

SPAR Today Magazine

Issue 65 | June | July 2020

**Our
stores don't
just serve
the community,
we're part of it**



Marie Curie charity reg. no. 207994
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There for you

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Convenience retailers should be recognised



It is fifteen weeks since the start of the pandemic and it is apparent that SPAR retailers thrive on crisis. No matter what is thrown at us, we tackle it head on by working together and finding the best solution to serve local communities.

I am in awe of the work everyone in the entire business has done over the past months. The tireless number of hours people have put into their businesses with no stone left unturned in order to find solutions to keep stores afloat or to maintain the service your local customers have come to expect.

You have been innovative, caring, adaptable, and resourceful and a critical emergency service from what has been forced upon us.

And at the time of writing, the issue of changing Sunday trading laws has come up again. We are very disappointed that our efforts to feed the nation have not been seen as enough and outraged that those pressing for a change in the law are using the current crisis to back their agenda.

Supported by our wholesalers and suppliers, SPAR and EUROSPAR stores stepped up to the mark, adapting on a daily basis to ensure people the length and breadth of the UK have access to essential items.

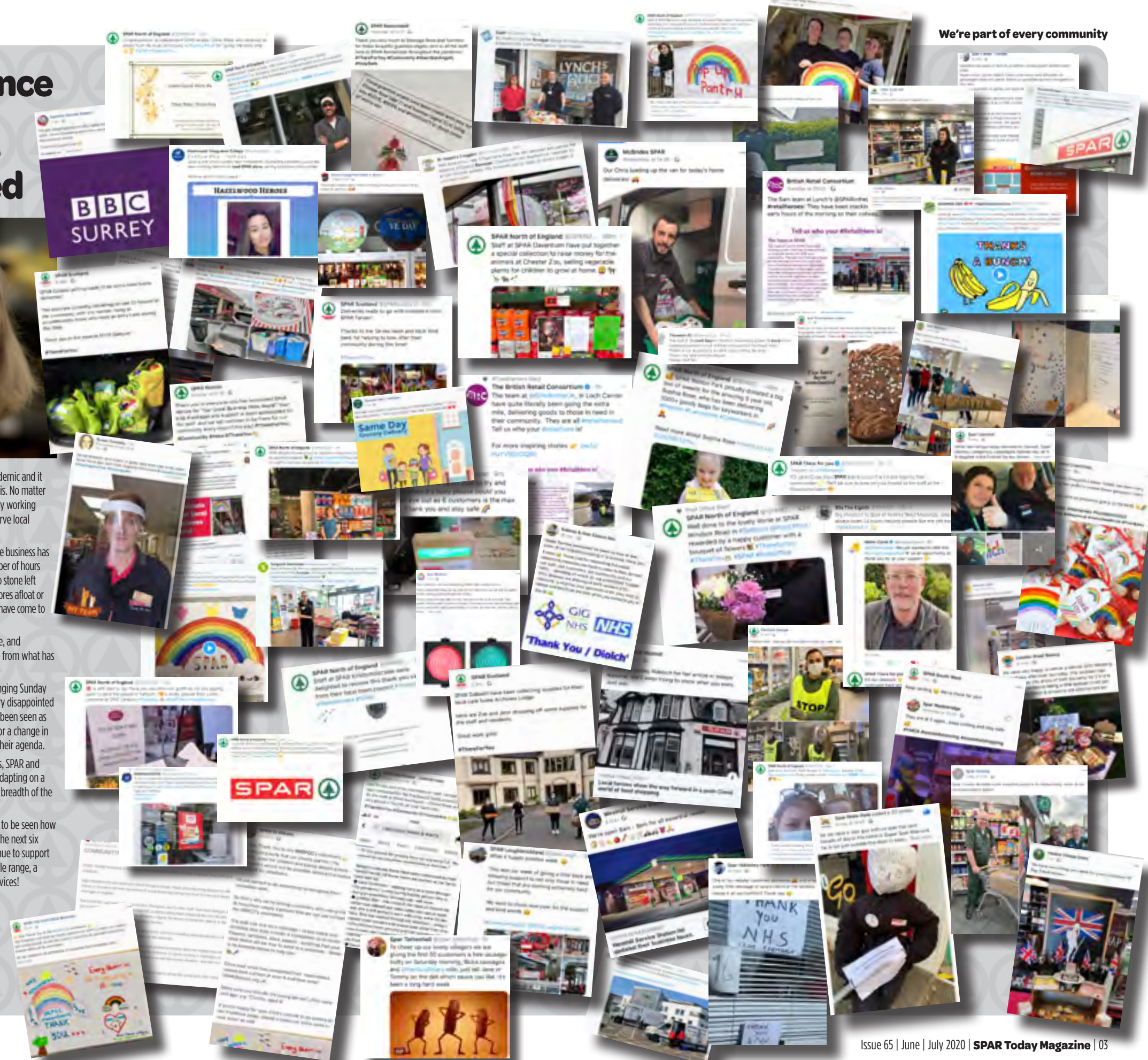
Your efforts should be rewarded. It remains to be seen how much shopper behaviour will change over the next six months, but for now, SPAR stores will continue to support their local communities by offering a credible range, a variety of services and efficient delivery services!

I want to thank each and every one of you for your remarkable work.

Please continue to stay safe.

Louise Hoste

**Managing Director
SPAR UK Ltd**



We're part of every community

Great lines back in stock for the Summer

As we continue to adapt to the challenges associated with the current pandemic, there have been a number of changes to the SPAR Brand ranges recently. Thanks to suppliers and trading colleagues, a number of SPAR Brand ranges temporarily reduced at the start of the UK's lockdown are now back in production and available to order today.

Cake

After a period of unavailability, SPAR's full range of muffins and cake bars is now available to order. Stock up at a key time where consumers can treat themselves to a touch of indulgence.



Savoury snacking 2 for £3

With SPAR's summer range reaching stores slightly later than planned, there are some great product recommendations for this time of the year. If you are seeing new shoppers utilise your SPAR stores more regularly, there are some outstanding savoury basket fillers and picnic options to ensure shoppers find everything they are looking for in the warmer weather.



Frozen

SPAR Frozen Prawns are now available to order. With consumers wanting to spend less time in-store and shop less frequently, this line is a great substitute to any chilled alternatives.



Ready meals

SPAR's full range of ready meals, including sides, is now available to order again. Summer-focussed lines in our Tex Mex range are back in production and are sure to be a hit with customers in the 2020 season.



Six new lines added to own label chilled dessert range

SPAR Brand's chilled dessert range has been revamped in 2020! Keeping in line with current shopping habits, six brand new products have been launched. The packaging on two existing favourites has also been refreshed in order to drive consumer interest ahead of the summer season.

Own-label dominates the chilled desserts category with a 70% share of a category worth £750m, and whilst the healthier eating trend has increased over the last few years, the accepted role of treats in order to lead a balanced lifestyle is supporting the growth in the category.

The new products include twin-pots for both blackcurrant and strawberry cheesecake flavours as well as chocolate trifles, tapping in to the 'one for now, one for later' trend.

Development is also underway with a new supplier on replacements for the hot desserts. The three products, as well as a brand new line, are expected to be available this October - just in time for the festive season.



SPAR Brand has everything 'on the go'

As the country begins to return to normal and with consumers wanting to spend more time outside, SPAR Brand's vast range of 'on the go' impulse products across both ambient and chilled space are there for you!

The savoury snacking range has recently been redesigned bringing a distinctly refreshing look on shelf, and includes snacking favourites including pork cocktail sausages, scotch egg and savoury mini eggs.

Additionally, the soft drinks range goes from strength to strength, with products like the SPAR Brand water bottles made from 51% recyclable plastic and not forgetting the reformulated SPAR Cola, Diet Cola and Cola Zero 500ml bottles.

All these products offer a fantastic opportunity and are available to order now!



The best new wines from SPAR

The summer of wine is upon us and SPAR has a selection of new on trends wines for customers to choose from.

A first for SPAR launching are two new organic wines which will sit under the brand name Orbis Organic and consist of a white wine Verdejo Sauvignon Blanc and a red Tempranillo Shiraz.

With organic wine sales now at £1m a week in the UK and organic wine being the fastest growing wine trend, it is the perfect time to launch the Orbis Organic brand.

SPAR also has two new rosé wines launching, a sparkling rosé that will be added to the popular Perlezza brand and another first in the form of a Malbec rosé which will be added to the Rios De Los Andes

wine brand. Malbec is the only red grape variety to grow by 20% in value in 2019, and pale style rosé is up 16.4% in the current market.

The final two wines adding to the range are the sub £5 wines. Offering value is very important at the moment with customers having less disposable income since the lockdown. Value is and going to become a bigger concern for customers and the new quality Spanish sub £5 wine in red and white is a great addition to the range.

All these wines target a different customer trend and are a must have in SPAR stores this summer.



SPAR reports global retail sales growth

SPAR International reported sales of €37.1 billion for the year ending 31 December 2019, representing a 4.35% increase in revenue on a constant currency basis.

At the end of the year there were 13,320 SPAR branded stores operating across 48 markets worldwide in four continents, an increase of 208 stores over the previous year. Consistent expansion has seen over 1,200 new stores added to the SPAR global network in the last four years. The brand was launched in two new markets in 2019, Kosovo and Armenia, further strengthening the brand in Central and Eastern Europe – one of the key growth regions for SPAR in recent years.

Tobias Wasmuht, CEO of SPAR International said: “In the face of intensified international competition, the SPAR brand has again delivered exceptional results. A common trend across many of our markets in 2019 was the outperformance of the SPAR brand versus key local and global competitors.”

“The strength of our international network and growth in our distribution and supply chain operations have delivered significant competitive advantages for our stores and retailers, allowing agility and a speed of response to changing consumer and market trends.

“Our continuous compound annual growth of 4.4% over the last five years creates a strong platform to build from for the future and indicates that our ‘Better Together’ strategy continues to deliver sustainable growth.”

Commenting on SPAR performance during the first four months of 2020 and the impact of COVID-19, Tobias continued, “From our unique vantage point as a global retailer, we had the ability to track the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the retail sector from East to West; and to share SPAR’s best practice approach to ensuring the safety of SPAR



Hungary online fulfilment

colleagues and customers around the world. The crisis has shown the true strength of the SPAR network. As a group, we have worked tirelessly to ensure consistency of supply for the hundreds of thousands of our colleagues who continued to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

“The strong performance of neighbourhood retailing during the outbreak and the importance our customers place in proximity and local retailing will continue to strengthen, as will our continued roll out of online retail in the new ‘low-touch’

economy. Economic impact, consumer confidence and the negative impact on household incomes will see consumer spend shifting towards three key areas of health, sanitation, and value, with the SPAR brand very well positioned to respond. “Performance to date this year gives just an indication of the key role SPAR stores have played as critical lifelines for local communities throughout the crisis. SPAR now has an online shopping presence in 25 countries worldwide.”



Kosovo exterior

SPAR There for You Message Reaches Record Online Audience

A social media campaign run by A.F. Blakemore to recognise the important role that stores and colleagues have played in supporting their communities during the coronavirus pandemic has reached a record online audience of more than 100,000.

Launched in early April, the campaign features two Facebook posts that focus on communication to shoppers and SPAR colleagues. Both have been posted across 269 Blakemore Retail Facebook pages, as well as some SPAR pages belonging to independent retailers, if they have signed up to the company's free Facebook post scheme.

The first post features a "We will continue to be there for you" message starring Blakemore Retail colleague Helen Vinson from SPAR Laceby Lodge. It promotes the fact that SPAR continues to support people in need during the coronavirus outbreak.

The second post features a "We couldn't be prouder of our SPAR family" message starring Blakemore Retail colleague Halim Boudherba from SPAR Bad Bargain Lane. It acknowledges the dedication of SPAR colleagues and all those behind the scenes who keep stores operating.

Social Media Co-ordinator Ed Bolla commented: "This campaign is one of Blakemore Retail's most well-received yet and has generated an incredible amount of positive feedback from customers. It's great to see the fantastic efforts of all our colleagues recognised."

The campaign idea was created by SPAR International but has been adapted by A.F. Blakemore for use in the UK.



A.F. Blakemore Colleagues Donate Over £58,000 During Coronavirus Crisis

Colleagues from across A.F. Blakemore have joined forces to donate £58,000 to local communities during the coronavirus crisis.

Colleagues from the company's Blakemore Foodservice Darlaston depot and Blakemore Retail SPAR stores have awarded over 700 in-kind donations worth £40,441 and a further £18,000 in monetary support to local good causes via A.F. Blakemore's charitable trust, the Blakemore Foundation.

Vast numbers of essential goods have been donated to support hundreds of frontline NHS workers.

Hospitals that have received support include Peterborough City Hospital, Sheffield Northern General Hospital, Princess Royal Hospital in Telford, Barnsley Hospital, Withybush General Hospital, Walsall Manor Hospital, Newark Hospital, Rookwood Hospital, University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff and Princess of Wales Hospital in Bridgend.

As well as this, Blakemore Retail SPAR staff have awarded goods to care homes, food banks and volunteer groups across England and Wales, offering essential care packages for the isolated, elderly and most vulnerable.

Good causes to have benefited include Chirk Food Court Care Home, Grimsby Food Kitchen and the Black Country Food Bank.

Donations of Easter eggs and craft materials were also given to Easter 'social distancing' street parties and schools open for keyworkers' children.

The Blakemore Foundation has donated £18,000 in monetary support to 165 good causes and emergency appeals. The monies donated will enable charities to maintain services for local people during these uncertain times.

Good causes include St David's Hospice in Caernarfon, St John Ambulance, the YMCA, Aspire and Compton Care.

A.F. Blakemore Community Affairs Officer Kate Senter said: "During these extraordinary times, it is heart-warming to know that communities are helping one another where they can. I am so proud of colleagues supporting their local community and all the community relationships that continue to grow as a result."

A.F. Blakemore Partners with Royal Voluntary Service



A.F. Blakemore has partnered with the Royal Voluntary Service on a number of initiatives to help vulnerable people and NHS workers during the coronavirus crisis.

The company has secured a contract with the Royal Voluntary Service to supply products for 5,000 'help from hospital' bags.

The bags will play a vital role in providing essentials to patients leaving hospital as well as keeping NHS staff fed at home.

Products supplied include tea, coffee, milk, tuna, baked beans, soups, a wafer snack and soft drinks as well as a toothbrush, toothpaste and soap. These are being delivered to four Royal Voluntary Service distribution centres across the UK for the charity to distribute to people in need via their volunteer network.

A.F. Blakemore is also collaborating with customers, suppliers and Royal Voluntary Service to provide essential foods and refreshments to frontline workers in the NHS.

The business is helping to deliver food and drink donated by partners such as Milk & More, Pepsi Co., Lucozade, Fulfil and Walkers Snacks to NHS workers across the UK.

A.F. Blakemore Group Marketing Director Sarah Ellis commented: "We are delighted to partner with Royal Voluntary Service, one of our key business partners, at this crucial time."

"During the coronavirus crisis many of our SPAR stores have been prioritising home deliveries for those identified by the government as vulnerable, and the NHS Volunteer Responders scheme and 'help from hospital' bags are great ways that we can make even more of a difference."

A.F. Blakemore has been distributing food and drink to Royal Voluntary Service since April 2017 and supplies 180 of the charity's hospital sites across Britain.



Blakemore Retail Launches Home Delivery Website

Blakemore Retail has launched an online ordering website to make it easier for customers to browse products from SPAR stores offering home deliveries.

Customers are able to view a range of circa 1,100 products across all categories, including fruit and vegetables, bread, meat, dairy, drinks, snacks, alcohol, tobacco and household goods.

To place an order, customers simply have to log in or register at www.afbspar.co.uk, select their nearest store and start shopping. Once their order has been placed, their chosen store will give them a call, take payment over the phone and arrange a convenient delivery slot.

Blakemore Retail Managing Director Matt Teague commented: "SPAR stores have played a key role in local communities delivering essential groceries to those most in need."

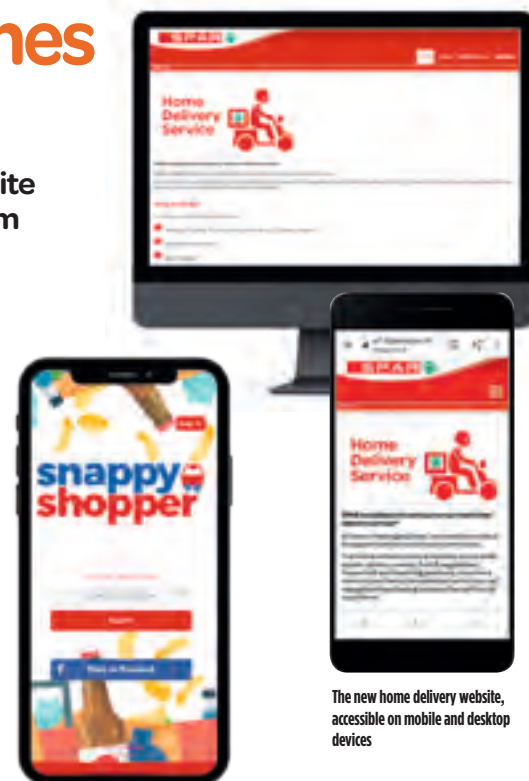
"We hope that this new platform improves our home delivery service by making it easier for

customers to see what products we have available without leaving their homes."

The online ordering platform is aimed at all customers within two miles of participating Blakemore Retail stores, of which there are circa 80 across England and Wales.

There is a £3 delivery charge on orders. Key workers, NHS staff and vulnerable customers who are self-isolating will, however, be able to take advantage of free delivery if they notify their local store.

A.F. Blakemore also recently teamed up with online ordering app Snappy Shopper to expand its home delivery service. This new online platform will not be used by stores registered on this app, as this is a separate initiative.



The new home delivery website, accessible on mobile and desktop devices



Blakemore Foodservice drops off a donation of refreshments for a catering van at Walsall Manor Hospital, to feed NHS staff

James Hall & Co. donate £250K to Royal Preston Hospital

NHS staff at Royal Preston Hospital are set to benefit from a £250k charitable donation aimed at ensuring their on-going well-being and to assist them in the fight against COVID-19.

This significant donation will enable the hospital to realise its ambition to transfer out of date facilities into a state of the art area including refurbished male and female showers, cubicles and lockers; sleep "PODS" for staff who have been working long shifts and are too tired to drive home safely; indoor relaxation area complete with sofas, yoga mats and tea and coffee making facilities; a refurbished breast feeding room and an out- door patio area with table and chairs so that staff can unwind in the fresh air.

Speaking on behalf of the Hall family, Andrew Hall said: "As a longstanding local business,

we wanted to make a donation which would have a positive impact on NHS staff morale and provide a legacy for the community which would reach far beyond COVID-19."

Paula Wilson, Head of Charities and Fundraising for Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "This extremely generous gesture will have a huge impact on staff morale, at what is an exceptionally challenging time. Being able to offer staff on-site accommodation is a real lifesaver for those who spend their working lives saving others, and we are absolutely thrilled that we can now transform this fabulous idea into reality."



Thanking staff at Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust

James Hall & Co. donated £10,000 worth of chocolate treats for NHS staff to enjoy at The Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust, on behalf of independent SPAR retailers across the North of England, North East Convenience Stores and SPAR G&E Murgatroyd.

Tomas Garliauskas, Corporate Social Responsibility Coordinator at James Hall & Co. said: "We are so grateful to NHS colleagues up and down the country for their unfaltering dedication and commitment, in fighting COVID-19 and protecting communities across the UK. We wanted to do something to say thank you and knew that many would be working over the bank holiday, so provided staff with a little chocolate treat to boost morale and accompany a well-earned cup of tea. The Newcastle Upon Tyne NHS Foundation Trust kindly took the donation and distributed amongst NHS staff across the North East, sharing the treats with as many staff as possible."



Partnering with FareShare Lancashire and Cumbria to reach vulnerable communities

A new partnership with FareShare is ensuring surplus stock from James Hall & Co.'s depot, reaches the most vulnerable in Lancashire and Cumbria.

Andrew Barnes, Trading Director at James Hall & Co. said, "As a large wholesaler and manufacturer, hundreds of thousands of fresh and ambient lines pass through our warehouse each week. This new partnership with FareShare will ensure the distribution of surplus fresh and ambient stock reaches the most vulnerable communities across the North West, communities that desperately need support during the coronavirus pandemic.

"In the past, we have worked with many different charities but have often come up against the challenge of organisations not having the required fridge space, or chilled transport, to receive and distribute fresh food donations. FareShare's infrastructure and network of local charities enables us to distribute large amounts of fresh and ambient food to hundreds of local charities."

FareShare Commercial Manager Michael Shields said, "We are very thankful to James Hall & Co. for their support in the face of the current crisis – their donations to FareShare Lancashire and Cumbria help us greatly to support communities in the North West with vital food supplies."



SPAR CITY OF PRESTON 10K

James Hall & Co. has launched a new sponsorship programme with the Running Bee Foundation, to sponsor the SPAR City of Preston 10K.

All profits from the event will be donated through grant applications to community initiatives and groups in Preston, to help create and improve health and wellbeing initiatives in the area, with many of James Hall & Co.'s community signing up to run or volunteer on race day.

Peter Dodding, Sales and Marketing Director at James Hall & Co. said, "We are absolutely thrilled to be supporting the SPAR City of Preston 10K, especially as the event takes place in our home town. As a family business, community lies at the heart of everything we do and The Running Bee Foundation's commitment to implementing health and wellbeing initiatives within the community aligns perfectly with our sponsorship of the SPAR Lancashire School Games. We are really looking forward to what promises to be an exciting, family centred, community event."



SPAR Lancashire School Games launches online 'Stay at Home' fitness programme

The team organising the SPAR Lancashire School Games have adapted to the challenges of lockdown by launching an online SPAR Lancashire School Games Stay at Home fitness programme.

Designed to ensure schoolchildren across the county remain active throughout lockdown, the programme delivers daily activity schedules for three age categories, in line with school PE curriculum. The programme also features local sporting celebrities such as middleweight professional boxer, Brian Rose, and professional paraplegic adventurer, Shaun Gash.

Organised by Active Lancashire and the team of Lancashire School Games organisers, the online programme has had a fantastic response with over 10,000 users in the first few weeks of lockdown.



Lizzie Arnot bakes for SPAR Scotland

In keeping with a commitment to supporting the Future Stars Football Cup, SPAR Scotland has produced a new video with Scottish Women's National Team star Lizzie Arnot, highlighting the benefits of home baking. It's available on both SPAR Scotland's and the Scottish FA's social channels.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "In times like this it is important for everyone to stay active – both physically and mentally. SPAR has always been passionate about sport and encouraging healthier lifestyles for young people and we were delighted to be able to work with the Scottish FA on this production."

Lizzie Arnot, Manchester United and Scotland: "By using the basic ingredients you can pick up from any local SPAR store, it's amazing what you can bake. I really encourage everyone to have a try."



David Lamb departs CJ Lang following 25 years of service

David Lamb, Trading Director at CJ Lang & Son Ltd, retired from the company on 30 April 2020.

A long term Executive Board member, David made a substantial contribution to trading both at CJ Lang & Son and as a member of the SPAR UK national trading committee.

Colin McLean, CEO of CJ Lang & Son Ltd, said: "Over the years David has made a significant contribution to the Board and has helped steer the direction of the business. In the two years since I've joined SPAR Scotland, David has been a huge asset in sharing his wealth of experience in wholesale trading with CJ Lang and SPAR UK."

"On behalf of the Shareholders and the Board of CJ Lang, I would like to thank David for his loyalty, dedication and commitment over the last 25 years. He is a well-respected and regarded Trading Director within wholesale and convenience and I wish him well in his retirement, it's richly deserved."

David said: "I am very proud of the role I have played alongside CJ Lang colleagues and Independent customers in building the success of SPAR in Scotland. Now though, I'm looking forward to enjoying more time with my wife and family."

"Richard Collins, who joined in early 2020 as Trading Director (Designate), has now taken over the role of Trading Director."



SPAR Scotland announces new partnership with Snappy Shopper

SPAR Scotland has announced an exciting new partnership with the online grocery delivery app Snappy Shopper.

Colin McLean, CEO at SPAR Scotland, stated: "SPAR stores are playing a very important role in local communities around the country by helping the vulnerable and those who are self-isolating. With the addition of the Snappy Shopper app, it will make our SPAR stores even more convenient by us being able to quickly deliver essential items to consumers without them ever leaving their homes."

Mark Steven, CEO at Snappy Shopper explained what makes the Snappy Shopper service so appealing to retailers by saying, "We are absolutely delighted to be partnering with SPAR Scotland, further enhancing our national SPAR relationship."

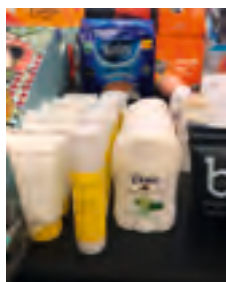


SPAR Scotland donates £200 to help NHS Fife patients

SPAR Scotland has donated £200 to help patients at a hospital in Fife.

When local resident Wendy Page said: "We became aware that patients are often admitted to hospital urgently with no personal possessions and no one to assist in delivering these. With the hospital in lockdown families unable to take things to the hospital we know they would feel isolated."

"Fife Coronavirus Fundraisers would like to say a big thank you to SPAR Scotland for their generous £200 donation to our appeal for Victoria Hospital Kircaldy. This will go a long way to help patients with personal care items in these difficult times," she said.



SPAR Scotland partners with Brownings the Bakers for Marie Curie

SPAR Scotland teamed up with local Scottish baker, Brownings the Bakers, to produce a twin-pack version of the Scottish favourite Empire biscuit, which carried #stayathome on its packaging.

Priced at only £1.60, the twin-pack Empire biscuit were available exclusively in Scottish SPAR stores for a limited period. 60p from the sale of each product went Marie Curie.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "We are very proud to support Marie Curie and thrilled to partner with the Scottish family business Brownings the Bakers and develop this #stayathome campaign with the delicious Empire biscuit."

John Gall, Joint Managing Director of Brownings the Bakers added: "We are absolutely delighted to partner with SPAR Scotland to produce one of our best selling products with

the #stayathome hashtag and look forward to seeing how much we can help contribute to the wonderful and very well deserved Marie Curie charity."



SPAR Scotland donates sandwiches to local partners

CJ Lang & Son Ltd donated 8,000 sandwiches to a number of great causes.

Dundee Bairns were one recipient and David Dorward said: "We are immensely grateful to CJ Lang for the offer of help through the donation of sandwiches at this unprecedented time of worry and food insecurity for so many people across the city who already teeter on the edge of coping. As we ramp up our service to try to support our colleagues across Dundee, we are sure many will feel the benefit of your generosity at this time."

CJ Lang & Son's foodbank partner Gate Church has also taken some stock to help those in need around Dundee.

Colin McLean, CEO of CJ Lang & Son Ltd, said: "At times like this it is very important to think of those in our local area who could need our help."



SPAR Scotland donates 1,440 boxes of Cadbury Heroes to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee

At a time when Scottish NHS frontline staff are working tirelessly to help the nation, SPAR Scotland delivered this kind gesture of thanks to Ninewells Hospital.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland said: "We really appreciate the amazing work all frontline NHS staff at Ninewells Hospital are doing to help local residents in the Tayside region during this current crisis."

"As they are our heroes, we thought it would be only fitting to treat them to boxes of Cadbury Heroes – the chocolates in the box may be small but it's a mighty thank you from all of us at SPAR Scotland."

NHS Tayside Chief Executive Grant Archibald, said: "I would like to thank everyone at SPAR Scotland 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 by the people of Tayside."



SPAR SCOTLAND SUPPORTS LOCAL SUPPLIERS

As many areas of convenience retail experience a number changes, the pandemic has transformed the way CJ Lang & Son Ltd works with local suppliers.

The Dundee-based wholesaler took the time to speak to its existing 150 local supplier base to see what they could do to support them – particularly those who were involved in the catering industry.

"Such developments are not only assisting local businesses during this time of uncertainty but it has allowed us to maintain a regular flow of local products to our SPAR stores right across Scotland," said Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland.

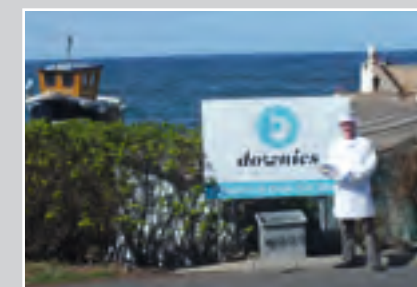
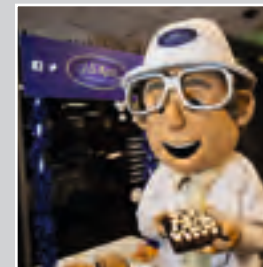
"The supply chain could have been heavily affected but pandemic has highlighted the opportunity of committing to local Scottish businesses. The quality and price of what we produce right here on our own doorstep is as good as what we may bring in from other parts of the UK and abroad. This could have a more positive effect for the domestic retail economy when the situation settles," he added.

CJ Lang & Son works with a number of local Scottish bakeries, fresh and chilled suppliers in order to keep the shelves of SPAR stores stocked. Graham's the Family Dairy, Farmlay Eggs, Brownings the Bakers, Ashers, McGhees, JG Ross, Malcolm Allan and Stuarts Bakers are a few who currently supply the wholesaler.

Graeme Ross, Joint Managing Director of JG Ross based in Inverurie, Aberdeenshire said: "CJ Lang has helped us plan and react at an early stage to help ensure we can maximise availability of our key products in SPAR stores to serve the local community. This is a true partnership in action."

Other local suppliers include Gen!us Craft Lager, Equi's Ice Cream and new season Scottish strawberries and raspberries from Castleton Farm, which is now available in Scottish SPAR stores.

Scotland Food & Drink UK Market Development Director Lucy Husband said: "CJ Lang's approach to working with suppliers in this agile way is what's needed to support Scotland's recovery and it's been great to be able to support the team with introductions to the right suppliers."



C J Lang hosts supplier webinar

C J Lang hosts supplier webinar C J Lang & Son Ltd hosted a webinar with 300 attendees on 10 June to take the opportunity to present to its supply base and provide details on how the business has progressed over the course of the last 12 months.

Colin McLean, CEO, said: "The purpose of the event was to update our suppliers on the strong position the business is in. We have gone through a positive transformation over the last couple of years and we wanted to share these results and our future plans with our supply base."

We are in our 'back to basics' phase in our five year strategic growth plan but the results so far are very good."

The next virtual conference is being planned for later this year.

Thousands of school children sign up for Virtual Sports Day challenge

Since launching in May, over 21,000 school children registered for Healthy Kidz' Virtual Sports Days as part of their partnership with Henderson Group.

Pupils from almost 800 schools across Northern Ireland didn't have to miss out on one of the highlights of the end of the year with 21,308 individual registrations and over 800,000 activities already logged by participants.

Henderson Group and their brands partnered with the successful health programme to develop Virtual Sports Days, meaning thousands of pupils across the country were able to take part with their classmates to represent their school through an app, safely at home.

Healthy Kidz is the holistic Health Programme for schools, aimed at increasing physical, general and emotional health of children across schools in Northern Ireland and the UK.

The Virtual Sports Day took place on Saturday 13 June, with a full training programme kicking off from 11 May to teach participants their sports day activities. Sammy SPAR, the local mascot, also took on training in a series of videos that were shared across social during the training period.

Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing

at Henderson Group says that following the closure of schools in Northern Ireland it was even more important for them to continue to support initiatives that keep children active; "Sports Day is an important tradition for schools, their pupils and their families to get together and celebrate the end of the school year whilst combining important physical exercise.

"Partnering with Healthy Kidz means we could continue our own tradition of supporting sports day through their virtual platform and giving children at home more to focus on and enjoy as the lockdown continued."



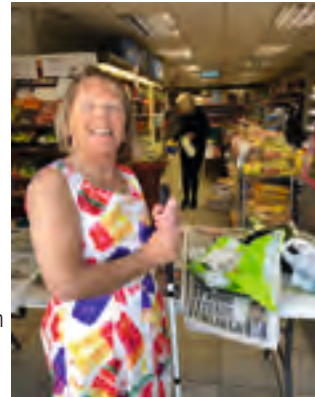
NI retailers pledge commitment to RNIB with best practice guidelines

487 stores supplied by the Henderson Group have pledged their commitment to supporting blind and partially sighted people, both in-store and with their already existing next day home delivery service.

RNIB's best practice guidelines have been circulated to these retailers to help serve and assist blind and partially sighted people who shop in-store and who use its home delivery service.

Mark McCammond, Retail Director at Henderson Retail said: "We appreciate the challenges the more vulnerable in our communities are facing during the COVID crisis, which is why we have communicated RNIB's guidelines to our stores in order to serve and look after our blind and partially sighted shoppers better in store.

"We're very proud of how our teams have stepped up in recent weeks to help all members of the community, so we hope that these additional measures enable us to reach even further and ensure everyone feels confident coming to our stores in these challenging times."



Elaine Orwin is grateful to RNIB for issuing guidelines to local retailers across NI

16 LOCAL CHARITIES BENEFIT FROM £20K FUNDING TO ALLEVIATE COVID PRESSURES

Sixteen of Northern Ireland's community groups and charitable organisations have benefitted from the inaugural Community Cashback Grant created by the Henderson Group.

Announced in April, the Grant has donated £20,000 to charities providing a variety of complex and critical services to users throughout Northern Ireland.

The organisations range from local community groups who are ensuring the most vulnerable are still able to access hot meals while isolating, to critical care in the skies and some of Northern Ireland's most important mental health organisations.

Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group said the Grant was set up in the face of a surge in demand for charity services, alongside the immediate cancellation of fundraising events; "Everything changed overnight for the charities and their service users, not only did critical fundraising events get cancelled but they had to navigate and pivot an unparalleled change in the face of a huge surge in demand. Therefore, we set up the Community Cashback Grant as we are part of every community these charities serve in Northern Ireland."

The organisations which received boosts to their COVID-19 crisis response funds are; Tiny Life NI, Mae Murray Foundation, Belfast Homeless Services, Flourish NI, Kilkeel Development Association, Foyle Down Syndrome Trust, Crossroads Care NI, SHINE Autism Support Group, Air Ambulance NI, Make a Wish NI, Action Mental Health, Simon Community, Nexus NI, Cruse Bereavement Care, Eating Disorders Association NI and Parenting NI.

Niall Dempsey from Nexus NI with the organisation's £2,000 cheque from Henderson Group Donna McConnell, CEO of Kilkeel Development Association which also received £2,000 as part of the Community Cashback Grant.



Local nurses, medical centres and care homes benefit from retail brothers

Brothers Dale and Aaron Beckett, who own SPAR Loughbrickland have donated a share of hundreds of disposable masks and hand sanitiser to their local stores' GP surgeries, care homes and District Nurses, alongside all-important hampers of biscuits to keep dedicated staff going.

Dale Beckett says their stores are an integral part of the communities they serve and it was important for them to give back; "this pandemic has hit so many families in our local communities, and there are many key workers who are continuing to work through it all. We hope our donations give those at the GP surgeries and care homes a little less to worry about while they're continuing to help their patients and residents throughout this pandemic."

Dale continued; "We have been collecting for Air Ambulance NI throughout our three stores as around 40 of our staff were signed up to complete their Let's Go Hydro Challenge back in April and the Mourne Way Walk Challenge in June. The fundraising continued, however, and we are donating a cheque for £1,105 to this very worthy charity.

"We were also due to hold our annual Blooming Great Tea Party for Marie Curie in June, which is always a huge occasion for us in Loughbrickland, so we'll be donating £500 to Marie Curie NI.

"Our SPAR Loughbrickland charity partner, Action Cancer, has never been more important as a number of treatments have been cancelled due to COVID-19, alongside their own fundraising events, so we're also donating £500 to them to help them deliver the services they can to their patients."



Dale Beckett with Lagan Valley Hospital District Nurses

Belfast Food Blogger appointed as SPAR and EUROSPAR brand ambassador in NI

SPAR and EUROSPAR NI have announced a new brand ambassador partnership with one of Northern Ireland's top foodie bloggers.

Conor Hogan, who goes by The Belfast Food Blogger across social media, has steadily turned his love for cooking, baking and experimenting with fresh, local food into a successful online platform and, after previous partnerships with EUROSPAR, has made it official with the brands. Conor kicked off his role by showcasing SPAR's enjoy local range of meats with a cook-along video, which showed what's in store for barbeque season ahead of the Big SPARBQ Weekend on 12 and 13 June.

Brenda Mulligan, Head of Brand Marketing at Henderson Group said Conor will also be the first to taste test new own brand ranges and share with his audiences; "Conor has earned his credentials as one of Northern Ireland's most curious and authentic novice cooks, he has the ability to combine big flavours with simple recipes, making them accessible to our shared audiences.

"Conor will be integral in boosting our own brand ranges and fresh local products in store, from our enjoy local fresh range to The CHEF ready to cook line, which will see an additional 25 products added over the summer.

"We're looking forward to working with Conor and sharing his simple tips, ideas and delicious recipes across our digital platforms."

Conor added; "My blog started off as somewhere for me to share what I was enjoying cooking for myself and my family, recreating firm favourites and challenging myself to try something new. I have a genuine love for food, and I believe we have the best producers in the world on our patch of land, which are well showcased in SPAR and EUROSPAR stores. I'm really excited

to take on this role!"

Followers of SPAR, EUROSPAR and The Belfast Food Blogger on social media also got involved with the Big SPARBQ Weekend getting the opportunity to win prizes on all platforms by sharing their own SPARBQ spreads rain or shine!

Brenda finished; "We brought some fun into peoples gardens with our SPARBQ, and our Virtual Sports Day with Healthy Kidz, something for the kids at home to enjoy as they usually would at the end of term."



Conor Hogan, AKA The Belfast Food Blogger has been appointed as brand ambassador for SPAR and EUROSPAR NI.

Just The Tonic – Gin Firm Answers Call for Hand Sanitisers

Saltash-based Trevethan Distillery, renowned for its handcrafted Trevethan Cornish Gin, pulled out the stops when the order came in from Appleby Westward for hand sanitisers exclusively for the use of SPAR store staff.

John Hall, co-founder and head distiller at Trevethan Distillery, said: "The recipe for the sanitiser contains a number of ingredients that we use in our lemon gin. It took about a day to make the solution and then two or three days to bottle it all."

Appleby Westward's Trading Director Joe Dooley said: "We were very grateful to Trevethan Distillery for the quick turnaround of this stock of 250ml bottles of hand sanitiser, which is for in store use by SPAR staff to ensure that they and their customers can be as safe as possible."

Appleby Westward to the Rescue for PPE Supplies

Appleby Westward has stepped in to help with the distribution of vital Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across the region for nurses working for the charity Marie Curie.

Tom Heron, Senior Corporate Partnerships Manager for Marie Curie, contacted AW with a plea for help as it struggled with delivery of essential PPE supplies to 100 nurses across the south west.

Appleby Westward's logistics team swung into action to help by picking up PPE parcels from Tiverton and delivering them to selected SPAR convenience stores in the region from where nurses can pick them up more easily and quickly.

"We are extremely grateful for the fantastic support we have received from Appleby Westward," said Tom. "PPE has presented a huge challenge for us, both in acquiring enough to keep our nurses safe and then delivering it across the region to support

work with patients in time, which is what we have been struggling with most. It's a real testament to Appleby Westward and SPAR as a business for supporting communities in this way."

Del Phillips, Logistics Director for Appleby Westward, said: "We were delighted to be able to step in and support this vital supply line by delivering to stores close to where nurses can collect the PPE stock more conveniently, and we are grateful to our stores for playing such an important role in this initiative."



Retailer Philip Green (owner of SPAR store in Crowlas, Cornwall) receiving PPE from Appleby Westward driver Lewis Lakey.

'Flagship' Family Forecourt Store Opens

The creation of a flagship SPAR forecourt store, undertaken by Olly Andrews, owner of Maiden Newton Service Station with Appleby Westward, is the culmination of a co-investment for the future by the award-winning Dorset businessman.

The investment began last autumn with the expansion of the garage forecourt involving the installation of new fuel tanks, pumps, pipework and the introduction of supreme grades of diesel and unleaded Texaco petrol. This followed increasing the size of the store to 2,425sqft.

"We've safeguarded the whole site and future-proofed it for many years ahead," Olly said. "We reopened the new-look store just before the COVID-19 crisis and were already attracting new

customers quicker than we thought."

During lockdown, new staff were taken on as the store ramped up home deliveries to customers in Maiden Newton and surrounding villages. The Andrews family has run the business for over 40 years and Olly took over the business from his mother Melodie eight years ago after 15 years in business management. The store has been trading under the SPAR fascia for over 20 years.



Growing Sales for Milk Station

Dispensing refills in reusable glass bottles has continued to prove successful for some south west SPAR stores over the last few months, with Menheniot the latest to report growing sales.

Increased demand has led store owner Gary Walters to double the size of the milk station, selling full cream milk now alongside semi-skimmed.

Meanwhile, at St. Agnes, a refill station of a different sort has been installed. As well as self-serve refillable milk bottles, the store now offers a refill station for cereals, pulses and fruits.

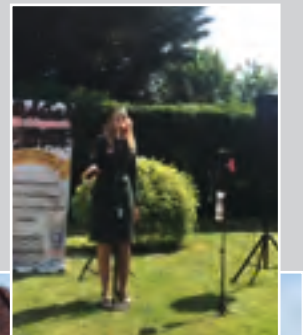


VILLAGE PAYS HOMAGE TO VE DAY

Tim and Leslie Francis and customers at Enham Alamein's SPAR store and Post Office paid homage to the village's World War II history, marking the 75th anniversary of VE Day despite the coronavirus lockdown.

The village has close links with World War II and the owners delivered flags to homes throughout the village to help locals celebrate over the VE weekend and a performance from members of the Covergirlz Band was also staged and streamed online from just outside the shop.

Leslie, who is also chairman of the parish council said: "The Post Office and shop is truly the hub of the village, and we are proud of our connection to World War II and supporting people in need."



SPAR Stores Step Up Support

SPAR stores throughout the south west, which has more people aged over 65 than any other UK region, continue to provide unparalleled support to the communities they serve during the lockdown.

The "There for you" community support and initiatives of store owners, managers and their staff have stepped up to help communities by offering home deliveries.

Barbara Clements' Preston, Weymouth now offers a home delivery scheme via a team of volunteers to reduce the number of customers having to visit the shop in person. The store is also providing hot meals daily for vulnerable families

At Pool, Cornwall, Leon and Hayley Hill's use of the new Snappy Shopper app has resulted in them making over 100 deliveries a day as well as a click and collect service to customers ordering through the app.

At the company-owned store in Feniton, Devon, manager Gary Grove said "We set up a community dump bin where people donated essential items such as loo rolls and pasta. We attached a charity box to it and used the money to buy items in store for our food bank. We've also teamed up with two women from the local church who are delivering shopping for vulnerable people and we've been sourcing from local producers struggling during the crisis."

At Menheniot, Cornwall, Gary and Sarah Walters have seen turnover in their village store rise from as they make home deliveries and see new customers choosing to shop locally rather than go to supermarkets in nearby towns.

In Penryn, Ian and Helena McCabe have been impressed with product availability from AW, especially chilled, bread and milk as well as fruit and veg, and sales in store have increased by 30% in the last few weeks.

Paul and Sophie Boxall have been conducting extensive home deliveries from their Pelynt store to local communities in south east Cornwall, as has Amanda James in St. Agnes and both have seen substantial rises in their turnover.

One problem the West Country has faced has been the arrival of visitors flouting the lockdown rules. Julie Harrison, who runs the SPAR store in Tintagel, decided on serving locals only after a man from Kent called into her store to buy postcards. The move has been supported by her regular customers.

SPAR UK raises £1.5m for Marie Curie!



Marie Curie is delighted to announce that SPAR UK has now raised an incredible **£1.5 million** for families living with terminal illness! That's a staggering **80,000 hours** of nursing care... or almost **9,000 nursing shifts** where patients and families have been given expert care and support thanks to your incredible generosity.

Marie Curie would like to thank each and every one of you for your dedication and support to help make a real difference to families faced with the end of someone's life. Now more than ever, people need Marie Curie nurses to be there for them. Thanks to all of your unbelievable support, Marie Curie has been able to have a nurse by someone's side for 80,000 hours. Just think about that for a second and let that sink in. This is a phenomenal achievement and we really cannot thank you enough!

Why all this matters...

Marie Curie nurses continue to be there for families day in, day out. For people living with terminal illness, putting their lives on hold for coronavirus simply isn't an option. They need support now.

That's why nurses like **Emily** (pictured) are so important. Despite the risks, they work incredibly hard to ensure our patients are given the best possible care at the end of their lives. We ensure their families are taken care of too, with bereavement support available as well as our support line, which is only a phone call away. Expert care like this simply could not exist without your support. That's why we're so proud to be partnered with SPAR UK, who ensure our nurses can be there when it matters most.



Blooming Great Tea Party is going virtual

Marie Curie's legendary Blooming Great Tea Party is going virtual this year to ensure people can still par-tea hard without needing to meet!

Marie Curie is challenging you to throw your very own Blooming Virtual Tea Party from home this summer, as a fun way to stay connected to loved ones during this time and a great way to support nurses working on the frontline.

For 2020, we're encouraging you to bring loads of lovely people together online for high tea, green tea, builders tea, work-from-home tea break... whatever your cup of tea.

Tom Heron, Marie Curie Senior Partnership manager said: "Our Blooming Great Tea Party looks a little different this year, but I think everyone needs an excuse to meet up with their friends and family - online of course - and check in on the people they love. If SPAR UK can do that while raising some money for Marie Curie, then your generous donations will enable us to help even more people at the end of their lives get the care they need in this time of uncertainty.

To find out more, simply email SPARUK@mariecurie.org.uk and we'll get your free pack sent out to you.



If you need help, we're here

As we continue to work through these very difficult times together, we know many of you will be facing extremely challenging circumstances. Whether you're grieving in lockdown, caring for someone who's unwell or feeling anxious about your own or your family's health, our Support Line is here to help.

Call **0800 090 2309** or reach us via web chat, seven days a week. We're here whenever you need us.

Hospital receives generous donation of £25,000 for care bags for frontline staff

Southend Hospital received 2,000 care bags for frontline staff thanks to generous donations from **The Gerald and Gail Ronson Family Foundation, SPAR, Makro Rayleigh** and several other generous donors.

The idea was the brain child of Lisa Ronson, who said: "It's all hands on deck during these challenging times and I was keen to ensure that our hard-pressed NHS staff had all they needed while they were at work."

Lisa, along with a team of willing volunteers, spent a few weeks putting together the care bags which were filled with non-perishable

items - coffees, teas, energy bars as well as a selection of toiletries.

The hospital said the care packages have essentials to get frontline staff through their day or night shift and they were incredibly grateful to Lisa, her family and the team of dedicated volunteers for creating these bags.



SPAR supports national charities

Following the success of the shop and pay structure for people who are shielding introduced with Royal Voluntary Service under the NHS Volunteer Responders scheme in April, over **700 SPAR stores in England and Wales** are now also supporting volunteers for additional national charities in order to support vulnerable people.

Recognising how difficult it can be for older people who are too scared to go out and shop, or those who might need help in terms of accessibility or are blind or partially sighted, SPAR has provided a list of stores that are able to work with charities in order to help vulnerable customers who cannot get out to shop for themselves.

As this move is a first for convenience retailing, along with RVS, volunteers are now working with Marie Curie, Parkinson's UK and RNIB who can use designated SPAR stores to shop for vulnerable people.

With the help of Defra, SPAR has contacted a number of national charitable organisations to see how they can help those who are frightened or confused.

In February, SPAR started to work with Alzheimer's Society and by including people with dementia, and unpaid carers in this scheme, it now makes it easier for Dementia Advisers to signpost their service users to the NHS Volunteer Responders who are closely working alongside SPAR to access shopping.

SPAR also supported the Carers Week campaign by using social media to drive the awareness of carers who may need support with their shopping needs in local communities.

Louise Hoste, Managing Director of SPAR UK, said: "It is hugely important for those who are vulnerable to have access to food and deliveries. As our stores are situated in local communities and in an ideal position to actively promote how people can shop with us by using their volunteer network."

Free hot drinks for NHS and emergency service workers at Certas Energy forecourts

To support the tireless efforts of the UK's blue light services, since April fuel supplier Certas Energy is offering free hot drinks to all NHS and emergency service workers visiting its petrol stations across the country.

Richard Billington, Retail Director at Certas Energy, commented: "Our NHS and emergency services are working heroically to save lives during this challenging period. As a small way of saying 'thank you', we're pleased to be offering free hot drinks to all blue light workers.

"We have a duty to serve the communities in which we operate and support our frontline heroes. With many of our petrol stations located in rural areas where there is limited choice for accessing essential services, we've seen first-hand the important role that forecourts can play in local communities. "On-the-go access to food and drink is vital to keeping the nation moving, and we're proud to keep our doors open at all Certas Energy-operated forecourts across the UK."





SUPPORTING GROCERY COLLEAGUES

The GroceryAid Covid-19 Fund has been established to provide enhanced support for grocery colleagues during this unprecedented time.

The GroceryAid Covid-19 Fund is designed to support:

Mental Health Support

Offering 'in the moment' emotional and practical support for colleagues dealing with shock, anxiety and stress through BACP trained counsellors, our Health and Wellbeing portal and Woebot, our AI Robot App.

Bereavement Financial Assistance

Providing financial assistance for the loss of a loved one through Covid-19. Available to colleagues who lose a partner or the immediate family of a colleague who has passed away as a result of Covid-19 whilst working in our industry.

Crisis Grants

Non-repayable grants, designed to help with financial emergencies. This is available for colleagues experiencing unexpected financial difficulties due to Covid-19 with a year's industry service.

Call the 24/7 Helpline: 08088 021 122
Visit: www.groceryaid.org.uk

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