

Celebrating **Local Heroes**



TRIBUTES FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY



a message from our **President**

Councillor Eugene Reid

President of Ballymena Area
Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Ballymena Area has always had a vibrant local economy with a strong industrial, agricultural and service base. Ballymena is also rightly renowned as Northern Ireland's premier shopping town. The past months have seen unprecedented challenges for our citizens, our communities and our businesses. As a Chamber it will be our role to work hard with our partners to ensure the shops and businesses in the Ballymena Area can take full advantage of any support offered and ensure all of our businesses are in the best possible position to be part of the economic recovery.

Having taken over the Presidency of the Chamber I want to say that it is an honour and a privilege not only to take on the role as President of such an important organisation but also a privilege to be able to continue working for all of our businesses to ensure that Ballymena is at the forefront of the recovery process and that our economy gets back on track as one of the most vibrant in Northern Ireland.

I am born and bred in Ballymena and I have many personal and business connections in the town. I am passionate about business and in particular business in the Ballymena area. I can assure our businesses and the local community that I will work tirelessly with our partners during my term as President. As a Chamber it is our role to provide all the support we can to business and our local community to ensure that we see a strong and significant bounce back in the local economy.

As a Chamber we realise that it is important that we have a vibrant local economy on all levels where we can offer businesses, members of the community and visitors a place where they can grow their business, live safely and socialise. The next period will be a challenge but as a Chamber we are looking forward to taking on those challenges and I know that our local business community is filled with hard working and innovative entrepreneurs who will be up for the challenges ahead.



Our Heroes

The Ballymena Chamber of Commerce are well aware of the many local heroes there are, and their amazing contributions during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, one local charity and their wonderful compassionate care stood out for us, so we have chosen the Northern Ireland Hospice & Children's Hospice as our Local Hero!

Hospice has always been there for the people in our community, ensuring that families have the care and support they need when they need it most. This year however has proven to be one of the Charity's most challenging years so far.

When the coronavirus began to appear in Northern Ireland the Hospice was immediately impacted. All their fundraising events were cancelled, and every Hospice shop was closed, however even during this difficult time, the Hospice team continued to deliver their vital care.

The team in the adult hospice, Somerton House continued to care for patients that needed specialist palliative care. They introduced visiting restrictions, but they worked hard to ensure the unit did not close to families completely. Family support is a crucial part of the holistic care provided by Hospice.

The Hospice Community Nurse Team in our area did not stop visiting patients in their homes – they didn't even hesitate – they just put on their scrubs and PPE and delivered their much needed care every day. During a very frightening time for everyone it takes a real hero to stand up and be there for the people that depend on them.



We are all lucky to have this special service to help the babies, children and adults in our local community.

With many children shielding during the pandemic the team at Children's Hospice became even more creative with their support, providing virtual one on one and group therapy. The Family Support team held arts and craft sessions, sing alongs and even a family fun day! We are aware that many parents felt that Children's Hospice was their lifeline during this stressful time.

Northern Ireland Hospice and Children's Hospice are an integral part of our community and we hope you will join us in celebrating their contributions and supporting their vital services.

Should you wish to fundraise or become a 'partner of Hospice' **Catherine O'Hara The Partnership Programme Manager** can be contacted on **028 9078 1856** or by email: **Catherine.O'Hara@nihospice.org**

The Business of Caring



Northern
Ireland
Hospice



Northern
Ireland
Children's
Hospice

Join our Business of Caring community with a regular gift to Northern Ireland Hospice.

Your valued commitment will help local families receive specialist care and support, when they need it most.

Talk to us today about the benefits of supporting Northern Ireland Hospice.



Northern
Ireland
Children's
Hospice

**Proud
Supporter**
2019–2020

Get in touch.

catherine.o'hara@nihospice.org

07515063303

nihospice.org



Thank you from RJ Cherry & Son

RJ Cherry and Son would like to recognise the work of our Accident and Emergency Departments. There can be no doubt that as with many others the staff in these Departments were indeed heroes going to work everyday during the crisis to provide medical assistance to those in the greatest need, we should never forget their work or the work of all our essential workers during this terrible time.

RJ Cherry and Son are local agricultural producers, who provide a range of fresh locally grown products to our restaurants, supermarkets and individual buyers. Our farm is on the outskirts of Ballymena within easy distance of the town centre. We offer the best quality locally grown Sunbeam potatoes which are excellent for steaming, boiling or roasting.

In addition to our high quality potatoes we also grow our own Pak Choi. Pak Choi is a crisp green vegetable which is delicious and can be eaten raw but also is a great addition to a stir fry. Robin Cherry developed a unique system for growing Pak Choi and RJ Cherry and Son are renowned across the Province for the quality of this tasty unique vegetable.

For more information on the potato varieties offered or to find out more about the Pak Choi please visit RJCherryandSon.com



Powering Together

At Power NI, we've been Northern Ireland's leading energy supplier for almost 90 years. We not only provide energy solutions to local businesses, farms and household customers, but we give something back to our local communities, right across the province.

Our values are about bringing people together and representing genuine value and energy within a 'New Northern Ireland'. Throughout these challenging months, we've been able to stay true to who we are and continue to deliver community funding programmes to help in the fight against Covid-19.

When we all first entered lockdown, it became apparent help was needed in the community. The Power NI Community Response Fund was launched, where staff from across our Antrim, Belfast and Omagh offices were able to choose 29 local groups they wanted to support. It was great to see staff nominate groups they volunteered with in their local area and felt deserved additional help.

As well as staff nominated groups and projects, Power NI reached out to 15 Young Farmers' Clubs and 13 charities and organisations, helping them to provide on the ground support in both urban and rural areas where it was most needed. These groups included local companies like Village Blinds manufacturing PPE in Ballymena as well as Age NI, Macmillan and foodbanks in Belfast, Antrim and Omagh.



When we celebrate our local heroes, we want to show our appreciation to our essential workers at Power NI, especially to our staff in Antrim, Belfast and Omagh taking customer calls every day and helping them throughout this crisis.

As well as having tragic impacts on the health of our community, Covid-19 has also caused damage and disruption in our business sector. We've been actively working together with our customers over the last few months to weather this storm. Like all storms however, it will pass, and we are committed to growing our range of products and services, and, together with our customers, helping in the recovery of our local economy and tackling climate change.

Keep up to date with how we're evolving to be more than just your energy supplier:
www.powerni.co.uk/letsgrowtogether

Let's grow together

We're evolving to be more than just your energy provider.

Join over 40,000 businesses who trust NI's largest electricity supplier.

powerni.co.uk/letsgrowtogether

Supporting the local community

Staff and students across Northern Regional College's campuses in Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey have pulled together to support their local communities.

Despite having to deal with the challenges of home working and schooling, virtual classes, studying online or caring responsibilities, they still managed to find time to support some vulnerable people.

In response to the unprecedented demand for PPE early in lockdown, thousands of items of PPE were sourced from across campuses and distributed to frontline staff in hospitals and nursing homes. Items included disposable gloves, aprons, facemasks, goggles, safety glasses, protective visors produced 'in-house', as well as hundreds of handmade reusable facemasks produced by staff at all campuses.

With fundraising activities for charities severely disrupted by the pandemic, the success of the College's inaugural Volunteer Day in May was a real boost to the coffers of beleaguered charities and highlighted the strong sense of community spirit that underpins Northern Regional College.

Among the many fundraising activities were a Virtual Campus Walking Challenge and

Virtual Ironman Challenge and numerous sponsored walks, runs, cycles and stair climbs. Many staff provided practical support to elderly neighbours or people who were shielding by collecting prescriptions and groceries or doing baking, cooking, DIY chores and gardening. Other activities for Volunteer Day included blood donations, cemetery cleaning and litter collection.

In addition to their voluntary efforts, hundreds of current and former students and staff from the College's Health and Social Care courses have been working as frontline healthcare workers and domiciliary assistants in hospitals, care homes and in their local community, while others have been filling key roles in supermarkets, community pharmacies, agri-food factories and other production lines.

As part of Northern Regional College's ongoing support for the local business community, free accredited short online courses are available for anyone wishing to upskill or retrain. The courses, which are fully funded by the Department for the Economy, are aimed at closing skills gaps identified by the industry and will focus on improving digital skills, essential skills, employability skills and leadership and management.

PPE DONATED BY

Northern Regional College to hospitals and nursing homes:

NORTHERN
Regional College



30,000

DISPOSABLE GLOVES



5,000

DISPOSABLE APRONS



50

PAIRS OF SAFETY GLASSES



14

SETS OF GOGGLES

Proud to play our part in supporting our amazing frontline healthcare workers.
From all at Northern Regional College - THANK YOU.

For information on business support at Northern Regional College, visit www.nrc.ac.uk or email: business.engagement@nrc.ac.uk

Partnering with businesses

At Northern Regional College we take pride in partnering with businesses to develop new ways of working smarter whilst maximising budgets. The College Business Engagement Team can enable businesses to access support for knowledge transfer, skills transfer and technology transfer programmes. In addition to our advertised courses, we can offer bespoke training delivered in house, online or through blended learning which can be tailored to your specific needs.

We at Northern Regional College are proud to offer a range of practical, effective services to help local businesses get results!



FREE accredited online courses

Supported by the Department for the Economy for those affected by Covid-19. Qualifications include Digital Skills, Leadership and Management and ICT.



Skills Focus

A fully funded programme for NI based businesses with less than 250 employees, who have the need to upskill or reskill staff to a Level 2 qualification or above. Benefits include maximising training budget through funding support and flexible learning in a wide range of qualifications to develop a more productive workforce.



InnovateUs

For businesses in NI with less than 50 employees and aids the development of innovation best practices. It can assist in bringing ideas to market as new products, services or processes and encourages the raising of innovation levels long term.



Innovation Vouchers

Funding of up to £5000, for small to medium-sized businesses who want to innovate, develop and grow.

For further information, contact business.engagement@nrc.ac.uk

NORTHERN
Regional College



Department for the
Economy
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Emergency Services

At Coulter Weir Wealth Management we would like to acknowledge the work carried out by all the Emergency Services during the crisis.

Whilst many workers were told to stay at home to reduce the spread of the virus our Emergency Services continued to turn up for work everyday and provide an invaluable service to the public. Whether you were in need of the police had a medical emergency or required the assistance of the Fire Brigade you knew that these key workers would be there for you when needed.

Many of these brave men and woman had to leave their families at home for long periods whilst they went to work to provide invaluable services to the public. We normally depend on our emergency services to be there for us when required in normal circumstances but to know that they continued to work for us during this critical time was very reassuring.

Coulter Weir Wealth Management want to acknowledge this incredible effort and offer our thanks to all the Emergency Services for their work during the crisis and for the service they continue to provide on a day to day basis.



COULTER WEIR
WEALTH MANAGEMENT



COULTER WEIR
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

At Coulter Weir Wealth Management we specialise in the provision of tailored financial advice to individuals, businesses and trustees.

We understand that every client has unique goals and aspirations. We take the time to get to know our clients needs so we can provide bespoke financial solutions.

Given the uncertainty in the world at present we have found it a crucial time to ensure that your plans are on track.

In recent times we have been helping clients ensure their pensions are on track, that their investments are in the right place, and that they aren't paying too much tax.

Some of the areas we provide advice around are:

INVESTMENT PLANNING

RETIREMENT PLANNING

TAX AND ESTATE PLANNING

MORTGAGE AND PROTECTION

Coulter Weir Wealth Management

Unit 20 The Courtyard Business Park
Galgorm Castle, Ballymena, Co Antrim, BT42 1HL

T: 028 2563 2929 www.coulterweir.co.uk

Galgorm Says Thank You

Galgorm Collection donated a staggering £750,000 worth of experience vouchers to the Northern Health & Social Care Trust staff in recognition for their hard work, bravery, and commitment to helping patients throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Galgorm Collection rewarded key workers with a range of experiences – from overnight stays, spa days and meals in their award-winning properties across Northern Ireland – to cement its commitment to the community and bring some much-needed respite to key workers.

Colin Johnston, Galgorm Collection Managing Director, said: *“The COVID-19 pandemic is unlike anything we have seen before and it is placing huge pressure on our health and social care system. We wanted to find a way to sincerely thank our brilliant HSC staff who are fighting against this outbreak and coping with unbelievable situations in a remarkably professional and brave manner.*

We recognise how difficult it must be for every HSC staff member working to manage this crisis, with many separated from their families and working long hours. That’s why Galgorm Collection has donated 5,000 experiences to Northern Health & Social Care Trust workers, to show our appreciation and give our heroes the chance to rest and recoup once this emergency is over.

The voucher donation represents a charitable contribution of over £750,000 by Galgorm Collection to our local communities and we look forward to welcoming each and every HSC worker through our doors.

Galgorm Collection is actively engaged in corporate social responsibility and works with numerous local community groups and organisations including the long standing relationship with Simon Community and more recently the Community Rescue Service raising in excess of £100,000.”



GALGORM

SPA & GOLF RESORT

A WORLD APART

GALGORM.COM

Town Centre Recovery

#RediscoverMEA Town Centres

The reopening of our town centres in the summer was underpinned by our innovative #RediscoverMEA campaign, targeted at encouraging citizens to support town centre businesses by shopping and dining local.

Led by Council's Town Centre Recovery Group, the campaign showcased the unique selling points of the Borough's three main towns – Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus – driven by a bespoke narrative and compelling imagery for each location.

Ballymena Chamber of Commerce President, Cllr Eugene Reid, explained: "As we made up for lost time, with peace of mind that all appropriate measures were in place, there had never been a better time to #RediscoverMEA and all that our borough has to offer in terms of shopping and dining out."

"Through this campaign we wanted to equip local residents and visitors to Mid and East Antrim with the confidence that they could shop local and shop safe. We wanted shoppers to enjoy the outstanding selection of high street brands and stylish boutiques in a safe environment across our Borough, embraced by the warm and heartening welcome from local business owners who are the life and soul of our town centres."

"Diners, meanwhile, were encouraged to enjoy an unrivalled dining experience with the same buzz and atmosphere knowing that our hospitality providers had worked exceptionally hard to ensure that their only concern was what to choose for dessert."



**Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Council's Retail Safety Packs aid reopening of businesses

Council helped businesses in the area to prepare for reopening safely, in accordance with the Northern Ireland Executive guidelines, by providing hundreds of specially designed 'COVID-19 Support Packs' to retailers. The packs included guidance on social distancing and infection control, posters for display, checklists to ensure employee and customer safety, useful contacts and infection control products.

The initiative formed part of Council's recovery plan for the three town centres across the Borough. Our Town Centre Team, in conjunction with its partners, has been working to support the local business community to increase footfall, create and protect jobs, attract investment and nurture new and existing businesses as they find the road to recovery.

Alderman Audrey Wales MBE, former President and Life Member of Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Council's representative on Ballymena BID, said:

"The COVID-19 lockdown period served to remind us just how greatly our town centre retailers businesses are valued and how much they contribute to the wider local economy, lifestyle and culture in Northern Ireland."

"I witnessed first-hand the endless hours of hard work that these businesses invested in ensuring their premises were safe and complied fully with government guidelines to operate. These packs were just one of many ways in which Council was pleased to support these preparations."

New stickers 'a mark of confidence for consumers' in Mid and East Antrim

Council distributed new window stickers to businesses and premises across Mid and East Antrim to send a signal that safety measures have been taken in response to Covid-19. The customer confidence stickers were issued as the economic recovery from the pandemic continues in Ballymena, Larne, Carrickfergus and surrounding villages.



Featuring the **#Rediscover** messaging for each of the three towns and their distinct branding as part of Council's bespoke **#ShopLocal**, **#ShopSafe** marketing plan, the stickers have been well received by shoppers and traders alike.

Mayor, Cllr Peter Johnston, explained: *"These customer confidence stickers show the public that our local businesses are taking the necessary steps to help customers feel at ease, feel safe, and above all have an enjoyable experience when shopping and going about their daily business."*

"I am confident that, by continuing to work closely with our business community, Council will continue to deliver on its commitment to the next phase of post-COVID-19 recovery."

TOURISM

Giant steps towards recovery for tourism in Mid and East Antrim

Council was the official sponsor of this year's series of 'Ulster Giants' – UTV's popular series which celebrates Northern Ireland's rich civil engineering heritage. A portfolio of ads airing during each episode was specially commissioned by Council to showcase a range of destinations and attractions across Mid and East Antrim, including The Gobbins, Portglengone/Glenoe, Ballygally and Slemish.

Councillor Peter Johnston, Mayor of Mid and East Antrim, said: *"Ulster Giants showcases some of the province's most breath-taking scenery and areas of outstanding natural beauty, many of which can be found right here across Mid and East Antrim."*

"The local tourism industry is absolutely vital to the Borough's economic, social and cultural health. As a Council, we are committed to doing everything we can to proudly showcase our compelling tourism offering of destinations, attractions and activities along the Causeway Coastal Route."

The sponsorship formed part of the bespoke #RediscoverMEA marketing and communications plan targeting specific market segments such as 'staycations', day-trippers and visitors from GB and ROI, aligned to evolving government guidance.

One of the jewels in the MEA tourism crown, The Gobbins Coastal Path, meanwhile, has recently reopened after being closed due to the Coronavirus restrictions.

The must-see attraction, which first welcomed visitors back in 1902, opened to the public again on September 1.

Billed as one of the most beautiful and dramatic coastal attractions in Europe, the exhilarating clifftop walk has been awarded the 'We're Good to Go' charter mark and now features a number of enhanced safety measures to maintain hygiene standards and social distancing, in line with strict Covid-19 guidelines.

These include pre-booking tours, contactless payment and a one-way system for visitors. More information can be found at www.thegobbinscliffpath.com



New five-year tourism strategy for Mid and East Antrim

In August the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim announced Council's intention to launch a new five-year tourism strategy for Mid and East Antrim, which he said would be "critical" to the recovery and sustainable growth of the borough's hospitality and tourism sector in the coming years.

With Council approval granted to proceed to Phase Two of our specialist Hospitality and Tourism Recovery Task Force, a new Tourism Specialist Chair will now be appointed to oversee the development and implementation of the strategy.

Both initiated and currently chaired by MEABC Chief Executive Anne Donaghy, the Task Force was established to provide a platform for key players and influencers to work together to deliver a clear action plan focused on recovery, and to raise the profile of the local tourism economy within Mid and East Antrim.

£2million expansion for Galgorm

Galgorm Spa & Golf Resort recently unveiled its new, dramatically enhanced Thermal Village and Spa provision, representing an investment of more than £2million into its tourism credentials.

The Resort now boasts a suite of new attractions for spa guests, including a 10-metre infinity pool on the shores of the River Maine, a 200m² Palm House relaxation area encompassing six heated loungers, and new Salt Room for halotherapy experiences. With over 90 per cent of its Thermal Village and Spa offering located outdoors, Galgorm has also installed two group hot tubs and saunas, three additional private hot tubs with waterfall views and six brand new riverside cabanas.

Welcoming the expansion, Arlene Foster, First Minister of Northern Ireland, commented: *"As our tourism and hospitality industry focuses on rebuilding, it is encouraging to see one of the best-known businesses continue to invest and innovate, bolstering the recovering economy and cementing its reputation as a world-class destination."*





Whitehead celebrates much-awaited reopening of Blackhead Path

In July we re-opened the much-loved Blackhead Path in Whitehead to the public, following a multi-million-pound restoration project carried out over the past year. Repair works covered four main areas along the coastal path and included rock armour protection, new steps and handrails, and extensive scaling, fixing and netting of rocks.

The Mayor of Mid and East Antrim said: *"Whitehead is a beautiful village, with lots of eateries, shops, art events and stunning scenery to explore – all of which will only be enriched further by the much-anticipated completion of these works. Blackhead Path is not only a treasured part of life for locals in the village, but one of the area's greatest tourism assets."*

"The re-opening of the path in July was a timely boost for the local community and businesses as we emerged from lockdown, meaning that they can once again benefit from the many thousands of visitors who flock to what is one of Northern Ireland's most popular walking destinations every year."

MEA STARS

MEA Mask Makers

With the wearing of face coverings in shops and other enclosed public spaces becoming compulsory in August in Northern Ireland, the need for inexpensive and eco-friendly face coverings was bigger than ever.

Council's Health and Wellbeing Department publicised our 'Mask Makers' initiative, which was aimed at individuals and community groups to help meet the demand for face coverings, masks and scrubs. Our Community Health and Wellbeing Team supplied sewing machines on loan and materials to residents in the area – including needles, pins and scissors, a small supply of fabric and patterns for face coverings and a small supply of fabric.

Thank you to all our MEA Stars who sewed hundreds of facemasks for local carers and communities through this scheme!

MEA Certificates of Recognition

In June, the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim awarded one of the first voluntary groups in the borough with a certificate of recognition for their exceptional work during COVID-19.

Councillor Peter Johnston visited the Factory Community Forum, based in Larne, who had delivered almost 3,000 food hampers to those who are vulnerable throughout the pandemic.

The Mayor said: *"It is really encouraging to hear of so many people who have rallied together to help. Just one of many very worthy recipients of this certificate in the Borough, the Factory Community Forum really are MEA Stars!"*



Council waste collectors shining examples of MEA Stars

Refuse collectors in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council were praised by the public for their generosity and good nature throughout the pandemic, with residents even showing their appreciation by leaving heart-warming messages on their bins.

Two refuse collectors in particular went above and beyond their usual duties by helping a resident in Ballymena change a flat tyre. Mark O'Loughlin and Robin McIlhagga, who work with the Ballymena Waste Team, were on duty when they encountered a lady with some car trouble.

The Good Samaritan nature of both men immediately kicked in and they helped her get the tyre replaced and continued on with their shift. Two true examples of MEA Stars!

Council's £120k Covid-19 grant scheme helps communities deliver during time of crisis

Throughout the pandemic, hundreds of families and individuals across the Ballymena, Larne and Carrickfergus areas benefited from Council's support initiatives. Council staff worked in partnership with charities, community groups and volunteers across the borough to help those struggling to put food on their tables.

Council's Group Party Leaders redirected £120,000 funding into a special COVID-19 Community Grant Scheme, tasked with supporting the work of local community groups as they provided on-the-ground assistance to those most vulnerable and at risk due to social isolation and those shielding in their homes. More than 100 community groups benefitted from the scheme, which was also supported by £71,000 funding from the Department for Communities' 'Community Support Programme'.

Communication is Key

In these challenging times, Michelin Development Limited wishes to acknowledge the work of Ballymena Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the crisis.

The pandemic created so many challenges for our families, our communities and our businesses, especially local independent businesses, where clear information on support available and how they could continue to operate was vital.

The Chamber continued to operate during the crisis, working closely with other stakeholders including The Cabinet Office, The Northern Ireland Executive, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and Invest NI.

As a result, they provided a vital communication link to ensure our businesses received the necessary information on the support and assistance available as soon as it was announced, and that the information provided was from a verifiable source.

Where possible, Michelin Development Limited has helped many of its existing clients deal with the sudden impact of lockdown, and we know that the information and support offered by the Chamber of Commerce during this period was invaluable. Michelin Development Limited is looking forward to continuing to work with Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Industry during the recovery process to ensure that the Ballymena area is at the heart of the wider economic revival.





MICHELIN DEVELOPMENT LIMITED

Michelin Development Limited is working alongside many local stakeholders including local councils, Invest NI, Ulster Bank, business centres, and the Ballymena Chamber of Commerce to help promote the area and develop the local economy.

Over the past 16 years, Michelin Development Limited has provided financial support and expertise to 142 local businesses, supporting growth plans to potentially create more than 750 new jobs in the area. In addition, since the closure of the Michelin plant in Ballymena, it has been working closely with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Invest NI to help attract major investment into the area. To date we have provided support to one multi-national company to set up an engineering design office in Ballymena, creating 28 high-quality jobs.

Long term sustainable economic growth depends on creating entrepreneurs of the future. To encourage this, Michelin Development Limited is working closely with Young Enterprise, local business centres and schools, driving initiatives to provide opportunities for young people to practise life skills that are vital in enterprise and entrepreneurship.

In the current economic climate Michelin Development Limited remains dedicated to its mission of helping local economic development and the creation of sustainable jobs.

Further information and how to apply for support can be found online at our web address below.

www.michelindevelopment.co.uk

Riada Says Thank You

Riada says thank you to essential industry workers, the NHS and our Ballymena Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their care given to the community throughout 2020.

Riada are proud to be a part of a resilient community that supports one another, through a collective drive and sheer determination to succeed in the face of adversity.

Our team would like to congratulate all of our clients, including Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for their tenacity and support of NI businesses. Services created by the Council during lockdown to support food, production and logistical services such as Bid2Win mentor and up-skill programme and BuySupplyNI connecting manufacturing companies to suppliers, have ensured a focus on sustainability, economic growth and employment.





MAKING EXCELLENCE A HABIT



Riada's experience sourcing locally for permanent and temporary staff has enabled us to fully support the recruitment needs of clients and essential industries across Ballymena, Antrim and surrounding areas for the past 20 years. Throughout 2020 Riada adopted an agile approach to running the business, making the choices that had to be made quickly and ultimately within 24 hours, the business was fully relocated to home working, enabling us to...

- Supply Mid & East Antrim Borough Council with workers to support essential services.
- Provide 1000 workers during Covid lock-down to staff dedicated PPE manufacturing facilities.
- Continue to deliver to 40 companies throughout lock-down.

Riada has successfully navigated unprecedented challenges and discovered many benefits for our staff and clients by working remotely. Our team is here to support you and your business, enabling us to collectively revive and drive economic growth across Northern Ireland.

Connect with Riada today and discover how we can deliver total recruitment solutions for your business.

www.riadaresourcing.com

Praise for our Partners

The Gallaher Trust offers its long-term support to the local community through charitable and not-for-profit partners, who have expertise in creating and delivering projects which support the Trust's objectives, and has already committed a total of £1.1 million to support 10 projects across 9 Delivery Partners over the next 5 years.

The Trust would like to recognise the work of these 'local heroes' within the wider Ballymena community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our Partners have risen to the challenges posed by Covid-19, by risk assessing their operations and developing alternative means to continue to deliver their work to the very best of their ability.

By implementing social distancing procedures, Ulster Supported Employment Limited (USEL) has continued mattress recycling, with minimal interruption, at its Woodside Road premises.

Where face-to-face contact was no longer possible, many of our Partners quickly implemented alternative on-line and telephone practices, to ensure continued support for local business start-ups and disadvantaged adults.

The Gallaher Trust is proud to be associated with our charitable and not-for-profit Partners and wishes to recognise the important contribution that they, and other similar organisations, are making within the wider Ballymena community.





SUPPORTING THE BALLYMENA COMMUNITY

ABOUT US

The Gallaher Trust is an independent charity working to promote job creation and skills development and to provide support to disadvantaged adults in the wider Ballymena community

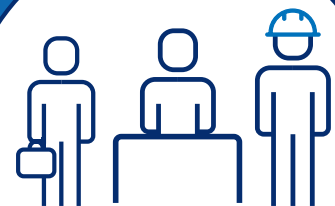
WE FOCUS ON



HELPING PEOPLE



DEVELOPING SKILLS



CREATING JOBS

OUR DELIVERY PARTNERS



TRIANGLE

NI HOSPITALITY
School of Excellence



PROUD TO BE A
PATRON



simon
community
Northern Ireland



www.thegallahertrust.org

Starting a Business During Lockdown

Celebrity florist comes back to his roots with blossoming new business in Ballymena.

A local florist who is well known in royal circles for his beautiful arrangements has taken the plunge and opened his own florist shop, Le Jardin Sauvage in Ballymena.

The Go For It Programme is part funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) programme.

Will Kerr, who left Northern Ireland at the tender age of 21, worked in London for over 15 years and has managed the floristry in Harvey Nichols and Claridge's as well as being the preferred florist for royals including Prince Charles and The Duchess of Cambridge.

Will commented, "Working in London was really amazing. I was able to learn from some of the most amazing florists and really honed my skills and my craft. I always knew that I would probably return home and when family circumstances changed it provided a great opportunity to move home and open up my own studio."

"My true passions in life were gardening and art and so they combined really well when I turned my hand to floristry. I actually grow much of much of my own foliage not far from my shop which is based in Ballymena town centre.

Will continues, "When I made the decision that I wanted to go out on my own, I really understood the market and the operational

aspects of the day-to-day running of a florists studio, however I lacked the knowledge on some of the finer details, such as financial projections, legal requirements and marketing. I got in touch with the Go For It Programme, they put me in touch with the Ballymena Business Centre and it all went from there."

"The support I received from the Go For It programme was second to none. I really still can't believe the programme is free! They really were so supportive and continue to assist me to this day. My business advisor was fantastic and was able to point me in the right direction for so many local services. After being away from home for so long, their up-to-date expert guidance was so valuable. Whilst I am a sole trader, I never felt like I was on my own, they were always at the end of the phone.

"We completed financial projections, sales forecasts and looked into legal aspects of the business including insurances. It helped me to see what I needed to put in and what was possible from the business. We completed a comprehensive competitor analysis also which assisted with pricing, product portfolio selection and gave me an in depth knowledge of what was currently available in Northern Ireland."

The Go For It programme is delivered free of charge by a team of experienced business mentors through Northern Ireland's wide network of enterprise agencies. It provides expert advice and help with developing a robust business plan to help turn ideas into a commercial enterprise.

Councillor Peter Johnson, Mayor of Mid & East Antrim Borough Council said:
"The Go For It Programme is providing accessible, free and specialist business support - giving people the confidence, contacts and the knowledge they need to start trading. I wish Will every continued success with Le Jardin Sauvage and encourage anyone thinking about starting their own business to go for it and get in touch!"

Melanie Christie Boyle MBE, Chief Executive, Ballymena Business Centre, said; "We were delighted to be able to support Will with Le Jardin Sauvage in the initial stages of his business start-up. Will's wealth of high-end experience is not something which any other florist in Northern Ireland can boast. His passion is electric and that translates into his business."

"Through the completion of his business plan with the support of Lawrence Greer, Business Advisor, we were able to finalise his business proposition and really delve deeper into what made Will different than other local florist shops. Will's creations are so amazing, like nothing currently available in the local market. I look forward to watching his business grow in Ballymena Town Centre in the near future."

If you have a business idea you'd like to develop or if you are thinking about starting a business contact the **Go For It Programme** on **0800 027 0639** or visit: **www.goforitni.com**



Will Kerr, Proprietor, Le Jardin Sauvage; Cllr Peter Johnston, Mayor, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and Melanie Christie Boyle MBE, Chief Executive, Ballymena Business Centre



Helping Businesses and the Local Community

"The outbreak of Coronavirus has been first and foremost a real human tragedy that goes far beyond our understanding. Life has changed and so too will be the way we do business. Many businesses from start-ups to established, sole traders to multi nationals have been greatly impacted, yet through these difficult times we continue to see the birth of new business start-ups as they embark upon their enterprise journey for the first time and observe the outstanding efforts of existing businesses who have gone the extra mile to support our front line workers and the most vulnerable in our community."



Ballymena Business Centre Tenant: AMS UK

"On behalf of Ballymena Business Centre I would like to thank our Business Advisors who through the use of virtual technology continued to provide vital advice and guidance to start ups and existing businesses during lockdown and at the same time managing the ever increasing demands of family commitments; thank you to our crafters in Midtown Makers Shop who used their creative skills to make personal protective masks and scrubs for our frontline workers and thank you to all our business tenants in Galgorm, Ballee and Ballykeel business centres who provided essential services and supplies



Ballymena Business Centre Tenant: MET Healthcare

across a wide range of business sectors including food, pharmaceutical, health, construction, engineering and mechanical services."

"Ballymena Business Centre is a Northern Ireland Charity and at the heart of our organisation we focus on Enterprising People, Enterprising Businesses and Enterprising Communities, never more so has this focus been so important. As we are all adjusting to the new norm we will continue to seek new ways of working and be ready to adapt our services to help rebuild our local economy. Ballymena Business Centre would like to thank Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and The Gallaher Trust for supporting our projects and helping us to provide essential support to our business community in Ballymena."

**Melanie Christie Boyle MBE,
Chief Executive, Ballymena Business Centre**

Contact Information

Ballymena Business Centre

0550 155 2092

melanie@ballymenabusiness.co.uk



Supporting financial wellbeing

In this unprecedented year, supporting the financial wellbeing of our customers and communities and their underlying local economies, is more important than ever to us at Bank of Ireland UK.

Despite these challenging times within the local and wider economy, Ballymena's local businesses have shown great resilience, solidarity and understanding of the value of working together to keep businesses and communities working in these difficult times and ensuring Ballymena remains an important retail destination.

Ballymena Chamber of Commerce has been and continues to be an essential vehicle of support to a wide range of local businesses, employers and business owners from small independent retailers and service providers to larger high street and sector brands.

Bank of Ireland UK is delighted to continue building on its longstanding partnership with Ballymena Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry and continue to play our role in supporting and enabling local businesses now and in the future as we move towards recovery.

We understand the importance of the SME and the wider business market to local economies and that is why we believe that local Ballymena businesses and key frontline staff are Bank of Ireland's chosen heroes.

For more information on **Bank of Ireland UK** visit www.bankofirelanduk.com or call into your local Ballymena Branch to speak to one of the team.



Jonathan Reilly
Branch Manager, Bank of Ireland.

Mobilising staff to reach out

firmus energy mobilises staff to reach out to its most vulnerable customers and supports initiative to make scrubs for health workers during height of Coronavirus.

Customers are at the heart of firmus energy's business so it's no surprise that at the height of the COVID-19 crisis, firmus energy mobilised staff to reach out to its most vulnerable customers as well as stepped in to support one of its very own staff in her plight to make scrubs for front line staff.

The natural gas company maintains an active register of customers who are older, registered disabled or are chronically ill through its ongoing scheme called firmus care. Staff were made available to contact those registered on the scheme, either by phone or letter, to see if they could do anything to help during the lock down period.

Customers were supported in all sorts of ways from simply providing a listening ear, to helping with groceries, prescriptions, and offering reassurance to help keep isolation at bay.

The company also donated £5,000, as well as one of its vehicles, in support a volunteer initiative called NI Scrubs, in which one of its very own employees, played, and continues to play, an integral part.

Angeline Murphy, a previous BBC sewing bee contestant and talented seamstress helped coordinate a team of seamstresses to produce and deliver scrubs for front line workers in response to real need at this critical time. To date over 100,000 items and 28,000 scrubs have been delivered through the initiative and earlier this year Angeline was awarded a Sunday Life Spirit of Northern Ireland Covid-19 Heroes award for her work.



firmus energy has been delivering natural gas into the heart of Ballymena and the surrounding area for many years. To date more than 5372 domestic and business customers have made the switch from other energy sources to natural gas and are enjoying the huge benefits that natural gas brings.

The advantages of natural gas are abundant. Whether you want constant hot water for the family; take advantage of a more efficient boiler, do your bit for the environment by choosing a lower carbon energy option; are a business one of the many who don't want to the hassle of remembering to order oil every few months, or remove the risk of running out of oil this winter; or even have a 'grand design' to convert a hot-press into a study or transform your outdoor space by freeing up space in your garden, natural gas is simply the easier choice.

It's easy to make the switch. Homes and businesses who are interested can find out more by contacting **firmus energy** on **0550 024 9000** or by registering their interest online at www.firmusenergy.co.uk.



Celebrating local heroes

Many thanks to our partners



NORTHERN
Regional College

rjcherry & son

