

Bangor receives ATCM Best Practice Award

Bangor & Holywood Town Centres Ltd has been awarded the Northern Ireland Association of Town Centre Management award for 'Managing the Evening Economy.'

Martin Blackwell, Regional Development Director for ATCM and Chair of the judging panel, confirmed, "The standard of entries in Northern Ireland, which is one of 12 competitions across the UK, was remarkable. It really does highlight the quality and variety of projects being undertaken in our towns and cities, through Town Centre Management, to enhance our town centres for the benefit of all. To win an Award is a great achievement and well deserved. This is particularly true of N Ireland as the number of entries was the highest in the UK to date".

The Evening Economy project in Bangor came about following a debate within the Town Centre Management Board. Town Centre Management initiated a conference to bring together all parties interested in the evening economy to work together on

eradicating the town's image of being unsafe and dominated by anti-social behaviour.

The conference brought key agencies together to agree on collective ownership of the evening economy. Town Centre Management agreed to manage the partnership, which was formed from the conference to improve the town's evening economy.

The outcome of the conference was the 'Agenda for Change.' This provided a specific plan for future action and a shared vision for tackling the issues. The conference brought together local publicans and provided the catalyst for the creation of the Bangor & District Local Vintners Association.

Garda officers from Dublin were invited to Bangor to discuss their experiences in the Temple Bar area. They shared their view on best practice with Bangor Police officers and this in turn helped them change their night time policing tactics.



From left to right: Dennis Ogborn TCM Board Member, David Brown NDBC, Martin Blackwell ATCM Regional Director, Jeremy Adams PSNI and Ricky Donnelly Chairman of the BDLVA

The 'Agenda for Change' has created a vision for the future where previously nothing existed. It has helped in establishing a number of sub-projects, which are still ongoing. These projects include - Licensed door staff, a 'Proof of Age Card', CCTV, Radio linked door staff, late night town centre buses and high visibility jackets for PSNI officers.

Town Centre Manager Board member Dennis Ogborn said "This award is not just for the Town Centre Management Company, it is recognition of the four years of hard work that has gone into making this project happen and for all the partnerships who have come together for the benefit of the town and are making a significant step in tackling anti-social behaviour which plagued our town in the late 1990's. We are delighted to receive this award, which shows we are making steps in the right direction to tackling the issues. We know we cannot afford to stop now and we must continue the process."

Northern Bank announce principal sponsorship of the Bangor Business Awards 2006

The Northern Bank has announced that it is to be principal sponsor of the 2006 Bangor Business Awards.

Making the announcement, Senior Branch Manager of the North Down Area, David Croft said, "We believe that Bangor has an exciting future and we at the Northern Bank are here to help local business people fulfil their ambitions. The Bangor Business Awards recognises the strength of local business talent and we are delighted to be principal sponsors in 2006."

By creating mutually beneficial relationships with local communities Northern Bank is a major force in assisting local innovative business owners with the development of their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Evan Ward, President of Bangor Chamber of Commerce said, "We are especially pleased that the Northern Bank will be this year's principal sponsor of the Bangor

Business Awards. We aim to ensure that each year the Awards are bigger and better than before. With the Northern Bank as principal sponsor we are confident that businesses will gain added benefit from entering the Awards and it further underscores the Bank's commitment to the commercial development of Bangor."

The Bangor Business Awards is a joint initiative between Bangor Chamber of Commerce and Bangor & Holywood Town Centres Ltd. The Awards working group is made up of local business managers and agencies focused on promoting best business practice.

The Bangor Business Awards Gala Dinner will take place on Thursday 18th May 2006 at the Clondeboye Lodge. Further information can be obtained by phoning **028 9147 9651** or from the TCM web site, www.bangorhollywoodtcm.co.uk.

Spring clean Bangor and Holywood

North Down Borough Council, Bangor and Holywood Chambers of Commerce together with Town Centre Management are planning a spring clean of both town centres and are calling on businesses to join in. Councillors have instructed officers to focus their budget to ensure that the maximum clean up can be achieved during the week of 22nd May. Businesses are being asked to take a look at their premises and ensure that it is clean and tidy and presents their brand in the most positive way.

Small shops could disappear in 10 years

A report by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Small Shops has claimed that the future of small and independent retailers is looking bleak and they are concerned that many may cease trading by 2015.

The group made up of 73 MP's from across the parties has said that if smaller stores are squeezed out, there would be a number of social, economic and environmental consequences on local communities as it views small convenience shops as the glue that binds communities together. It added that the elderly, the less affluent and people without transport would be worst hit. Women will also suffer as they make up the majority of small shop workers. The Report, High Street Britain: 2015, claims particularly vulnerable are convenience stores, grocers, newsagents and petrol forecourts.

Retail in the United Kingdom

- UK retail sales totalled £246bn in 2004 - that's more than the combined economies of Switzerland and Ireland
- Half of the 278,630 shops in the UK are owned and managed by a sole trader; 103,000 have fewer than 5 employees

- The UK retail sector employs 3.1 million people, supplying 1 in every 9 jobs
- Retail is the largest employer in rural England, providing 16% of jobs

The report highlights that between 1960-1990, 15% of small rural settlements experienced the closure of their last general store or food shop and between 1991-1997, 4000 shops closed. Many local shops have now become convenience stores to compete with superstores but as the superstores expand even more, shops are then faced with another battle trying to expand, which many cannot.

Many small and independent retailers are concerned that large retailers with more funds are drowning out their voices and fear that should current trends continue they will not be able to compete against bigger retailers.

To halt store closures a number of recommendations have been made:

- Suspend takeovers until plans to secure the diversity of the sector are brought forward

- Establish a regulator
- Bring in a comprehensive code of practice
- Revise retail property market
- Encourage transformation of Post Office network
- Tax system review
- Give local people greater say in decision-making process
- Develop regeneration units in all local authorities

The Forum of Private Businesses, which represent 25,000 small to medium businesses felt that the findings of the report cannot be ignored and said "the government needs to look at the inexorable growth of supermarkets to try to come to some kind of control."

They added, "Locally, it needs to look at things like car parking regimes which are far too aggressive, far too awkward and far too expensive, and that is having a very damaging impact on town centres and independent High Street shops."

The report however has not found favour with everyone, British Retail Consortium, Director General, Kevin Hawkins, said:

"We are disappointed that the Committee has not grasped the realities of modern retailing, nor have they understood all the burdens small retailers face with regulation.

"The Committee is trying to turn the clock back and reverse some well established trends in consumer shopping habits. Over the past 30 years or so, supermarkets and other large multiple retailers have grown and become the dominant form of shopping because they have met the changing needs of their customers. Consumers have clearly voted with their feet.

"Nevertheless, there are still many thousands of independent specialist butchers, bakers and other food shops that are alive and well throughout the UK and most of them will still be around in 2015.

"The secret of success for the small retailer in what is a highly competitive market, is not to try to compete head on with larger rivals, but to offer consumers something different, something better and something targeted very precisely at a particular portion of the market."

Tesco also rejected the report saying that people use both small shops and supermarkets but at different times and they also felt that there is always room in thriving markets for anyone who satisfies customers as it is the consumer who is the best regulator.

The report is published just three weeks before the Office of Fair Trading rules whether to refer the grocery sector to the competition commission.

Spring Clean Week Monday 22nd - Friday 26th May 2006

Spring Clean Week is a Council initiative working with Tidy Northern Ireland and Town Centre Management.

The emphasis of the week is to encourage residents, businesses, church groups, community groups, Scout Association and other groups to become actively involved in helping to clean their local environment. By organising clean-ups and litter picks this is a great opportunity for residents or businesses to really make an impact in their local area.

The campaign will be supported by your council, who will supply rubbish bags, gloves litter pickers, and prizes.

Take this opportunity to spring clean your local area and contact North Down Borough Council to express an interest and find out more about getting involved.

For more information telephone The Environmental Health Department, Bangor Town Hall on 02891 270371, EXT 8070.

Help make a difference to your area.
If you are interested and have an idea for the week please return this slip:

Name

Address

Organisation/group

Contact: North Down Borough Council, Environmental Health Department, Town Hall, The Castle, Bangor, Co. Down Tel: 02891270371 EXT 8070.

Christmas 2005 a success but a warning for retailers



Retail Sales in the UK during December rose 2.6 percent on a like-for-like basis from December 2004 when sales fell 0.4 percent. Sales picked up strongly in the week before Christmas, and continued in the two days of the post Christmas Sales, but then dropped back markedly. Shoppers were value conscious and took advantage of the widespread promotions and sales discounts.

December 2005 saw the best performance for retailers for that month since 2001. Many retailers have shown signs of recovery with Iceland, Monsoon and Dixon's reporting healthy profits. Marks and Spencer reported that sales for Christmas were 'particularly strong.' They reported that like for like sales in the 13 weeks to the end of December were up 2.9% on the same period of 2004.

British Retail Consortium director general Kevin Hawkins has warned retailers that although sales were up the "first quarter of 2006 looks challenging, despite being up against weak comparatives in 2005." Retailers should expect to see higher energy, fuel, rent and rate costs and wage costs.

These results were a lot better than what some experts originally forecasted and although they represent the UK as a whole, Town Centre Management asked a number of retailers to participate in a confidential retail survey to get an idea how businesses in North Down performed.

The survey has given Town Centre Management a better understanding of the local economy and the issues that influence it. It has highlighted areas where the town was strong and where it performed badly whilst identifying a number of possible opportunities that could be developed to benefit local traders. The feedback complimented those results published from KPMG whose Head of Retail Helen Dickson identified that with Christmas falling on a Sunday it gave businesses and extra days' trading in the Christmas week. She also made the point that retailers were not just blanket selling to shift surplus stock, they were in fact targeting promotions on specific lines in order to drive in footfall.

A number of Bangor retailers were involved in a similar scheme by participating in the Bangor 24/7 voucher booklet which helped bring in extra footfall and income to the town.

Similar to the UK results, retailers in North Down recorded a better than expected Christmas period. Some retailers reported performance being down by up to 25% to others reporting an increase of up to 50%. One retailer saw an increase of up to 125% on last year. The factors identified above and a dryer Christmas than in previous years helped.

Christmas for many in retailers was a slow starter, with a number saying that the town didn't get busy until two weeks before and two days post Christmas, with a number benefiting greatly from opening on Boxing Day. Although Christmas was better than last year and sales were up, turnover for the year in general was down due, to some heavy discounting and increased competition online.

Participants were also asked what areas could be improved upon to make Christmas 2006 better. A variety of responses received. The most popular reply was that the town was lacking in festive feeling and Christmas events to attract footfall into the town. Many felt the Christmas decorations in the town were better than previous years. However they would still more like to see more decorations throughout the town and in the streets just off the main shopping vicinity.

The lack of appropriate car parking spaces was also a major issue for North Down retailers with a large number of retailers. They felt that more spaces could be provided with the one-hour on street parking limit being properly enforced.

The Queens Parade development remains one that Bangor retailers would like to begin sooner rather than later. The benefits that it will bring in terms of improved footfall and income will benefit them greatly.

Retail News

Matalan

Sales were down 5.5% in the ten weeks to 7th January, although this improved on a 10.6% fall for the previous nine weeks.

Next

A 3.2% fall in like-for-like sales for the five months to the end of December was balance by a rise in key areas. Sales from the Next Directory website and mail order service, as well as from new stores, rose nearly 10% compared with 2004.

New Look

Saw overall profits increase to 14%, thanks to new store openings and the internet.

JJB Sports

Reported a 2% rise in like-for-like sales for Christmas and New Year Sales.

JD Sports

Beat market expectations by unveiling a 3.7% rise in like for like sales during the 14 weeks to 7th January. The cold snap boosted the demand for winter clothing.

Monsoon

Like-for-like sales jumped 5% in the six weeks to 7th January.

John Lewis

Trumpeted a 7% rise in like-for-like sales, excluding Christmas Eve. Post Christmas sales rose 4% in the first week of its end of year sale.

Marks and Spencer

Enjoyed a particularly strong Christmas. Like-for-like sales rose 2.9% in the 13 weeks to the end of December. Clothes sales grew 1.9%, though even stronger growth was seen in food sales, which rose almost 8%.

Woolworths

Maximised its profits by holding off on price cuts. Same stores fell 0.8% in the six weeks to 14th January, an improvement on the 3.9% fall in sales for the 50 weeks to that date.

HMV

Like-for-like sales fell 2.7% compared to the 6.4% rise seen a year ago. Cutting prices had squeezed profit margins

Body Shop

Same store sales in the UK and Ireland rose just 1% during the Christmas period, down from a 5% rise the year before.

Boots

Like-for-like sales fell just 0.7% rather than the predicted 1.4%. Total sales including new stores rose 1%.

Tesco

Saw a 5.7% surge in same store sales for the seven weeks to 7th January. Total group sales grew 11.5%. Online sales reached a milestone with tesco.com racking up a record one million orders in the four weeks before Christmas.

Thorntons

Total sales fell 6.2%, with like-for-like sales falling 4.8% in the 28 weeks to 7th January.

Hollywood Focus

Local business undergoes a facelift

Walker Communications, based in High Street in Hollywood has pleased local residents with their freshly painted and updated building front. The local advertising and design agency appreciates the importance of their outward appearance as it is essential that it makes a positive first impression with new and prospective customers.

Many locals have passed comment on the difference a coat of paint can make, and Deirdre Thomas - Chairperson of the Hollywood Conservation Group has also voiced her delight at the paint work - 'Walker Communications have set an excellent example with this investment in their property by simply painting their building front. This is just the type of activity we encourage at the Conservation Group as such a simple task can make such a difference to the overall look of the High Street - we would however encourage any paint work to be co-ordinated with the surroundings of the particular premises'.

Peter Walker, Managing Director of Walker Communications is delighted with the response that his premises have received. 'It is great to hear the positive feedback we have received during our refurbishment and if this encourages other business' to follow suit then I will have been delighted to be of assistance!'



A first for Hollywood and Northern Ireland

A flagship eco-friendly housing development has recently been completed at Abbey Place in Hollywood. Developed by Habinteg Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd, the project places Hollywood at the forefront of the 'green revolution', being the first development of its kind in Northern Ireland to be awarded the 'Excellent Eco Homes' standard by the Build Research Establishment.

On the surface, Abbey Place, has many of the common characteristics found in Habinteg developments up and down the country i.e. houses are finished to a high quality and are suitable for a wide range of residents. There are 29 dwellings on the scheme, four of which are specifically tailored to accommodate wheelchair users. Beneath the surface, quite literally, the development is anything but typical. A 14,000 litre tank has been submerged in the grounds of the site to harvest rain water for use in washing machines, toilet cisterns and garden taps, and solar roof panels provide the dwellings with hot water. During construction, no ozone depleting substances were used and all elements within the home are geared towards minimising the overall effect on the environment. The development also boasts

innovative features such as low energy interior and exterior lighting, bicycle sheds, home offices, drying areas and additional storage for recyclable waste. Habinteg has planted a variety of trees and shrubs in the grounds to improve the development's ecological value and introduced a number of wildlife boxes.

Commenting on the new Abbey Place development David Duly, Chief Executive of Habinteg said: "We are delighted to be involved in this particular development. It is one that is both innovative in its design and environmentally conscious in its concept. However, the most important element of Abbey Place is that it will provide residents with the quality housing that they both require and deserve."

Abbey Place is not without its history and in fact, through its unique design, has a degree of irony attached to it. During the severe storms that hit Northern Ireland in 1998 the development which previously occupied the site had its roof torn off. Now the natural elements are being positively harnessed to improve the quality of life for future residents.

World beating ad campaign scoops two IPA awards for life saving work

Multi Award-Winning agency Ardmore Advertising scooped two of the coveted accolades at the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) annual Effectiveness Awards held at Belfast City Hall and hosted by special guest, Piers Morgan just before Christmas.

Ardmore won a Silver Award and the Best New Client Special Prize for their life saving work on the Fire Authority campaign, titled 'Writings on the Wall'. The Hollywood-based agency was only one of three agencies in Northern Ireland to be short-listed from an original list of 48 entries and only one of two agencies to receive a Silver Award, the highest accolade to be received by a Northern Ireland agency. Entries must categorically prove that the campaigns worked with detailed submissions scrutinised by some of the UK's most experienced marketing professionals. The judging panel was chaired by Lord Heseltine, the former Deputy Prime Minister.

Peter Craig, Assistant Chief Fire Officer of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service was delighted with the campaign's success: "The "Writings on the Wall" campaign consistently delivered advertising awareness when independently researched, and more importantly, it prompted action among the people of Northern Ireland. Together we have delivered a record breaking campaign with the lowest death rate per million in the world."

He went on to say: "The campaign showed extraordinary results, including a 14% decrease in the total number of household fires (Year on Year) and also a 12% decrease of overall fire injuries. Also, 60% of respondents were influenced to take action to do something practical to prevent fire in the home as a direct result of the advertising. This is a very valued and important win not only for our advertising agency but also for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service as a whole".

Stephen Roycroft, Board Account Director at Ardmore Advertising was also extremely proud of the win: "We are absolutely thrilled at winning another highly respected industry award, especially when it focuses on the effectiveness of the campaign. This is our third IPA award in recent years. The 'Writings on the Wall' Campaign is essential in educating the public on Fire Safety behaviour and reducing the number of tragedies in the Province. We had the huge task of making the public sit up and take notice, which we feel we did effectively with powerful creative that really reached home and made people change their routines and take precautions. It's been a privilege to have worked on advertising that has had a profound effect on many peoples lives. My colleagues in the Agency are justifiably proud of this lifesaving work".

Ardmore Advertising who are based in Hollywood, boast an impressive number of

accolades to their name including the only agency in Northern Ireland to be awarded a Shark Award, an annual international advertising festival that rewards the cream of creative talent and celebrates the best work in broadcast advertising from Ireland and around the world. Ardmore won the Shark award in 2004 for their hard-hitting TV campaign for the Fire Authority - Escape Plan.



Ardmore sponsor Ulster lock

Account Managers Joanne Curran and Stephen Morris from award winning advertising agency Ardmore Advertising, are pictured celebrating the recent sponsorship announcement of Ulster Rugby player Justin Harrison at Ulster's training ground Newforge Country Club.

Ulster Rugby signed Harrison on a three year contract at the beginning of this season from the NSW Waratahas in Australia. A highly experienced and passionate player with a no holds barred approach to the game Harrison has a reputation as a brilliant line-out technician and at over 2 metres in height, is a purpose built lock.



Two Town Walk Sponsored litter pick of coastal path

The Chambers of Commerce are seeking enthusiastic walkers to embark on the "two town walk" sponsored litter pick along the coastal path on the evening of 25th May.

One group will leave Bangor and another from Holywood picking litter as they walk - all equipment provided! They will meet at Helens Bay Fort for a picnic snack and travel on to their final destination by train. The walk is expected to start at 6.00pm and finish around 9.30pm. Minimum entry sponsorship will be £10 and proceeds will go to Marie Curie Cancer Care. Chamber of Commerce members and the business community are invited to join in and make it a fun night out with their colleagues. Application forms can be obtained from the town centre management office at **028 9147 9651**.

Feherty Travel and Woolwich score gold

In the recently judged North Down Tidy Business Awards, Feherty Travel and the Woolwich Building Society scored the top marks and won the much-coveted Gold standard award for their clean premises and environmental practice. Both companies impressed the Tidy Business Awards judges with their regular checklist and in the way that they dealt with waste. To enter the Tidy Business Awards call Betsy Gray at NDBC on **028 9127 0811**.

Setting the Record Straight

Bangor Business Community was treated to a view of the plans for the future of the town on Wednesday 15th March 2006. The event, organised by the Bangor Chamber of Commerce detailed the town's current situation and outlined issues that will affect trade over the next few years. For the full story visit www.bangorhollywoodtcm.co.uk

Bangor 24/7 voucher booklet draws to a close



As the brighter mornings and nights signal an end to the winter, they also signal an end to the Christmas and Winter Voucher Scheme managed by Town Centre Management in partnership with, North Down Borough Council Marketing, Tourism and Events Team, Bangor Chamber of Commerce and local speciality retailers.

The project was created to extend Bangor's catchment area and attract new visitors to the town. The general feedback is that it has been beneficial for all the participating retailers as it allowed their business brand to be seen by people from Lisburn to Carrickfergus. Customers have also benefited from receipt of the number of great discounts that were on offer.

All the businesses that participated found the scheme to be worthy of doing again and are pleased with the number of vouchers they received. Unfortunately few retailers managed the process of holding on to returned vouchers as instructed which limits accurate analysis. Many put this down to staff being too busy to pay attention to their instruction.

Loren Wilson, the manager of Spice said "the scheme allowed us to get our speciality food brand seen by a wider audience. This extra footfall benefited not just those who participated in the booklet but all the retailers, as it has helped in bringing extra visitors into the town when they were needed. The concept of working with others strengthens the impact of any marketing scheme and should be encouraged again".

Rosemary Robinson of Robinson's Jewellers who also participated in the scheme felt that "...the voucher booklet has

highlighted to people outside of Bangor the number of quality retailers and specialist independent shops that Bangor has to offer, some of which local people may not have previously known existed. I'm still amazed at the number of people who come into our jewellers and say, "I didn't know you were here - how long have you been open?" and I tell them 25 years!"

The Christmas and winter scheme was a pilot project. The four months it has run has been a learning curve and has highlighted areas that can be improved upon. It has also exposed changes that can be taken to build on the initial success. These focus on issues of ensuring broad distribution and strengthening the offer. All parties agreed that there must be consistent targeted discounting for the scheme to pull in fresh footfall. By just targeting local business profits will be compromised as it won't increase turnover.

The early indicator of take-up came at Menary's when they selected the winner of their prize draw. Just over 500 slips had been left in the store and the lucky winner secured a £500 gift token from the store manager. A very pleasant addition to someone's Christmas stocking!

Due to the positive response from all the participating retailers, the Town Centre Management office will be exploring further collaborative marketing exercises, so make sure you keep a look out and get strength from working in partnership.

For more information on Town Centre Management projects, visit the website www.bangorhollywoodtcm.co.uk or contact **028 9147 9651**.

£81 million retail opportunity

The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan analysis has shown North Down to have the 3rd largest amount of expenditure in the Belfast Metropolitan area and is 4th in terms of retail turnover. The borough has a net loss of £13 million however what urgently needs to be addressed is the £81 million taken out of the borough and spent in other towns and cities.

Much of the information below is already established from anecdotal evidenced and common observation. The North Down Retail Audit has substantiated those observations with facts and consolidated various items of research only recently in the public domain and is divided into three sections covering the main urban centres within North Down.

Bangor

- 55% of the town's occupation falls into the service sector. The UK average for services is 30%.
- Comparison goods make up 23% of the town's retail sector this is in comparison to the UK average of 49%.
- 13% of units in Bangor are vacant which is just above the UK average of 11%.

Holywood

- 64% of the towns retail units are services - double the UK average.
- Vacancy rates are in line with the UK average.
- Services, eateries and beauty stylists dominate the town. Holywood exchange with IKEA is bringing in bulky comparison goods, non-bulky should be targeted for the new units at Holywood Gateway and the potential redevelopment of Pattons Lane.

The North Down Retail Audit has outlined the current retail situation within the borough. It shows that while we are particularly strong in the provision for services in both Bangor & Holywood we have a major weakness in the provision for comparison goods. This lack of comparison good variety is at the source of North Down's leakage. It undermines its attraction as a retail destination despite the quality of the immediate catchment area.

The dominant performance of the service sector is something that needs to be addressed and a balance found for the future prosperity and economic sustainability of the town centres.

Visit www.bangorhollywoodtcm.co.uk for the full report.

	Available Expenditure	Outflow	Retained Expenditure	Inflow	Retail Turnover
Carrickfergus BC Total	£124m	£64m	£60m	£13m	£7m
Castlereagh BC Total	£237	£141	£96	£122	£218
North Down Total	£307	£81	£226	£68	£294
Newtownabbey Total	£267	£96	£171	£117	£288
Lisburn Total	£378	£94	£284	£142	£426
Belfast Total	£863	£190	£673	£481	£1154
BMAP Total	£2176		£1510		£2453

Bangor provides a bright, cheery welcome to visitors



The Ulster in Bloom Judges for 2005, in which Bangor came first in the in the Large town Category, have released their comments and explained why Bangor won the award.

The judges expressed their delight at the bright, cheery floral welcome Bangor gives visitors and commented on how well the town centre was highly decorated.

Market Street was described as a floral treat and judges were delighted at the clear evidence of commercial involvement in the floral displays.

To further strengthen Bangor's position as Number One Large Town for floral displays, Town Centre Management will once again be running its hanging basket scheme.

Need flower baskets for your building?

If yes then please contact the town centre management office at the earliest opportunity to make your order ready for the end of May and early June when the baskets go up. Contact Gary Montgomery at 028 9147 9651.

Evening Economy Partnership explores Safer Streets Project

A delegation of North Down evening economy participants recently travelled to Burnley in Lancashire to view the operation of a project designed to reduce nighttime assaults and acts of criminal damage. The very successful project is called BAND (Burnley Against Night-time Disorder) and has the full backing of the Home Office and local council. It is now regarded as an example of "Best Practice" throughout the UK and is being emulated across the country.

Burnley is a town similar in size to Bangor with a population around 80,000 people. Its town centre attracts up to 7,000 revellers on a weekend night and this is policed by an average of 12 police officers. The delegation was made up of 2 Bangor based publicans, 2 town centre ward councillors, a PSNI Inspector, the Borough Licensing Officer, Community Safety Officer and Town Centre Manager. They were met by their counterparts and had the opportunity to attend a meeting of the BAND project. This consisted of Lancashire Police officers, local publicans, Burnley Council licensing officer and town centre manager.

The BAND project uses the publicans "right to refuse entry" in an organised manner to create banning orders from all premises within the town centre for those who perpetrate assaults and criminal damage.

Convicted individuals may be banned for a period of 3 months to 2 years depending on the severity of their offence. The partnership arrangement has considerably reduced criminal offences within the town centre and generated fresh investment in all aspects of the town centre. A recently completed development contains the first residential accommodation created in Burnley town centre for over thirty years.

Lisa Durkin, Burnley Town Centre Manager said: "The subtle use of a civil law remedy over the established criminal law route has driven positive change and has overcome the perception that the law works in favour of the perpetrator not the victim."

The Burnley Licensing Officer, Mick Armfield, went on to say: "The BAND project has created a bond between council, publicans and police that never existed in the past. There is a much healthier understanding on what the collective aspirations are and by working together we make all the jobs that bit more satisfying."

Representing Bangor town centre publicans both Ricky Donnelly of Bar15 and Martin Wolsey of Wolseys expressed their support of the project although Ricky Donnelly did emphasise that: "The night life in Burnley is very different from Bangor with all participants seemingly involved in an

unofficial pub crawl ending up in the biggest night club at midnight and staying out until 3.30. The volume drank and resulting antics are not replicated in Bangor. Those visiting Bangor will normally have a favourite bar reflecting their taste in music and group of friends. Nevertheless, we all learnt something from the visit and I would be recommending to colleagues in Bangor that we explore the use of BAND to encourage a safer town centre."

The BAND project is one of a number of high profile partnership based community safety initiatives targeting those using the town centres, particularly at night. Other initiative's will include the continuation of the night bus service, a robust scheme to reduce access to bars and clubs by underage drinkers, a personal safety promotional campaign to reduce the risk of individuals using the town centre, the further development of CCTV and informational campaigns to reduce the culture of binge drinking.



From left to right: Ricky Donnelly Bar15, Bryan Gault PSNI Inspector, Councillor Wesley Irvine, Faz Hamod Lancashire Police, David Brown NDBC Licensing Officer, Councillor Harry Dunlop, Martin Magee Community Safety Officer, Stephen Dunlop Bangor Town Centre Manager, Lisa Durkin Burnley Town Centre Manager, Mick Armfield Burnley Licensing Officer and Martin Wolsey of Wolsey's bar and restaurant.

Bangor baker is online pioneer

A Bangor bakery business is 'flour-ishing' thanks to internet technology. Paul Getty, of the Heatherlea bakery on Main Street, is part of a ground-breaking cluster of bakers across Northern Ireland who share information and ideas electronically, online, to help improve business performance.

The cluster, who call themselves Artisan Bakers, use the Online Smart Community to stay in touch and share ideas. "This resource has the potential to inject a significant new dynamic into the business community in Northern Ireland. It is currently being piloted amongst 30 local clusters involving over 700 individual participants," explains Bob Barbour, chief executive of the Centre for Competitiveness which facilitates the Online Smart Community tool, jointly supported by Invest NI and the Government Unit.

Bob continued "The Online Smart Community is a virtual tool which enables geographically dispersed groups or networks to use a secure resource to share information and ideas and exchange documentation with relative ease, and at no cost, at the touch of a button."

"The Artisan Bakers have used it extremely effectively to the point where they are now selling each other's product ranges in each other's shops, are breaking into new markets and are on the verge of launching a joint product range."

Paul Getty says the cluster he is involved with has yielded real results for him and the other members. "Decisions in a complex project have to be made continually. Postponing them until everyone assembles slows things



down. With the use of the Online Smart Community we have been able to take prompt decisions on joint marketing and new product development. It's extremely easy and effective to use." More information on the Online Smart Communities can be obtained by contacting 028 9073 7950 or at www.cforc.org