



Photo: L-R Wilton Crawford (Michelin Ballymena Factory Manager) and Thomas McKillen (Chamber of Commerce Vice President)

MICHELIN TO BE MAJOR SPONSOR FOR 2011 BUSINESS AWARDS

Michelin Tyre PLC is to be the major sponsor for the 2011 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards. This will be the ninth year of the awards, which are organised annually by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Announcing the sponsorship deal, Thomas McKillen, Chamber Vice President said "I am very pleased to announce that Michelin have agreed to be the major sponsor for the 2011 Business Awards. The awards have become bigger and better every year and last year 400 people attended the Gala evening where the winners are announced. Chamber has had an excellent working relationship with Michelin over many years and I thank them for their continued support of Chamber. I look forward to working with Michelin on the awards in the coming months".

Wilton Crawford, Michelin Tyre PLC Factory Manager in Ballymena said "I am delighted that Michelin Ballymena is to be the major sponsor for the Ballymena Business Awards 2011 and to continue our long

association with this prestigious event. The Ballymena Business Awards is a great event and an excellent opportunity to showcase Ballymena businesses at their best. We look forward to the Gala evening in October and wish all the entrants every success". Michelin has had a manufacturing base in Northern Ireland for over 40 years. Today it employs around 1000 people from across Northern Ireland at its Ballymena plant, dedicated to producing high quality, heavyweight truck and bus tyres mostly for export to North America, Europe and Asia.

The Ballymena plant, which is the only tyre manufacturer on the island of Ireland, produces around 1.4 million tyres per year, each one enabling customers worldwide to experience "a better way forward".

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WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF THE CHAMBER NEWSLETTER.

I would like to thank the members for re-electing me to serve a second term as President of Chamber. This is a great personal honour and I will represent Chamber to the best of my ability during the coming year.

The members who have been elected to serve on the Management Committee for 2011/12 represent a wide range

of businesses in the Borough, and they bring to Chamber a tremendous range of skills and expertise. They all give of their time freely, and I look forward to a busy and successful year.

I hope you enjoy the Newsletter.

Raymond Ruck
President



CHRISTMAS SOCIAL AND NETWORKING EVENT



Raymond Ruck presents a cheque for £3,455 on behalf of Ballymena Chamber of Commerce to Jim McGookin of the NI Hospice

Chamber held its annual Christmas Social and Networking event in December in Montgomerys. Despite the terrible weather a large number of Chamber members and guests were present.

Chamber President Raymond Ruck said a few words of welcome and then presented the trophies to the winners of the Christmas Window dressing competition. The three winners for 2010 were:

- Designer Home Interiors, Broughshane
- Leaf Designs, Galgorm
- Sally's Florist, William Street

Congratulations to the three winners.

Raymond then presented a cheque for £3,455 to the NI Hospice. This was the proceeds from the raffle which was held at the gala evening of the 2010 Ballymena Borough Business Excellence Awards where £3,055 was raised. Raymond himself had completed the Belfast marathon in May and had collected sponsorship of £400. The Chamber would like to thank everyone who donated prizes for the raffle.

We would also like to thank all the staff in Montgomerys who helped to make this another very enjoyable evening.



Emma McNeill (Designer Home Interiors) with Chamber President Raymond Ruck



Linda Ferguson (Leaf Designs) with Chamber President Raymond Ruck



Chamber President Raymond Ruck with Sally Moody from Sally's Florist

RETAIL THEFT TRAINING SEMINAR

The District Policing Partnership (DPP), Ballymena Retailers against Crime (BRAC), Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the PSNI recently held a training seminar in Montgomerys. The seminar focused on retail theft observation skills, deterrent methods and detention of culprits. Approximately 70 people were in attendance.

Audrey Wales (DPP) welcomed everyone to the meeting saying that it was great to see so many present and that she hoped they would all find the seminar to be beneficial. The seminar was sponsored by the DPP.

Trevor Parker, BRAC Development Manager, pointed out that retail theft in the last year cost over £4 billion, costing each household on average £120. He said that he disliked the term shop-lifting, call it what it is – retail theft.

Sgt. Alison Wylie from the PSNI then gave a very interesting address. She gave several



L-R Dean McAuley & Alison Wylie (PSNI), Audrey Wales (Chamber), Trevor Parker (BRAC) and Raymond Ruck (Chamber President)

examples of how the thieves operate. Much of the detail came from information given by reformed thieves. She gave two simple examples of how to deter thieves

- make sure your shops are adequately staffed at peak times
- thieves do not like to be noticed – a simple hello is often enough to put them off

Dean McAuley, the PSNI crime prevention officer pointed out that the law on the use of force changed in 2009, and gave everyone present an information sheet. He also gave information on the "right to search".

Trevor Parker also pointed out no individual has the right to enter any business premises – the trader has the right to refuse entry without giving a reason.

Trevor and Dean then covered a number of detection and deterrent methods that can be used to reduce retail loss.

Raymond Ruck, Chamber President closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. He wished everyone a busy and crime free Christmas trading period.

BALLYMENA RETAILERS AGAINST CRIME APPOINT NEW CHAIRPERSON.

Ballymena Retailers Against Crime are pleased to announce that the new chairperson for 2011/12 is Audrey Wales MBE who was elected at the Annual General Meeting on the 2nd March.

Audrey takes over the position from the outgoing chairman Martin North, Operations Manager of the Fairhill Shopping Centre. Martin commented "It has been a busy year for BRAC as the organisation takes on additional roles in the Town Centre under the Ballymena Town Centre Development Co.

These roles have seen BRAC becoming further engaged with issues that impact on the Town Centre including the highly



L-R Martin North (Fairhill Shopping Centre), Audrey Wales (Chamber of Commerce) and Trevor Parker (BRAC Manager)

successful graffiti removal project, working closely with the Community Safety Partnership."

Martin also added "I am delighted to hand over to Audrey, who has been involved from the start of radio link in Ballymena and has already been heavily involved in the development of BRAC over the years. I wish her all the best." Audrey has already served as Chairperson with BRAC, and has been a member of the committee since 1998.

Audrey thanked Martin and congratulated him on a very successful year in office. Audrey commented "I am honoured to be chairperson of BRAC.

The Radio-Link scheme in Ballymena is the bench mark scheme for Northern Ireland with almost 140 members and I look forward to working with the BRAC Manager Trevor Parker in the coming year".

BUSINESS BREAKFAST WITH ULSTER BANK

Ulster Bank in association with Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Ballymena Borough Council held a very successful business breakfast in the Braid Auditorium in March.



L-R Sean Trainor (Ballymena Borough Council), Thomas McKillen (Chamber Vice President), Mayor Maurice Mills, Terry Robb and Richard Ramsey (both Ulster Bank)

A large number of Chamber members, business people, councillors and MLAs were present to hear Richard Ramsey, Chief Economist from Ulster Bank give a presentation on the current state of the Northern Ireland economy.

Mayor Maurice Mills welcomed everyone to the Braid saying he was looking forward to hearing Richard. He said that whilst Ballymena had undoubtedly been affected by the recession it continued to "punch well above its weight". He gave examples of the success of the Wright Group in recently securing a £55m order and the fact that Ballymena continued to be the best shopping town in Northern Ireland.

The Mayor then introduced Terry Robb, the head of Ulster Bank's Business Centre in Ballymena. Terry thanked everyone for attending the breakfast and gave

an outline of the services provided to businesses in Ballymena. He said "Banks are frequently criticised for not giving support to local business. However Ulster Bank is committed to supporting small business where we possibly can by providing a range of funding options. This year alone we have committed to lending £300m specifically to SMEs and we are keen to support good viable businesses".

Terry then introduced Richard Ramsey, Ulster Bank Chief Economist. Richard said that Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, had christened the period 1998-2007 as the NICE decade – Non Inflationary Continuous Expansion. However that now seemed a long time ago. NI had gone into recession later than the rest of the UK, and whilst the UK economy was recovering, NI private sector output was showing no signs of growth. 38,000 jobs had been lost so far

and the economy has not yet felt the effect of the loss of public sector jobs. He summed up by saying that growth in 2011 and 2012 is predicted to be 1%, and unemployment is likely to stay high for a considerable time. The next few years will be tough for the NI economy. However it is not all doom and gloom. There is a great opportunity to radically change the NI economy for the better, but it must be taken. It is also thought that the public expenditure cuts will be difficult but are feasible. Events like the Olympics, the MTV awards which are scheduled to be held in Belfast and tourism will all help provide a boost to the economy.

The Chamber has a PDF of Richard's presentation – if you would like a copy please contact Chris at office@ballymenachamber.co.uk



Ballymena
Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Five reasons why your business should join Chamber today...



Become Better Connected...

becoming a member immediately offers endless networking opportunities, helping you grow and develop your business by establishing new contacts, building up and strengthening existing relationships.

Have your voice heard (Lobbying and Representation)...

acting as the ears and voice of the business community by communicating upwards and outwards the concerns of our members.

Give back to your local area...

your Chamber strives to support and promote all that is good within the Borough of Ballymena and seeks to keep commerce flowing within the local business community.

Tell the Borough and beyond about your business...

Chamber members receive real exposure through our website, publications and business events reaching hundreds of potential customers - guaranteed to get your business noticed.

Business solutions...

tap into a wealth of expertise, resources and training opportunities through various business events, breakfast / lunch seminars hosted by your Chamber.

become part of an organisation that is working for you...

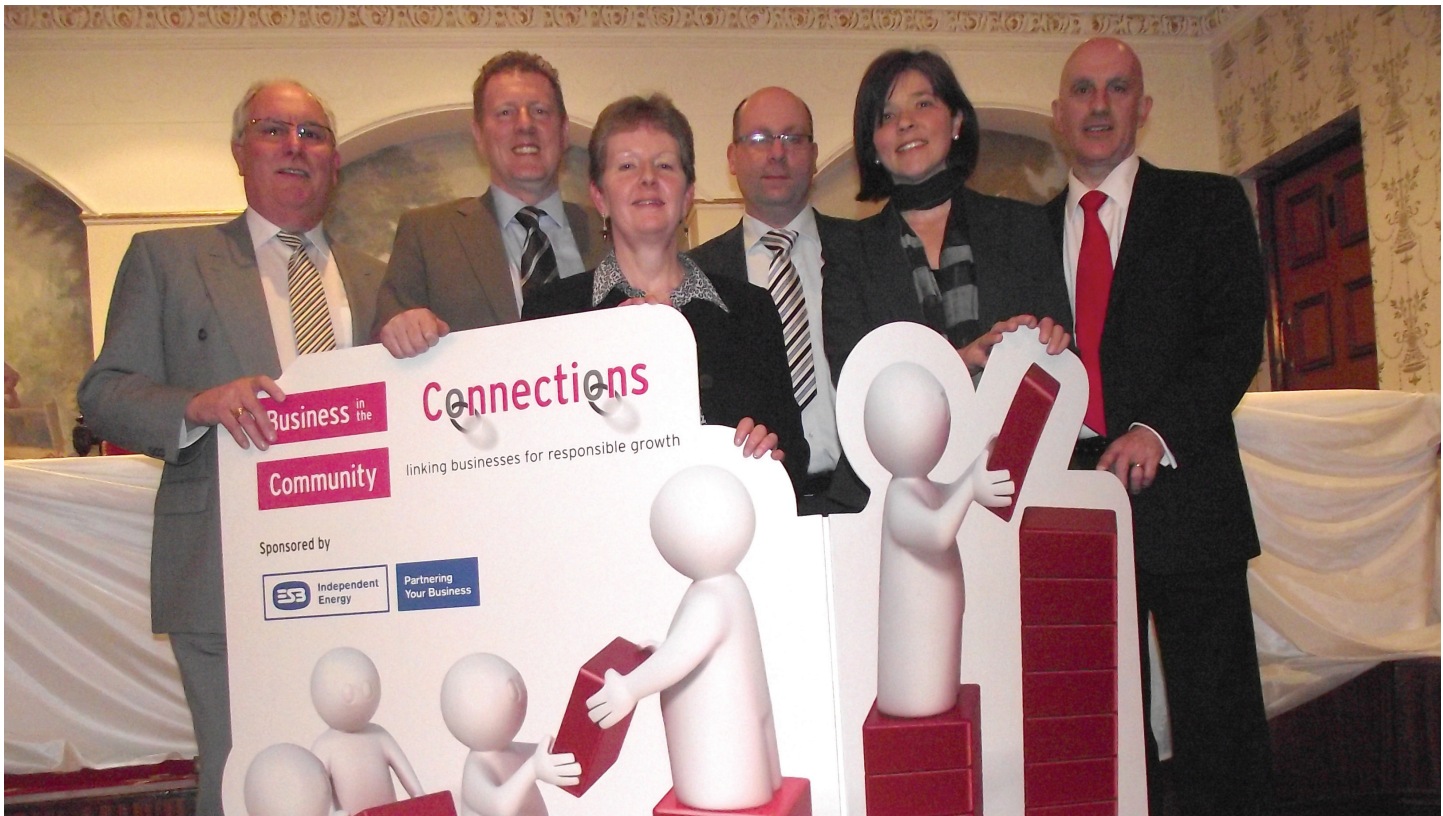


If your business wishes to join Chamber, or if you would like more information, you can contact Chamber at office@ballymenachamber.co.uk or by telephone on 07876 758797

www.ballymenachamber.co.uk

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Ballymena – A better place to do business

FUNDING AND FINANCE ADVICE TO HELP BALLYMENA BUSINESSES GROW



L-R Cecil Caldwell, Sean O'Loughlin, Heather Major, Andrew Reynolds, Claire Anderson & Bill Ellison

Over 40 local Antrim businesses attended Beat the Clock: Focus on Finance at the Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena in March.

Business in the Community's Connections programme, sponsored by ESB Independent Energy, hosted the event, in partnership with DARD Rural Enterprise, Ballymena Borough Council, Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ballymena Business Centre and Women on the Move.

The event was aimed at small business owners and managers interested in helping business survive the recession by improving their financial management and also where to seek funding and finance to grow the business. Guest speaker, Bill Ellison, shared his valuable experience of how to keep on top of credit control and getting the money in on time as an accountant and partner in BSx2, as well as from many years working in the private and not-for-profit sectors in finance and accounting.

Bill Ellison said: "As an entrepreneur myself, having set up and run three of my own companies in industrial heating, wholesale and distribution, and business coaching, I understand the challenges small business are facing in the current economic climate and I am delighted to be have the opportunity to pass on tips and advice to try and help other small businesses survive".

Heather Major, Business in the Community, highlights: "Our Connections programme aims to foster the sharing of knowledge and best practice with small businesses which can really make a difference to the sustainability of small businesses and to their future development.

Bill Ellison is also a Connections mentor and has been a key contributor from the outset to the programme's mission to help small businesses plan and achieve responsible growth."

After Bill's session on the programme, the participants at the event also heard presentations from five sources of business funding and finance. The sources included speakers from Enterprise NI Loan Fund, Halo Business Angel Network NI, E-Synergy, Michelin Business Development and the DARD Rural Development Programme.

Claire Anderson of DARD Rural Enterprise, co-hosts of the event, commented:

"We are delighted to be partnering Business in the Community on a series of events across Northern Ireland this year, focusing on sharing finance and marketing best practice. It is also a great opportunity for

both rural and urban businesses to network and learn from each other".

Connections small business initiative is sponsored by Business in the Community member ESB Independent Energy. "We are delighted to play our part via the Connections programme, helping to nurture economic growth within the small business community," explains Susan Kinane, Managing Director of ESB Independent Energy. "The Northern Ireland economy has great potential and we believe that the business community must pull together to provide every competitive advantage for the SME sector. The Connections seminar series is proving to be an important step towards delivering this."



BIG SUPPORT FOR 'TINY' CHARITY

Kevin McSherry (right), chairman of the Northern Ireland Pipeline Industry Guild (PIG) and head of engineering for Chamber member firmus energy, which supplies natural gas to Ballymena, presents a cheque for £14,445 to Andrea Milligan of TinyLife, as John Houston (left) of Burdens NI Ltd and treasurer for PIG, looks on

Kevin said: "This money, which has been raised by PIG member companies throughout 2010, will help TinyLife, Northern Ireland's only dedicated premature and vulnerable baby charity, in their work to reduce illness, disability and death in babies born locally, as well as providing invaluable support for families affected by such circumstances.

"Many of our members are parents and are well aware of the fantastic work TinyLife carries out. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported this charity as I know the donation will be put to good use.

"The money contributed by firmus energy was raised through a number of events.

Some of our staff took part in the Belfast marathon and we raised £320 and the firmus energy Golf Day raised £1,750 for TinyLife. We also had a collection at our annual dinner in April. In these difficult economic times, it is heart warming to see that so many people are still willing to dig deep and support worthy causes such as this."

Andrea Milligan, events officer for TinyLife, said: "I too would like to thank the PIG companies for all their support throughout this year. I was astounded by the amount raised, particularly as people are tightening their belts and being more careful with their money - everyone who has contributed was extremely generous.

"This substantial amount will go towards helping to fund our family support programme, training volunteers to provide practical and emotional support to parents of premature and ill babies. We work hard to ensure that parents get all the help they need at these difficult times."

TinyLife is fully committed to funding medical research into the causes of premature birth, stillbirth and miscarriage, as well as providing information to professionals and parents-to-be to ensure that every pregnancy has the best chance of a healthy outcome and a healthy baby.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE / INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND DESIGN AWARENESS EVENT

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry hosted a business breakfast in the Adair Arms Hotel to make members more aware of the importance of design and branding.

Thomas McKillen, Chamber Vice President welcomed everyone, especially Richard Christie and Gillian Colhoun from Invest Northern Ireland.

Invest Northern Ireland encouraged Ballymena Chamber of Commerce members to fully utilise the power of design to drive business growth. More than 30 local businesses gathered at Invest Northern Ireland's design event to gain ideas on what design improvements they could make to boost their company's performance. Design is a powerful business tool which can bring significant benefits to all organisations. Simple measures

implemented effectively can open up valuable opportunities for companies and become a catalyst for future growth.

Attendees from a range of sectors heard from Invest NI's Design Team, who shared their experiences of how design has changed the fortunes of companies across the world.

Invest NI offers a wide range of tailored design support to firms at all stages and encourages companies to embrace innovation and grow their business by cultivating a design driven environment within their organisation.



L-R Richard Christie and Gillian Colhoun from Invest Northern Ireland with Thomas McKillen Chamber Vice President



Building Locally
Competing Globally

CHAMBER AGM

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry held its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 13th April.

A large number of members were present to hear outgoing President Raymond Ruck give an upbeat speech on the past year, highlighting the number of successful events which the Chamber had run. Members of the Management committee also gave reports on the projects and working groups in which they had been involved.

The Rev. Robert Coulter chaired the meeting for the election of officers, congratulating the Chamber on a very successful year. The following officers were elected for 2011/12:

President: Raymond Ruck
Vice President: Thomas McKillen
Hon. Secretary: Audrey Wales
Hon. Treasurer: William McKean
Management Committee: Alan Stewart, Neil Holland, Robin Cherry, Paul Muir, Bridgene McKeever, Rodney Kernohan, Martin North and Alison Moore.

Members of the newly elected Chamber Management Committee 2011-12



At the conclusion of the AGM, Raymond Ruck made a presentation to Rev. Robert Coulter to mark his forthcoming retirement and as an acknowledgement of his many years of service to the Chamber.



PATTON EMPLOYEE WINS TOP AWARD



A leading Northern Ireland construction company has been singled out for a top award for its contribution to promoting arts in business.

Alan Stewart Group Marketing Manager of the Patton Group in Ballymena was named Business Individual of the Year at the prestigious Allianz Arts & Business Awards in Belfast recently.

The awards aim to showcase examples of excellence and the delivery of tangible business benefits with winning partnerships from across the Northern Ireland business and arts sectors.

Chairman of the Arts Council for Northern Ireland Rosemary Kelly OBE said of Mr Stewart: "Alan is a fantastic example of how

individuals within business can support the sector through personal commitment to the arts. The arts need more individuals with this sincere dedication for the sector."

As well as ongoing sponsorship with the Ulster Orchestra, The Patton Group have been active in setting up art projects which have benefited the local community in Ballymena.

Alan Stewart said: "I am really honoured to be recognised for playing a role in our corporate social responsibility which is embedded in our company's ethos.

"The arts in general are really close to the heart of our Chairman David Patton MBE and also our Managing Director, Neil Patton and it is through them that I have been allowed to engage with as many local arts organisations as possible.

"We have seen tangible benefits from projects involving our own staff, members of the orchestra and local school children and as a company we value the contribution the arts make to ourselves and the wider community".

NEW BUSINESS MAGAZINE LAUNCHED IN BALLYMENA

April saw the launch of a new business magazine, Into Business (Ballymena Edition). The magazine is published by Ballymena Business Centre.

Melanie Christie Boyle, Chief Executive of the Business Centre said "This is a glossy A4 40 page magazine packed full of editorial tips and advice on running a business. There are local and national contributors, the main aim being to promote and support local businesses. There will be 5000 copies per issue, and it will be distributed to all businesses via Royal Mail and stocked at all key outlets".

Chris Wales, Chamber's Business Development Manager welcomed the new magazine. He said "I am very impressed by the first edition. It contains an excellent range of articles and information and will be of interest to all local businesses. I congratulate Melanie and wish the magazine every success in the future".

You can view Into Business online at www.ballymenabusiness.co.uk

