

BID MEMBERSHIP

The Town Centre Partnership gains its operating budget from its members. This membership fund has secured an agreement with Ballymena Borough Council to be matched pound for pound for the next three years. This allows the partnership to carry out a number of agreed activities to ensure that Ballymena Town Centre remains ahead of the game in Northern Ireland, and consolidates its position as the number one shopping destination in the province.

At the time of going to press, current contributors to funding the partnership were:

A McLean Bookmaker	Fairhill Shopping Centre	Mid Antrim Branch DUP	Tesco
Abbey Insurance	First Trust Bank	Montgomery's	The Castle Friar
Anderson, Agnew & Co.	Front Page	Nicholl Bros (Radio) Ltd.	The Gift Box at Wellington Gifts
Alexander Holdings	Gerard Rafferty	North Antrim DUP	The Mortgage Shop
B Gillan	Greers Travel Office Ltd.	Park Madden & Co.	Thomas Cook Travel
B H McKeague Opticians	Harry Clarke & Co.	Park McKillop & Company	Toals Bookmakers
Ballymena Credit Union Ltd.	Imagine	Peter Crooks & Associates	Toals Bookmakers
Blackstone Bar	Irons Agnew & Co.	Progressive Building Society	Tom Toal
Breslin, McCormick & Co.	J & R Keys Tiles Ltd.	Rainey & Gregg Property	Tower Shopping Centre
Caldwells	Knowles & Gaston	Rambo Tools	Wallace's
Cheque Point	Leiths Home Bakery	Robert Adair Jewellers	Wallace's Footwear
Couples	M A Young Optometrist Ltd.	S D Manson & Associates	Waveney Eye Care (NI) Ltd
Crane Gallery	McAuley's Bar	Shoecraft	Wellington Lighting & Zeds Beds
Creations	McGroggan's	Slemish Bar	Woodside's Pharmacy
D T Carson & Co.	McKervill Neilly Solicitors	Spences Menswear	Wyse Bye
David Bellingham Menswear	McKillens of Ballymena	Style n Sport	

TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP BRIEFS MLA'S

Once again, the Ballymena Town Centre Partnership Business Improvement District has set a precedent within Northern Ireland, having instigated a formal quarterly briefing with key MLA members at Stormont to highlight the issues that are impacting in the viability and vitality of Ballymena Town Centre. This is a significant development and recognises the necessity of lobbying our local government to ensure they are well briefed on key Town Centre issues that are a concern to us all.

The first briefing held recently, was hosted in Stormont by Ian Paisley (Jnr) MLA, and future ones will be hosted by MLA's representing the full range of political parties ensuring an all-inclusive approach. Key representatives (including Councillors and business representatives) from Ballymena BID will attend these meetings ensuring any issues impacting on Ballymena Town Centre can be brought to the attention of the Assembly.

The MLA's invited to the meeting are Rev Dr Ian Paisley, Daithi McKay, Ian Paisley Jnr, Rev Robert Coulter, Mervyn Storey and Declan O'Loan.

PJ McAvoy, Chair of Ballymena BID said,

"The combination of both local Councillors (utilising their party contacts) and representatives of the business community provides a demonstration of the strength of the Town Centre Partnership that exists in Ballymena."

"These meetings will not only be a useful platform for our own Town Centre Partnership to shape government policy for the good of Ballymena, but also for the good of the province as a whole."

For more information on BIDS contact Patricia McMullan

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AUTUMN 2008



at the centre of it
Ballymena
Town Centre Partnership

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TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN DRAFT RELEASED...

After many months of anticipation, Ballymena's new Masterplan draft is now available. The document has been compiled by consultants from the Paul Hogarth Company who have been commissioned by DSD to produce a Masterplan for Ballymena Town Centre. The purpose of this plan is to provide a feasible and realistic vision stating how the town can best utilise its assets and encourage appropriate and innovative development for the future of all aspects of the town centre's life. As part of this process they have been consulting for some time with a number of stakeholders and parties with a vested interest in the town, including much of it through The Town Centre Partnership.

Areas that the Masterplan seek to address include:

- An economically competitive and sustainable Town Centre based on sound market knowledge;
- Need to maintain diversity of retailing in the Town Centre, with a focus on retention of independent retailers
- The introduction of housing / mixed use development to create a more socially and economically balanced populace;
- An urban design form which integrates disparate areas into a clearly identified and functioning part of Ballymena Town Centre

- Improved accessibility throughout the Town Centre including provision for public transport, park & ride, pedestrian and cycle access
- An improved and enhanced evening economy;
- An improved perception of safety in the Town Centre;
- A strengthened identity;
- A safe and accessible Town Centre; and
- Strengthening of links and creation of development opportunities along the river front.

The Masterplan will offer a deliverable series of proposals that will significantly shape the future town centre. It will rely on a strong robust partnership of both the public and private sector to see it come to fruition. Ballymena is in a strong position in this regard having a pro active Town Centre Partnership, and also operating the only Business Improvement District (BID) model in the province. An exhibition of the proposals included in the draft masterplan will be on display in The Braid until Friday 3 October. The draft masterplan is also available for viewing on the DSD website, www.dsdni.gov.uk For further information on the plan, please contact the Economic Development Unit, Ballymena Borough Council on 2563 3930.



COMMUNICATION PARTNER

BLACK

MARKETING PARTNER

crime focus

Trevor Parker, Development Manager, Ballymena Retailers Against Crime (BRAC)

BRAC AND YOUTH JUSTICE AGENCY COOPERATE ON RETAIL THEFT CONFERCING.

Ballymena Retailers Against Crime, who deliver the Radio Link and safer Town initiatives in Ballymena on behalf of the Town Centre BID's Partnership, have teamed up with the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) to support the youth conferencing process that takes place when a young person has been caught committing retail theft.

Aideen McLaughlin, an Assistant Director with the Youth Justice Agency, explained what happens when a youth is referred for conferencing. "Youth conferencing is a restorative approach which brings together the young person, family, victim and community to discuss the impact of the crime. During the conference, the young person is required to face up to the consequences of his/her actions and the victim often learns why they have been targeted. The conferencing process offers the young person the opportunity to make amends to the victim and together they can agree a plan of action which repairs the harm and contributes to the prevention of re-offending."

The Youth Justice Agency is keen to encourage Managers of retail premises to take part in the youth conference. Participation by victims is

voluntary and retailers are quite often reluctant to become involved for a number of reasons including 'time involved', financial loss, and in some cases a reluctance to engage with the victim. Following an approach from the YJA to BRAC Development Manager, Trevor Parker, arrangements were put in place by the BRAC Management Committee to have a committee member attend the conference and represent the victim (retailer) when required. Trevor commented "BRAC feels it is important to engage with this excellent deterrent work as one young person deterred from this type of crime has the potential to save £100's if not £1000's of pounds in loss to the retail community over a period of years"

Current Trends

Distraction Thefts are being used whereby mostly Eastern European teams are entering retail premises and distracting staff with queries while the other team members are committing thefts. Mobile phone thefts are still taking place on retail premises where customers are being targeted while browsing goods or in check-out queues. Watch out for young people in relation to carrying out these thefts. Where the rear doors from your premises exit onto unsecured areas, make sure

they are kept locked. Several instances have occurred where suspected thieves have been spotted checking these areas.

For more information on the Radio Link system, contact the BRAC Development Manager, Trevor Parker on 2564 6050.



Ballymena BID's Safer Task Team and Safer Action Plan is delivered by Ballymena Retailers Against Crime (BRAC) as part of a Strategic Alliance Agreement between the two organisations.



The Former First Minister, the Rev and Rt Hon Dr Ian Paisley MP MLA presents award to Ald P J McAvoy, Chair of the Town Centre Partnership

A NEW CHAPTER....

Some five years ago, Ballymena Borough Council employed its first ever Town Centre Manager, Colin Neill. During that time, Colin has overseen many developments within the Town, not least the setting up of an active and enthusiastic Town Centre Partnership. The quality of work that under his guidance the partnership has achieved is exceptional. There are many examples, which would take up a whole newsletter in itself, but most recently, Ballymena won a national award for its recent improvements on accessibility in the Town.

This was recently awarded by the Association of Town Centre Management, whose Chief Executive said, "Addressing accessibility issues, particularly those relating to parking, is often a real challenge and the judges were very impressed by the inclusive approach adopted in Ballymena and by the outcome. This is a well deserved win that we would advise other initiatives across the UK to look at carefully"

He has also ensured that the newly developed Masterplan for Ballymena had robust consultation with key stakeholders in the town, and that the content addressed issues that are of concern to us all.

Colin is now leaving Ballymena to take up pastures new, and hence begins a new chapter for the Town Centre Partnership. Colin has made a significant difference to Ballymena Town Centre, we wish him well in his future occupation and he will be welcome back in Ballymena anytime.

Ald PJ McAvoy - Chair Town Centre Partnership

DID YOU KNOW**We've got you covered...**

Ballymena CCTV has in excess of 50 cameras - believed to be the largest non-police system of its kind anywhere in the province.

**MARKETING FOCUS...
Creating a Customer Database**

To effectively target your services or products you need to know who your customers are. Everyone in business wants more information about the people they want to influence be they customers or constituents. What you need is a customer database.

Businesses often pay for information but the basic information needed for your marketing may have slipped through your hands if you haven't yet compiled a customer database. The importance of having a customer database is recognized as essential if companies are to communicate with their existing customers. A database may be very simple, - containing the customer or potential customers name, address and contact details, or may contain more meaningful information, such as age, reason for purchase or distance traveled to visit. A simple database can be compiled in-house using software like Excel whereas specialist help may be required for a more complex database. Its important to start with a list of all the information you expect to get from your data base, this may be your top 100 customers, or what percentage of contacts have bought into a specific promotional offer. If you spend the time determining what information you want out of your database it is easier to determine what needs to be input.

CAPTURING THE DATA

Capturing the data is easier in the B2B than B2C sector, but in the retail sector, stores need to think of ways to obtain the information. One of the most tried and tested is by introducing a customer loyalty scheme where the customer completes a specifically designed questionnaire. Customer comment cards are also useful and have the added advantage of capturing customer's ideas for improving your business.

COMPILING THE DATA

Existing customer information whether manual or computerized may be used to build a database. Useful information may include:

- Contact details, name, address,

telephone, fax numbers, email address.

- Purchase history.

CLEANING THE DATA

Every business should have a customer database containing relevant information. These should be updated and "cleaned" regularly to ensure the data is accurate. If your data hygiene is poor your ability to communicate with the right customers is greatly reduced. Ensure compliance with your legal obligations, particularly those relating to the Data Protection Act 1998, and electronic marketing. Customers should be given the option to opt out of being contacted by telephone, fax, post or email. It is important that those who opt are removed from your database.

Although databases have been used for customer data in traditional marketing for a long time, the database marketing approach is differentiated by the fact that much more consumer data is maintained, and that the data is processed and used in new and more sophisticated ways. Database marketing is a systematic approach to the gathering, consolidation, and processing of consumer data (both for customers and potential customers) that is maintained in a company's database. Among other things, the database may be used to learn more about customers (profiling), select target markets for specific campaigns, compare customers' value to the company, and provide more specialized offerings for customers.

USING YOUR DATABASE

As with all good ideas they are only of use when actually used.... So don't delay anymore, start a database today and use it.

**JOY BLACK ACIM
BLACK ADVERTISING | DESIGN**

employment focusLabour Relations Agency, www.businesslink.gov.uk**How to manage continual short-term absence due to a medical condition**

If an employee is continually absent for short periods due to either a single genuine health complaint or other genuine health complaints, which are connected to a medical cause, the employer can dismiss them for capability reasons (their skills, abilities, health or any other physical or mental quality). In these situations, the employer must have a medical opinion on the chances of recovery, the likelihood of the unsatisfactory attendance pattern continuing and how long this is likely to last. A reasonable approach would be to treat these situations in the same way as someone with a long-term medical problem.

Statutory dismissal procedure

If the employer is considering dismissing an employee because of their capability, they must follow the dismissal procedure described below to avoid penalties at an industrial tribunal. The procedure below only outlines the minimum steps, which must be followed by law. Following this procedure in a dismissal situation does not guarantee that an industrial tribunal will find the dismissal 'fair'. As well as following these steps, the employer should act fairly and reasonably in deciding whether to dismiss an employee.

Step 1 Statement of grounds for action and invitation to meeting

- The employer must set out in writing the employee's alleged conduct or characteristics, or other circumstances, which lead him or her to consider dismissing them.
- The employer must send the statement (or a copy of it) to the employee

and invite the employee to come to a meeting to discuss the matter.

Step 2 The meeting

- The meeting must take place before action is taken.
- The meeting must not take place unless:
 - a the employer has explained the reasons included in the statement to the employee; and
 - b the employee has had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to that information.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to go to the meeting.
- After the meeting, the employer must tell the employee his or her decision and tell them about their right to appeal against the decision if they are not satisfied with it.

Step 3 Appeal

- If the employee wants to appeal, he or she must tell the employer.
- If the employee tells the employer that they want to appeal, the employer must invite them to another meeting.
- The employee must take all reasonable steps to go to the meeting.
- The appeal meeting does not have to take place before the dismissal or other action is taken.
- After the appeal meeting, the employer must inform the employee of his or her final decision.

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Over and Out

Ballymena RadioLink scheme currently operates with around 170 radios - the largest daytime economy network of its kind in the province