

SPAR Today

Magazine

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2021 A Year of Opportunity



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There for you

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What lies ahead for 2021?

Dear SPAR member,

The United States will have a new president in the White House, Tokyo hopes to host the Olympic Games, the vaccine for coronavirus will be distributed, the UK will have agreed a trade agreement with the EU and SPAR convenience stores worldwide will continue to play a fundamental role in serving communities.

During 2020 there was a huge shift to ecommerce; consumers embraced online shopping and retailers responded with the speedy rollout of new technologies, new apps and new ways of meeting shoppers' needs.

As the coronavirus pandemic has affected the way every trend would play out in 2020, the world of retail will continue to change over the course of 2021 as the pandemic and other factors continue to influence consumer habits.

It is expected that consumers will spend more on groceries, household and essential items in 2021. Plant based, meat free consumption and healthy products will continue to rise. Consumers will seek new flavours and experiences. Sustainable messaging on products and in-store will become one of the main drivers of choice and the power of social media will ensure brands have to be transparent.

The Covid-19 legacy will live on through the growth of online shopping. In a very short space of time online delivery has been scaled up. We have experienced much of this ourselves with stores adding direct to customer deliveries whether that was via online orders, phone orders or call & collect orders.

SPAR has proven itself to be multi-functional during 2020. Great stores driven by excellent store standards and customer service, advances in new technologies



and added entrepreneurial flair which only independent retailers can bring to their stores.

This will in no doubt stand SPAR in good stead and ensure our position as the most compelling and competitive convenience proposition in the country.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish everyone in the SPAR family a very happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

*Dominic Hall***Chairman
National Guild of SPAR**

Value deals at SPAR



January is a key time to focus on healthy eating, and a time when consumers will be seeking value for money more than ever. SPAR's weekly headline deals will reflect this trend by offering healthier products at great prices.

SPAR will help shoppers kick the new year off with a strong value campaign that combines key everyday products with making healthy products affordable. Our in-store celebrations will provide excitement and opportunities and the chance for shoppers to explore the healthy ranges and brands available all under one consistent value message.

A new focus will be on an on-going frozen meal deal starting in P13, which last until P15 when it will get refreshed in time for P17 and so-on.

Shoppers will be turning to frozen products for value for money, as well as food waste reduction. The frozen meal deal offers five products for £5, mirroring this demand whilst aligning with our competitors at the same time.

2021 brings a new look and feel to the meal deal mechanic in stores. The assets have been refreshed to tie in to the overall spring selling plan creative to ensure that everything in store matches visually.

SPAR's key value message will be supported with posters, barkers and stackcards throughout including SRAR Radio and across digital.



Pick of the bunch

The Pick of the Bunch (POTB) campaign provides clarity to customers through wine recommendations from Master of Wine, Philippa Carr.

The campaign launches in January P14, with Philippa and the wine team picking the perfect wine for the promotion period and every one after that.

The team analyses customer trends and buying behaviour to recommend the right wine for the time of year.

Providing clarity and focus for customers at the wine fixture has always been a top priority and recent data has shown us that '42% of customers said they would spend more on wine at a convenience store if there was a recommended 'wine of week' or a similar style promotion'.

The Pick of the Bunch campaign does this, allowing customers to explore the SPAR wine range

through trial and recommendation. A similar wine of the month promotion was implemented through the Wine Club which saw a 222% increase in sales of the featured wine sale during its promotion period.

Every wine chosen for the 'Pick of the Bunch' promotion will receive instore POS support, digital content and supported with a price discount, in addition to the Master of Wine recommendation from Philippa.

As customers look for recommendations at the wine fixture, the SPAR Pick of the Bunch campaign provides clarity and focus to increase wine purchases in store.



Master of Wine

The globally recognised title of 'Master of Wine' is one of the most prestigious qualifications in the world of wine. Currently there are only 409 people across 30 countries who have passed the gruelling practical and theory exams and can call themselves a Master of Wine, or MW. Philippa is a member of that very select group and is very proud that she can share her knowledge, expertise and experience of wine with SPAR colleagues and customers.

SPAR Natural product range launches

Customers searching for products with added health and wellness credentials need to look no further because the SPAR Natural range of products will soon be available in selected stores.

The SPAR Natural range includes 12 prompts for the shopper looking to address allergies or follow a mindful approach to food and lifestyle including vegan, vegetarian, organic, lactose free, sugar free, honey free, gluten free, wheat free, dairy free, egg free, wild grown and allergen free.

This exciting new range enables customers to make more informed choices whether it is for on-the-go with SPAR Natural organic corn crackers, or take-home SPAR Natural organic olive oil. The range of 15 organic products include pasta, fruit and nut bars, block chocolate and soya milk.

The range is well established throughout Europe, and launches in time for the New Year, a time when consumers seek out healthier alternatives.

Look out for details with your local RDC.



2021 starts with focus on health and value



January is typically seen to be the key time to focus on eating healthier food. This coupled with economic uncertainty and the dangers of Covid-19 has prompted customers to seek out products like these more than ever, at value for money prices.

There is no doubt that Covid-19 will have a long-lasting impact on everyone; it has affected consumer confidence, altered shopping behaviour but it has also attracted new shoppers in to the convenience channel. As we inevitably enter the first recession in 12 years, there will be an increased focus on value driven health, as the economy recovers from the impact of the pandemic and shoppers look to healthier products.

The SPAR Brand team has a great range of both 'grab and eat' and 'take home' products to support shoppers health needs in 2021 from low-calorie strawberry jelly pots, to

fresh poultry lines, SPAR is there for value driven health.

The featured products on POS cover a number of meal missions across breakfast, lunch and snacking occasions and all boast either a vegan or vegetarian message, or a general health benefit which consumers may not know. The range will be supported with 11 half barkers and will be tied in to the selling plan creative in-store, creating a cohesive look and feel with the selling plan theme.



Beers, Wines & Spirits:

Orbis Organic is the first ever Organic SPAR brand wine released in the UK. With strong sales from the offset, the range is currently on track to deliver 11% higher than its expected incremental sales opportunity.

Fresh Foods:

The relaunched range of SPAR chilled desserts have been a triumphant success since they were re-introduced to the range back in May. In less than six months on SPAR shelves, the range has already delivered 134% of its incremental target!



Grocery:

The second phase of soft drinks launched in February and has performed well across the estate. These SKUs included Blue Bear 250ml which returned to a permanent "2 for £1" flash on pack which will continue to drive sales as consumers look for the value solution ahead of an inevitable recession.



Project Reignite fires up SPAR own label sales

The SPAR Brand team is delighted to announce Project Reignite, an activity that focuses on regaining lost distribution on SPAR Brand products that were affected by availability issues during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. SPAR Brand has performed exceptionally well through these unprecedented times, showing how SPAR is truly there for retailers and the community.

With over 93% of lines being back in stock, 56% of these are already above their pre-Covid distribution levels and growing! Project Reignite will help push these SKUs even further. SPAR Brand offers more margin to retailers than branded products and therefore the perfect solution for consumers looking for value from their shop.

The ranges being captured in Project Reignite will be given an extra push in store via POS, SPAR radio and internal communications. P14 will see the first batch of POS in store focusing on snacking cakes, soups, canned meat and fish, plus many more!



SPAR Retail Show Looks Ahead to New Opportunities

Blakemore Trade Partners has all of the industry-leading initiatives retailers need to thrive and make the most of new opportunities in the convenience market.

That was the key message at this year's SPAR Retail Show, themed *New Opportunities*.

The event, free to all Blakemore Trade Partners retailers, took place virtually on 3rd November and was attended by 1,000 guests, including suppliers, colleagues and retailers from across SPAR UK's Meridian & Welsh Guild.

The main message from AFB Group Commercial Managing Director Jerry Marwood to retailers was one of continuous investment and backing from A.F. Blakemore.

He explained: "It is important that we keep building our businesses to support you, and you keep building your businesses to give customers what they want.

"Next year is going to be as competitive as ever. Customers will want better value, better choice and better quality. They'll want it delivered in a way that corporate businesses

just can't replicate, and that is our opportunity.

"Our investment statement is unique in the industry. Blakemore's invests over 95% of its profits every year back into the organisation; it's a commitment that our business is investing in yours."

Speakers at the event informed delegates of the company's latest innovation in food to go, fresh meat and digital initiatives.

In October, A.F. Blakemore relaunched its Daily Deli food-to-go range for SPAR customers, rolling out tasty new products for breakfast, lunch, tea and snacking. Significant investment has been made in developing healthy, vegan and vegetarian options as well as exciting flavours that capitalise on current food trends and new cuisine types.

The company has also revolutionised its meat category with the rollout of its County Bridge range to independent SPAR retailers. The County Bridge brand, which offers customers high-quality value-for-money fresh meat, has seen meat sales increase by more than 300% in the most successful stores.

A.F. Blakemore continues to evolve its digital offer at a consumer and business-to-business level.

This year has seen the business embark on a successful new partnership with online home delivery platform Snappy Shopper. Marketing campaigns with advertising platform Cardlytics and navigational app Waze are engaging millions of customers with the SPAR brand online.

Meanwhile, a new online ordering website and app are currently being developed for SPAR retailers that will provide an industry-leading ordering platform.

Brand new for the business in 2020 was the launch of a new commission operator SPAR store model. The model provides a low-investment route into SPAR for new retailers and enables them to share risk and reward with A.F. Blakemore, who will develop their sites for them.

BTP Sales Director Louis Drake reminded retailers of the new terms package that launched at last year's SPAR Retail Show, providing significantly higher override payments that they can take in advance to develop their stores or use in combination with other financing from the business. This, he explained, means that A.F. Blakemore delivers "the most flexible retail support package available within the marketplace".

Blakemore Retail Enjoys Record Snappy Shopper Sales

Blakemore Retail has seen Snappy Shopper sales and orders increase by 25% during October when Wales entered its two-week firebreak lockdown. Sales have continued to grow when England went into lockdown in November.

Home Shopping Operations Controller Jamie Parkman commented: "As cases of Covid-19 have risen, so has demand for home deliveries. The business is well prepared, with our Snappy Shopper operation now established and our stores offering a wide range of home delivery options to customers.

"Our investment in six dedicated Snappy Shopper delivery vans back in June has been successful, and the business is now looking to invest further in more vans, which will hopefully see sales grow even further before the end of the year.

"The last few months have seen stores make great efforts to promote our Snappy Shopper service, both in shop windows and online, and it has really paid off."

Blakemore Retail currently has 84 stores registered on the Snappy Shopper app, including 40 hub stores and 44 satellite

stores. A click & collect option is now available in all 40 of the Snappy Shopper hub stores.

The Subway franchise is also feature on a few stores listed on the platform.

In addition, Blakemore Retail has teamed up with the Uber Eats and Deliveroo online food ordering and delivery platforms. The company will be adding stores to Just Eat in the very near future.

Blakemore Retail Managing Director Matt Teague commented: "Our home delivery services have really surpassed all expectations since their launch.

"All delivery channels have performed exceptionally well, but most

importantly our new services mean that thousands of vulnerable customers who can't come to stores can receive essentials direct to their door within 60 minutes of placing an order.

"The success we have achieved in such a short space of time shows how quick-thinking and agile the business can be. Our store colleagues are making incredible efforts to pick, pack and deliver so many orders."

A.F. Blakemore is now looking to help more independent SPAR retailers take advantage of the home delivery opportunity. The company will shortly be rolling out new e-learning support to engage retailers with the benefits of Snappy Shopper.



Blakemore Retail is seeing additional shopper sales with Snappy Shopper



A.F. Blakemore Relaunches Daily Deli Food to Go

A.F. Blakemore has relaunched its Daily Deli food-to-go range for SPAR customers.

In October, the business relaunched its chilled Daily Deli range in Blakemore Retail stores with new options for breakfast, lunch, tea and snacking. New additions to the hot food range will be introduced to stores in the first week of January.

Significant investment has been made in developing new healthy, vegan and vegetarian options as well as new exciting flavours that capitalise on current food trends and new cuisine types.

Food Solutions & Retail Proposition Director Nikki Rogers commented: "Food to go is as important now as it ever has been.

"Our objectives for the relaunch were to be number one for taste, quality and freshness and to develop a modern, relevant brand that looks great on the shelf.

"We believe we now have a fantastic offer to satisfy customers' needs around food to go and are confident that we've got the skillset to continuously innovate."

The new products have been developed by A.F. Blakemore's Retail Proposition team.

The chilled range that has launched in Blakemore Retail stores is now available to independent SPAR retailers too.

Nikki added: "The amount of work that has gone into this launch has been phenomenal, and every single member of the working group has gone above and beyond to create and deliver an exceptional range of new products".



Blakemore Retail Trials New Pizza-to-go Concept

Blakemore Retail is trialling a new pizza-to-go concept in SPAR Aldridge in the West Midlands.

The Aldridge store is offering customers a ready-to-go Prego Pizza offer, served via a small counter next to the store's main Daily Deli food-to-go counter.

Blakemore Retail Fresh Food Implementation Manager Mandy Gasson commented: "The business is currently looking at new opportunities to try and attract food-to-go customers into stores later on in the day.

"We are hoping that this new pizza offer will help attract customers during the day and into the evenings.

"During the trial we will be trying to understand the profile of customers who buy the pizza, what size portions they buy and

what flavour combinations they want.

"Customers have shown a great deal of interest in the products as they are being prepared, as they certainly draw attention with the colour combination and unique preparation. It is early days but the feedback has been promising."

Blakemore Retail is trialling four core flavours to start with: Margherita, Mediterranean vegetable, meat feast and barbecue chicken. Customers can purchase the pizza by the slice or in full.

The pizza, served in a box, can be prepared and handed over to the customer in just 90 seconds.



The new Daily Deli range.



SPAR employee crochets poppies

Congratulations to Helen Dobson of SPAR Cambridge who has crocheted poppies to raise money for The Royal British Legion. SPAR retailer Paul Phillips of SPAR Cambridge said: "It takes Helen 45 minutes to one hour to make one poppy and she sells each one for £3.00. Her dedication and to raise £130 so far is incredible. Next time she is going to make daffodils for Marie Curie. Everyone in the store is really proud of her achievement."

New store for residents in Tottington

James Hall & Co.'s company owned stores division, G&E Murgatroyd, has launched its 36th forecourt site in Tottington near Bury, Lancashire.



Once a used car showroom, SPAR Tottington now offers a 2,900sqft SPAR store with a Graham Eyes butchery counter, Clayton Park Deli, Cheeky Coffee offering, Tango Ice Blast machine and six Shell fuel pumps.

Julie McAulay, Company Owned Stores Director at James Hall & Co. said: "SPAR Tottington offers local residents the very best in modern convenience shopping with an extensive range of everyday essentials, delicious food-to-go and signposts and history boards celebrating the local landscape. SPAR Tottington will play an important role in serving local people during and beyond the current crisis."



SPREADING CHEER AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Teams across the Northern Guild have been pulling together to support local people during the crisis through product donations and community initiatives.

Independent retailers, Mr and Mrs Akhtar of SPAR Worsley Mesnes, prepared and donated free lunches for children during half term in their local town of Wigan. Mr Akhtar said, "We've definitely noticed an increase in families needing extra support during the pandemic and with all the news around child hunger, we really wanted to do something extra to help."

Nigel and Sue Masters of SPAR Oswaldtwistle marked Remembrance Day with a beautifully poignant window display, highlighting the heartbreak experienced by Oswaldtwistle, Accrington and the surrounding towns during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. All proceeds from the window display will support the Royal British Legion.

James Hall & Co. continue their partnership with FareShare and Community Gateway, sharing weekly donations for vulnerable members of the community and projects such as The Purple Pantry and Burnley Community Kitchen. The company's partnership with Too Good To Go has saved over 3,000 bags of food waste from reaching landfill, allowing families to access short dated stock at a reduced price.

The company has also reached out to nurses working at Marie Curie's Newcastle hospice. Hit hard by Covid-19, the nurses received donations of hand cream and lip salve, chocolate and Prosecco, fun Christmas head boppers and glasses, and puzzle books for their breaks. The team also sent a number of handwritten Christmas cards for staff and patients in the hospice to open on Christmas Day.



Recognising excellence

SPAR retailers in the north of England have achieved 6 nominations in the final stage of the 2020 Forecourt Trader Awards.

Celebrating success and innovation within the industry, the Forecourt Trader Awards recognise the very best forecourt sites across the UK and the winners will be announced on Thursday 14th January 2021.

Congratulations to the following stores:

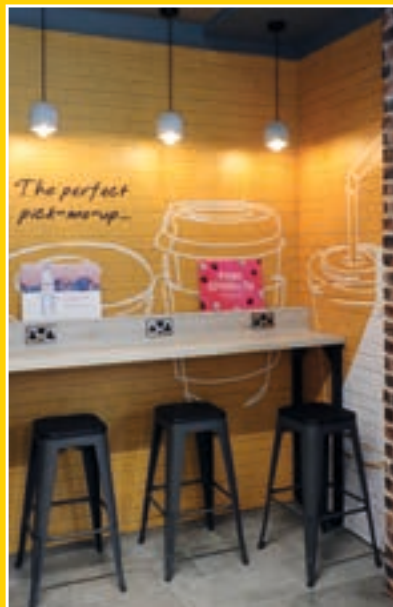
Northern England over 4mlpa
JET Askern Service Station – Askern, Doncaster

Northern England up to 4mlpa
SPAR Townsend Garage – Warton, Lancashire
SPAR Hutton Rudby – Yarm, Cleveland

Best Car Care & Lubricants Outlet
SPAR Ormskirk – Ormskirk, Lancashire

Best Community Engagement
SPAR Bedale – Bedale, North Yorkshire

Best Design and Development
JET Askern Service Station – Askern, Doncaster



All three images from JET Askern Service Station



Packs of PPE for Marie Curie community nurses

After a successful trial in October, James Hall & Co. has started delivering one month's supply of PPE to Marie Curie nurses working across the north of England.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, Marie Curie nurses have had to wear full PPE to protect both the people they care for and to keep themselves safe. The cost of providing enough PPE for the nurses to continue delivering care in patients' homes has been enormously costly and time consuming for the charity.

The new scheme will allow nurses working in the north of England to collect a month's supply of PPE from their nearest SPAR store, saving the charity time and money to spend where it is needed most.

Independent retailers and company owned stores are proudly taking part in this initiative.



CJ Lang reports positive progress as it continues its turnaround



CJ Lang and Son Ltd has reported a rise in sales and underlying profits as it continues to implement its strategy for growth.

Building on the growth achieved in 2018/19 turnover has increased by 3.4%, to £194.2m. Underlying pre-tax profits have doubled to £1.5m. The results include the impact of the very early stages of the Coronavirus pandemic which saw an increase in demand in the final six weeks of the financial year. It also includes additional investment made in stores to create safe environments for customers and employees.

CJ Lang and Son Ltd CEO, Colin McLean, commented: "Prior to the onset of Covid-19 our business was already growing, buoyed by the development of our food-to-go offer; a continued focus on improving and implementing consistent store standards; the development of our independent retailer customer base; and improvements to our offer in

order to meet the changing customer needs within convenience retailing.

"We have continued to implement our strategy for profitable growth developed last year, but we also have had to take further difficult decisions to improve the overall profitability of our business.

"Whilst the retail landscape is ever changing we continue to follow our long-term strategic path, driving our back to basics programme, balanced with initiatives to improve our offer and attract more independent retailers to SPAR Scotland.

"In these challenging times we remain committed to delivering what is best for the communities that we support. As a truly Scottish wholesaler and convenience retailer, we are focused on providing our customers with our excellent SPAR award-winning own label ranges, together with the best of Scottish local ranges and deals, to give them a real incentive to shop in our stores.

"I would like to thank all our customers and staff for their continued support."

SPAR Scotland implements new food-to-go brand CJ's

SPAR Scotland is expanding its food-to-go offering by implementing CJ's - a quick and tasty food-to-go brand into a raft of company owned stores.

This exciting new brand comes as part of a significant investment by CJ Lang & Son Ltd, which will see company owned stores the length and breadth of Scotland offering a fantastic food-to-go service by the end of March 2021.

CJ's, the over-arching food-to-go brand, will be available in stores alongside other tasty and quick products such as Rollover Hotdogs, Costa Coffee, F'real Milkshakes, Skwishee and Tango Blast. The dynamic food-to-go rollout programme will also include a hot breakfast and lunch offer along with support from local bakers Asher's, Browning's the Bakers, JG Ross, McGhee's and Stuart's for a range of cakes, sweet treats and hot savouries too.

Stephen Brown, Head of Food to Go at C J Lang & Son Ltd, said: "We are delighted to be working with so many local Scottish bakers as well as large iconic brands to deliver our new CJ's food-to-go offering. This adds to the stable of existing brands we work with, the great local bakers and the multitude of Scottish based suppliers.

"We have very ambitious plans to grow food-to-go. It is one of the fastest growing sectors of the eating out market and as a forward-thinking convenience retailer we are making a huge investment to ensure we are at the forefront of this sector."



Colin McLean, CEO at CJ Lang and Son Ltd, said: "We wanted to grab shoppers' attention by having leading brands available in our SPAR stores at great value prices. We know our customers expect to see value in our stores, which is why we have invested in these market leading promotional offers with these primary brands."

SPAR SCOTLAND ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF ITS COMMUNITY CASHBACK CAMPAIGN

SPAR Scotland launched its first Community Cashback campaign in August to giveaway £30,000 to community groups and charities who provide a variety of worthwhile services to communities around the country. And in November it announced the results of the Community Cashback campaign which received nearly 7,000 votes.

Launched on 10 August, the campaign ran until 30 August 2020. Customers, store staff and SPAR Scotland employees could nominate a local charity or community group for the chance to win a share of the money.

The campaign took place in all 108 SPAR Scotland company-owned stores.

The winning groups shared the £30,000 prize with the 24 winning charities winning 24 monetary prizes ranging from £800 to £2,000.

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "We are pleased to have received such a great response to our first ever Community Cashback campaign. However to have just short of 7,000 people vote in areas all over Scotland to win a share of the £30,000 is overwhelming and demonstrates how important it is to continue to look after small charities in local areas.

"We set up the Community Cashback campaign to recognise the work many groups and charities are doing to support people in local communities around Scotland. During the pandemic we have seen how local community groups and charities have suffered and we hope the winners can benefit in some small way from the donation," he added.



Eight year old girl from Blantyre wins SPAR Scotland lorry design competition

An eight-year-old girl from Blantyre has been named the winner of SPAR Scotland's first ever lorry design competition.

Alisha Razzaq, from Blantyre was one of many children and adults from around Scotland who entered SPAR Scotland's design a lorry competition which was launched in August.

SPAR customers were invited to design the livery of a SPAR lorry which would travel the length and breadth of Scotland delivering food and drink products to SPAR stores.

An avid artist, Alisha said she was "so excited to have won the competition. My parents own a SPAR store and I see lorries deliver to us every day. I'm really excited to see my drawing on the SPAR lorry. I designed it with sunshine, green grass, flowers and trees. I wanted to make everyone else feel happy when they saw the lorry!"

Alisha completed the design during lockdown and didn't expect to win. Her mother Michelle Razzaq said: "There has been huge excitement in the house since we found out Alisha won! We are very proud of her."

Colin McLean, CEO of SPAR Scotland, said: "We were thrilled to receive Alisha's winning design! We are looking forward to seeing how our SPAR retailers and customer respond when they see the colourful lorry make its deliveries around Scotland."



SPAR Scotland announced as key sponsor of Scottish Retail Food & Drink Awards

The inaugural Scottish Retail Food & Drink Awards is delighted to announce that SPAR Scotland as sponsor of the vital Small Producer of the Year category.

The Scottish Retail Food & Drink Awards will celebrate some of the finest branded and own label food and drink products available in Scottish retail outlets and has one simple goal: to ensure that more of Scotland's fantastic products make their way onto more Scottish retail shelves.

The company has a long and admirable commitment to supporting smaller local producers and currently works with over 150 local suppliers across Scotland.

Colin McLean, CEO of CJ Lang & Son, commented: "We understand just how important it is to support the country's many fantastic small local producers. That's why we are absolutely thrilled to sponsor the Small Producer of the Year category at the first ever Scottish Retail Food & Drink Awards. We view this as a fantastic celebration of Scottish food and drink but with a clear commercial aim: to grow sales for both small producers and the retailers who stock their products."



(left) Stephen Brown, Head of Food to Go at SPAR Scotland with Colin McLean (right), CEO of SPAR Scotland as SPAR Scotland announced as key sponsor of Scottish Retail Food & Drink Awards. SPAR Scotland will sponsor the Small Producer of the Year category.

Henderson Group reports growth in 2019 with sales of £918m

Henderson Group, based in Mallusk, Newtownabbey has published financial results for 2019, reporting a turnover of £918.1m.

The figure demonstrates a total growth of 7.6% on the previous year, with like for like sales growth of 3.9% driven by a strong performance in grocery sales. The Group also noted footfall and basket spend in their network of stores showing strong growth.

Ron Whitten, Chief Financial Officer at Henderson Group says these figures represent the end of a three year strategic plan which has brought benefits to every area of the business; "Since 2017, we have focused on delivering excellence in customer service, investing in our people, developing our information systems, maximising our operational efficiency, enhancing our fresh food ranges and improving our in-store proposition."

Ron added that this strategy laid the foundations to deal with the uncertainties

of Brexit and Covid-19 going into 2020; "We have had a challenging trading year in 2020. However, shoppers have appreciated the measures taken to provide a safe shopping experience which has been witnessed in increased basket spend and overall growth in retail grocery sales, offsetting the foodservice and fuel declines."

Patrick Doody, Sales and Marketing Director at Henderson Group said their performance in 2019 meant significant investment could be made in providing safety and value to shoppers this year; "Continual investment has always been a key strategy to the success of our business. Thanks to a growth in group sales in 2019 and 2020 to date, we have been able to negotiate this challenging and unprecedented year with confidence, to ensure our retailers and shoppers are safe and secure.

"These results are reflective of our continued investment and ambition to make our brands stand out in a competitive market, implement our 'famous for fresh' strategy by engaging

with local farmers, producers and growers, and to communicate that effectively to our shoppers with our marketing tactics."



Ron Whitten, Chief Financial Officer, Henderson Group and Patrick Doody, Sales and Marketing Director, Henderson Group.

HENDERSON PRODUCES SECOND CONSUMER MAGAZINE TO WEATHER THE WINTER

Henderson Group has produced its second consumer magazine providing a feast of inspiration to weather the winter months.

The *Winter InSPARation*, magazine serves up a recipe book of winter warmers inspired by seasonal and local produce, created by the brands' Executive Chef Carl Johannesson.

Bronagh Henderson, Deputy Head of Brand Marketing at Henderson Group says the magazine further connects the brands to their shoppers and seeks to provide some comfort in a time of upheaval; "Our Winter InSPARation magazine is a 100-page read which oozes comfort; from chats with our local celebrities and farmers, to over 30 pages of winter warmer recipes that covers breakfast, lunch and dinner along with money off coupons.

"We are also welcoming our readers into our Christmas Kitchen, which is a 21 page pull out covering everything from

party food, in the hope that we can have safe festive gatherings this year, to the main event – the Christmas Dinner – and absolutely everything in between."

Retailers have been fully equipped to raise the profile of the magazine instore, with POS and shelf cards for those products featured in the magazine, alongside a full merchandising guide to help group all ingredients together and further upweight their winter sales.

Bronagh finished; "We have also created how-to videos and social assets for the recipes featured in the magazine to even further engage our shoppers online, who may still be shielding or isolating. We're ensuring this is content that everyone has access to."



SPAR and EUROSPAR doubles donations for Tearfund with festive seed appeal

SPAR and EUROSPAR brands in Northern Ireland will double donations made in-store and online for Tearfund this winter in its latest appeal.

Tearfund's Seeds of Hope campaign, which runs until the end of the year, will seek to raise £200,000, which will be doubled to £400,000 to support Tearfund's work around the world. For example, £400,000 could provide over 5000 households, in some of the world's poorest communities, with the vital training needed to overcome hunger and lift themselves out of poverty.

For every £1 donated in store, SPAR and EUROSPAR will match it – including any donations made online.

Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group says this appeal has the capacity to change the lives of families living in poverty; "I visited Uganda in 2018 with Tearfund, and the families we visited don't want handouts, they just want the opportunity to be able to learn new skills and provide for their families.

"We appreciate that this year has been exceptionally difficult for all, more so those countries who are living in poverty, so we will be ensuring our shoppers know how they can help us give the gift of life this Christmas so those families don't go hungry; £4 doubled could provide enough weather-proof seeds to grow crops and help feed a family."



Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group is pictured with Glen Mitchell, Tearfund's NI Director to launch the Seeds of Hope Appeal for 2020.

SPAR NI Christmas sandwiches filled with festive charitable cheer

SPAR and EUROSPAR NI have revealed their Christmas sandwiches for 2020, with a new wrap featuring in the festive line up that has a charitable filling.

The new turkey, bacon and stuffing wrap will join the turkey, sausage and stuffing and roasted sweet potato and cranberry sandwiches in store this year, with 10p from the purchase of each sandwich or wrap being donated to Marie Curie and Cancer Fund for Children.

Last year, when the initiative launched, it raised over £1,400 for the local charities that partner with SPAR and EUROSPAR to raise much needed funds throughout the year.

Bronagh Luke, Head of Corporate Marketing at Henderson Group said they are doing everything they can to support their charity partners in a challenging year; "2020 has been a year like no other, and we have raised our efforts to really support our partners and other organisations in the community to help them navigate the pandemic."



SPAR shoppers shift over 1 million bottles of festive fizz

Shoppers in Northern Ireland picked up an extra 300,000 bottles of fizzy festive favourite, Shloer than they did last year, when the price of the drink dropped to less than half price as part of the 12 Deals of Christmas promotion.

County Antrim deal seekers have held the pole position for clearing the shelves of Shloer for the past five years since the campaign was launched. In total, local shoppers have purchased over 57,000 bottles from EUROSPAR Cullybackey since 2015.

However, all regions across the country got busy for the fizzy during the promotional week.

Paddy Doody, Sales and Marketing Director at Henderson Group commented; "this is the most anticipated sales week of the year for our 12 Deals campaign, and our retailers really get behind it and have a lot of fun. EUROSPAR Cullybackey has ordered extra crates and is going the extra mile to give their shoppers that special in-store experience."

Cullybackey Store Manager, Rea Turner said; "we need to get into the spirit of Christmas this year more than ever! The Shloer 12 Deals week feels like the start of the festive period for us, so we're expecting big demand and repeat customers. We've gone all out and printed t-shirts, we've decorated the store and we're running a prize draw to give away a delicious hamper, a meat pack from Ferguson's Butchers in store, and even a cake in the shape of a bottle of Shloer to anyone who purchases a full case!"



Staff at EUROSPAR Cullybackey got into the festive spirit this year to celebrate the Shloer week of the 12 Deals of Christmas promotion.

Sheriff Rewards Dorset Village Store

SPAR store owners Darren and Tara Fielding, who have run the Red Barn Stores in the village of Hazelbury Bryan for the last three years, have been rewarded for their work in supporting the local community with a special award from the High Sheriff of Dorset in recognition of their work during the pandemic.

Working with the parish council, they were assembling up to 10 boxes of goods a day for home deliveries, working long hours to source products people had specifically requested and co-operating with community volunteers to get prescriptions to people.

Presenting the award to Darren and Tara, George Streatfeild said "The service you provided enabled

the village of Hazelbury Bryan to support the most vulnerable. Your service to your local community was truly exceptional."

Tara Fielding said: "We are only a small store but were honoured to receive the award. This year has drawn out the community spirit among people in the area and really brought people together."



SPAR Feniton brings joy

In Devon Gary Grove, who runs the company-owned SPAR store in Feniton, was delighted to receive a letter from the Bishop of Exeter the Rt. Rev. Robert Atwell to recognise the services the store provides to the local community both before and during the pandemic.

The Bishop gave the store an official Bringer of Joy recognition and gift which would have been presented at a dinner earlier this year, which had to be cancelled. He said: "Being a Bringer of Joy is in appreciation of your service and the joy you bring within your community. Thank you for the work you have done to keep your shop stocked and safe and to provide for the elderly."

Gary said: "I am really proud of the team here at Feniton and so pleased that their hard work has been recognised."

SPAR Stores Support Free School Meals Plan

SPAR store owners throughout the south west lent their support to local communities after being inspired by the movement spearheaded by Manchester United and England football star Marcus Rashford to ensure underprivileged children get free food over school holidays.



Retailers took to social media to advise customers they would be making free lunches available for hard pressed families after the Government said it would not extend free school meals during the autumn half term holiday, a decision that was later reversed.

Among the posts on social media were Connolly SPAR, who reported that they were busy in store preparing free lunches to families in need and ended up handing out nearly 250 meals in the week from their Wiltshire stores.

The SPAR Latestop store in Charfield near Bristol supported struggling families by

setting up a food bank box for customers to donate groceries. The box was filled in one day with one customer buying £10 worth of groceries and donating it all to the box.

At St. Agnes in Cornwall, the store announced it would be offering 15 free children's goodie lunch bags, while at Delabole lunch packs were available in store thanks to the Camelford Community Larder. At High Littleton, Somerset, free kids lunch packs were offered by the store to those in need from Monday to Friday during half term, with some customers making donations towards the initiative.

SPAR south west retailers support local football teams

A village football team in North Somerset has praised its local SPAR after the store's owners showed their support by sponsoring the team's kit.

Jason and Michelle Appleyard, who took over the SPAR store in High Littleton earlier this year, got behind the local team after being approached by the father of one of their paper boys.

"He wrote to me asking if we would sponsor the kit," said Michelle. "At the time, we had only been open four months, but we loved the idea of supporting the community. Many of the football team and their families shopped with us during lockdown and continue to come into the store now."

Hordean Hawks is a successful football club in Hampshire providing young members with a great environment for playing the game. The local Gillett's SPAR store has donated £250

to support the team with kit for the season.

The SPAR Connolly Beech Hill store has sponsored the newly-formed Andover New Street Ladies team, playing in the Hampshire County Women's League Division Four. Sarah Connolly, manager of the Beech Hill store, plays for the side.

Gary Grove at the Gillett's SPAR Feniton store provides man of the match awards for the local football club each week and the store sponsors the team with SPAR branded shirts.

Tim and Leslie Francis at the SPAR store in Enham Alamein have provided matchday kit sponsorship to Andover Town Youth Under 11s.



Wiltshire Store Wins National Recognition

Management and staff at a Wiltshire family-owned SPAR are delighted after it became one of five stores to receive national recognition in a competition run by KP Snacks and the Convenience Store website.

The Local Legends competition set out to recognise retailers and their teams for the resilience and versatility shown through the national lockdown.

The Pennings Road SPAR store in Tidworth, run by the Connolly family, was recognised for working tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

On behalf of the panel, Matt Collins, trading director of KP Snacks, said: "The Pennings Road team introduced home deliveries and food parcels and even weighed out big bags of flour so customers could each have some. As well as working hard and despite the challenging situation, the team created some fantastic memories along the way."

ANNIVERSARY FOR CAMBORNE COMMUNITY STORE

Derren Jones and Katrina Sullivan have been celebrating their first anniversary since opening a new community SPAR store in Hilderley Park, Camborne – and have praised customers for their loyalty and friendship.

"The last 12 months have been one hell of a ride," said Derren. "We have survived lockdown and still strive to survive this pandemic. We have laughed and cried along the way, but we have never regretted taking the chance on our little shop on the corner."

"We thank all our customers for their support and sense of community spirit they have brought to the shop. Their loyalty and friendship will never be taken for granted."

They also paid tribute to their families and staff for their support. "We could not have done this without you all," said Derren. "We do not know what the next year has in store for us, but we know that through it all we will always be here for you."



New Appointments Announced By Appleby Westward

Appleby Westward has announced three new key executive appointments. Welcome to Joe Keohane has been appointed Finance and I.T. Director. Alyn Saunders has joined in the newly created role of Property Acquisitions Manager to assist Appleby Westward's ambitious plans to grow its portfolio of company-owned stores. In another new role, Andy Scull has been appointed Head of Customer Proposition, responsible for establishing the best promotional package and re-invigorating Appleby Westward's pricing strategy.



Alyn Saunders



Joe Keohane



Andy Scull

Paddleboarding Raises Funds For Local Charity

Managers from two Gillett's SPAR company-owned stores in Devon have raised £350 for charity after paddleboarding along the River Dart.

Kurtis Clark from the Alphington store in Exeter and Izzy Heath from the Teignmouth store took to their boards to fundraise for the Sunny Days Children's Fund, a national charity set up to help children with a wide range of adverse medical conditions.



Praise For Starcross SPAR Stars

Staff at the company-owned SPAR store in Starcross, Devon, were delighted to receive a letter of praise from their local councillor for their support within the local community over the last few months.

Cllr. Alan Connett, Devon County Councillor for the Starcross and Kenton area wrote to the store after he had run a survey throughout his local area on a range of issues arising from the coronavirus crisis.

"In my survey, one of my questions asked whether people felt any businesses deserved recognition for their work," said Cllr. Connett. "So many residents named SPAR in Starcross as one which has been a real support to the local community."

In his letter, he praised the store team for their community spirit. "I wanted to take the opportunity to let you know that your support during these very difficult times is recognised and appreciated by the local community," he wrote.

Dan Levin, area manager for Gillett's SPAR company-owned stores in South Devon said: "A massive 'well done' to manager Kelsea Swift and her team, who should all be very proud to receive this recognition from the community and their local councillor."



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A very merry Quizmas!

Marie Curie's Celebrity Quizzes is back with Christmas bells on! We have three fabulous festive quizzes lined up and each one will be hosted by one of our incredible celebrity supporters.

We are thrilled to have Alison Steadman hosting a Christmas Gavin & Stacey quiz, a family quiz with kids TV presenter Andy Day, and Mel Giedroyc throwing a Christmas Party quiz (with lots of guests!). It is a guaranteed great night in.

Take on our online quizzes by yourself, or team up with friends, family or colleagues for an evening of jolly good fun. Sign up today to get exclusive content from our fabulous hosts, Mel Giedroyc and Alison Steadman.

Simply visit www.mariecurie.org.uk/get-involved/charity-events/quiz or email sparuk@mariecurie.org.uk for more information.



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The Marie Curie
Celebrity Quiz



Join us to #UniteInMemory

With Coronavirus affecting so many in the UK, more people are experiencing the loss of someone close to them, often for the first time. Nearly 1.5 million people have experienced a close bereavement since lockdown began. Behind the statistics and whatever the cause, every death has been devastating for families, friends and colleagues.

That's why Marie Curie is campaigning for a national day of reflection, to bring people across the UK together to support those who have been bereaved, celebrate the lives and **#UniteInMemory** of everyone who has died during this time.

Please sign our petition and show your support for a National Day of reflection to be held on 23rd March 2021, the first anniversary of the start of the UK lockdown. To sign, visit www.mariecurie.org.uk/policy/campaigns/day-to-reflect, or search **"Marie Curie Day to Reflect"**.

Equally, if you ever need to speak to someone for support, Marie Curie is here for you. Our Support Line is open 7 days a week, Monday-Friday from 8am-6pm and Saturday-Sunday from 11am-5pm. Call us on 0800 090 2309 or visit <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support>.



Italy

A new 3,000m² INTERSPAR Hypermarket opened its doors in the town of Modugno, in southern Italy, at the end of October. High-end store fixtures and attractively designed speciality departments make this hypermarket a real eye-catcher. The new store showcases the latest in innovative retail design and was developed in partnership with SPAR International and the University of Parma.

The new store design concept, which will be replicated in future SPAR stores, enhances the shopping experience by offering a wide variety of assortments along a well-designed and spacious shopping route. Customers can be sure that they will find the right solution for every eating occasion. A focus is placed on fresh Italian products, highlighting the region's impressive culinary heritage and supporting local suppliers and their exquisite specialities.

The store was developed to offer customers a journey for their tastebuds. A digital supermarket for online purchases is also available with thousands of products offered at the same price as instore.

Sustainability and a reduction of the environmental footprint have been important considerations in designing this INTERSPAR store. It includes the latest generation energy-saving CO2 cooling units in all departments.



The Netherlands

SPAR Netherlands has acquired a majority stake in The Tosti Club, a premium grilled sandwich chain with eleven branches nationwide.

With this acquisition, SPAR is growing its market share in the foodservice industry considerably.

SPAR's convenience proposition responds to changing consumer behaviour. While people used to have three meals a day, smaller meals are now being consumed six times a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner with three moments for a snack in between.

SPAR already offers customers a variety of convenient solutions for breakfast and lunch.

"The various ingredients that are used for Tosti Club's sandwiches make it easier for us to improve our lunch and evening meal offering. We want our customers to experience the same convenience in shopping for their evening meals as they already do for breakfast and lunch", says, SPAR Netherlands CEO, John van der Ent.

SPAR intends to roll out The Tosti Club within its store portfolio but also develop other foodservice concepts.



Russia



As foodservice offerings are increased in line with shopper demands, SPAR International has developed a versatile coffee solution which provides independent retailers with a fully branded barista café and a coffee-to-go concept, under the brand CENSA. The first CENSA café in Europe has now been launched in Moscow. Customers have welcomed the solution, enthusiastic to try the delicious range of quality coffees and bakery delights.

China

SPAR Guangdong in China opened two new SPAR Hypermarkets at the beginning of October. Featuring an excellent product mix and environmentally conscious store design, both hypermarkets have introduced cutting-edge digital retail tools, including easy ordering and payment options. These products and services bring a fresh shopping experience to local shoppers.

Also in October, SPAR China was awarded the prestigious title of Socially Responsible Company by trade and industry body ECR (Efficient Consumer Response) China. The title recognises SPAR China's timely and efficient measures to safeguard health and safety as well as an adequate supply of goods during the coronavirus pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic, SPAR China partners have used their robust supply chains and logistical capabilities to pool resources and ensure the safe and smooth supply of products and essential services to the communities they serve. New systems were put in place to ensure prompt movement of goods, particularly from agricultural areas where producers had lost access to market.



SPAR NEWS GROUP

SPAR NEWS GROUP is a dedicated national resource to assist all SPAR UK stores manage the newspapers and magazines category efficiently. The group offers retailers the opportunity to join a large national group which gives benefits of scale and weight to support the management of the category and focuses on the requirements of SPAR customers.

Retailers have access to targeted ranges and planograms to match the fixture dimensions making it simpler to merchandise.

Ranges are reviewed twice annually, using market trends, new product to market, SPAR customer demand and publisher recommendations.

SPAR News Group retailers have the option to move to **HARD RANGE STATUS** which prevents wholesale allocating unwanted publications to stores. Management of the magazine category is more effective and less frustrating. The financial advantages of Hard Range Status are: Increased sales and profit through ranged product Reduced level of refused credits Improves retailer's cash-flow by reducing stockholding Stores spend on average, **2 hours less per week** managing the Magazine category. This equates to an annual cost saving of **£750**.

There is a dedicated SPAR News Group Helpdesk for retailers to access advice and support on unresolved wholesale issues such as newspapers delivery times, refused credits, availability. There are no sign-up fees or costs to become a member of SPAR News Group.

For more information please contact SPAR News Group at SNGHelpdesk@spar.co.uk

SPAR 
News Group

RETAIL TO HIT NET ZERO BY 2040

SPAR, together with 63 leading retailers, has supported the BRC Climate Action Roadmap which aims to bring the retail industry and its supply chains to Net Zero by 2040. The BRC Climate Action Roadmap outlines steps to decarbonise the retail industry and its supply chains

Louise Hoste, UK Managing Director of SPAR said: "SPAR UK is committed to supporting the retail industry Climate Action Roadmap ambition to achieve net zero by 2040. As a group of family owned businesses, supporting thousands of communities

around the UK, we know that addressing the climate emergency is a priority. We look forward to working with government, suppliers, the retail industry and stakeholders to achieve this important ambition."



Camelot awards prizes to National Lottery retailers

Congratulations to Pauline Wales of SPAR Polmont in Falkirk, Scotland, who was one of 11 National Lottery retailers to share £20,000 worth of prizes in the first quarterly prize draw of its new-look 'Site, Stock, Sell Online' rewards programme.

The company adapted and moved the popular programme online earlier in the year because retailers were facing a number of challenges due to the pandemic.

Camelot's retail director, Jenny Blogg, said: "Congratulations to all of this quarter's winners. Retailers continue to be the backbone of The National Lottery, and they've been vital in helping us raise funding for Good Causes at a time when it's most needed. Therefore it's only right we reward them whenever we have an opportunity to."



2019/20 GroceryAid Impact Report reveals more colleagues being supported

GroceryAid has been providing emotional, practical and financial support for grocery colleagues, working in partnership with hundreds of supporters across the trade.

In 2019/20 GroceryAid assisted over **17,000** colleagues from manufacturers, convenience stores, wholesalers, supermarkets, distribution, sales and support functions. **73%** of whom were of working age. **£4.25m** was distributed in financial assistance helping **3,183** colleagues as well as providing emotional and practical support to **13,871** people through the 24/7 Helpline services.

The GroceryAid Helpline is available 24/7, 365 days a year: 08088 021 122

The GroceryAid 2019/20 Impact Report



13,871
colleagues supported
through the Helpline



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Players must be 16+ to purchase a ticket in-store. Terms and conditions apply. Excludes NI. The Health Lottery runs 5 x £25k lottery draws each week (Tues – Sat). Every £1 line for any Wednesday or Saturday main lottery draw will also automatically be entered into the appropriate £100,000 free prize draw which also take place on those days. All players matching 5 numbers in the free draw will qualify for a prize. During December 2020 there will be 23 x £25k lottery draws and 10 x £100k free prize draws totaling £1,575,000 in jackpots. New customers only who register at www.healthlottery.co.uk will receive a free Health Lottery ticket. Bonus fully paid for by THL and cannot be withdrawn. Players must be 16+ to register to play online. The Health Lottery scheme manages 12 society lotteries that operate in rotation and each represents a different geographical region of Great Britain. The society lottery benefiting in November is Health Lottery South West and in December it is Health Lottery East. For more details on which society lottery is running each month please visit www.healthlottery.co.uk or ask your Health Lottery retailer. The Health Lottery™ logo is a registered trademark of The Health Lottery Ltd.