongguan, China, has recognised SPAR Guangdong as a local champion in the fight against COVID-19 during the Dongguan Municipal Awards Ceremony in December. In addition, Dongguan Newspaper Media Group named the SPAR Brand as one of its 31 'Citizen's Favourite' for its robust supply chains to maintain normal operations during the pandemic and their reliable supply of PPE, cleaning supplies and a contactless home delivery service which allowed customers to shop from the safety of their homes.

SPAR Guangdong also worked with Dongguan Chamber of Commerce and Women's Federation to distribute daily essentials and PPE among frontline healthcare workers.

In October 2020, SPAR China was awarded the prestigious title of Socially Responsible Company by trade and industry body ECR (Efficient Consumer Response) China. This title also recognises SPAR China's timely and efficient measures during the coronavirus pandemic.

Gran Canaria

SPAR Gran Canaria showed its community commitment during 2020 with considerable charitable food donations, and support to local producers of the primary sector and social work campaigns.

Despite the decline of tourism on the island, SPAR Gran Canaria saw stable growth in 2020. The company has sought to support its communities by donating more than 200 tonnes of food to various local associations and NGOs. It also supported various social initiatives and renewed its commitment to Canarian sports by taking part in a number of sponsorships.



Zimbabwe

SPAR Zimbabwe is delighted to announce the opening of its 39th store, SPAR Marondera. Customers can look forward to a wide range of products and competitive pricing in a modern and bright setting. SPAR Marondera will focus on the SPAR 'Fresh is Best' policy, with the highest quality specifications in all sections, including butchery, bakery, deli, fruit and vegetables.

"Despite the worldwide challenges of

the past year, we are pleased to keep to our well-defined expansion plan for our organisation by opening SPAR Marondera," said Cyprien Borerwe, General Manager of SPAR Zimbabwe.

In the past two years the SPAR Zimbabwe family has grown to include two new SPAR Supermarkets, three new Tops at SPAR, two SPAR Express outlets, and the SPAR Online Shopping platform.



CERTAS ENERGY ACQUIRES SEVEN FORECOURTS IN THE NORTH EAST

Congratulations to Certas Energy who have purchased seven forecourts in the North East of England as the company continues to grow its Gulf network across the UK.

"We are delighted to have concluded this acquisition of seven well-run forecourts and a highly capable and community-minded team of people," said Richard Billington, Director, Certas Energy. "It's a good fit for our business and adds further strength to our company-operation. We already have a strong Gulf presence in the North East and these sites will be an ideal complement to our thriving Dealer operation."

The sites will be rebranded to Gulf in March whilst simultaneously transforming each shop into the latest-design SPAR store.

"We are taking on a healthy business that will be further enhanced by our stunning new Gulf livery and award-winning loyalty platform, Oomph," continues Richard. "Working alongside SPAR and with ongoing investment, we see huge potential at each location."

Certas Energy is the UK's largest independent supplier of fuels and lubricants and includes over 500 Gulf branded forecourts within its retail portfolio. The seven newly acquired forecourts are located in Bishop Auckland, Crook, Howden-le-Wear, South Shields, Stockton, West Rainton and Witton Gilbert.

Bells Hill Service Station in West Rainton will be sporting Gulf colours going forward following the purchase of seven forecourts from Marla and Gus Saggi.



Cabinet minister praises grocery workers as 'hidden heroes' of pandemic

Environment secretary George Eustice has added his congratulations and thanks to the UK grocery retail sector after it was handed the trophy for Outstanding Achievement at this year's Retail Industry Awards.

He told TalkingRetail.com: "I congratulate the UK's grocery retail sector for its well-deserved Outstanding Achievement award at the Retail Industry Awards.

"I am enormously grateful for the work those in the sector have done in what has been an incredibly difficult 12 months. As you continue to feed the nation, I want to thank each and every one of you.

"You are the hidden heroes of this pandemic."

James Lowman, chief executive at the ACS, added: "It was highly appropriate that this year's Outstanding Achievement Award was given to the whole sector; every retailer, wholesaler and supplier should take a

moment to reflect on what they have been part of, whatever their own achievements over the past year."

Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail

Consortium, collected the Outstanding Achievement trophy on behalf of the whole sector.

She said: "We already know we have a world-leading grocery industry, but from convenience stores to supermarkets and online grocers, every single person in every one of these businesses – stores, distribution centres, drivers, support centres, and everyone in between – has shown indomitable spirit in the face of huge challenges posed by the pandemic.

"You went above and beyond. You ensured customers and colleagues stayed safe. You ensured everyone got the food that they needed. You looked after vulnerable people. You scaled up your businesses, doubled up your online capacity.

"You were and still are truly in the frontline of the pandemic. You should be very proud of everything you've done."

Environment secretary George Eustice



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MAKE AMAZING
HAPPEN

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