



DISTRICT BULLETIN

NORTHERN DISTRICT

LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS FOR NFRN MEMBERS

December 2018 to February 2019

As one season ends and another begins, it is time to put away the BBQs, sunglasses and ice lollies and bring out the log kindling, gloves and hats - and maybe even sledges!

Towards the end of October, we had our first open day at Smiths News in Newcastle. This was an opportunity for retailers to see for themselves the process of newspaper and magazine distribution, speak to the management and express any concerns they may have had. There was also a trade show running from 10am to 2pm. The day was a huge success, as you will see from pages 4 and 5, and we hope to do similar events in the future.

In my last bulletin, I spoke about the demise of Pass My Parcel. This has certainly had a big impact on our shop as the new courier, DHL, does not handle Amazon parcels. Consequently, our parcel volume has decreased dramatically. However, I have recently learned that DHL has a number of exciting new suppliers coming on board very shortly and, hopefully, this will get us back to the sort of volumes we were doing previously. If any retailers out there are not currently offering any parcel services, then you should join this growing industry, as more and more people continue to shop online year by year.

Winter is, of course, an excellent time to promote home news delivery (HND). The Federation currently has a number of promotions where POS and leaflets are available to entice new customers over the coming winter months. You can obtain these simply by phoning NFRN Connect on 0800 121 6376.

Finally, as the dark nights approach, make sure you are well prepared and have all the winter essentials available. I would also recommend good LED lighting on the outside of your premises, as well as having suitable CCTV installed to ensure the safety of yourself, your staff and your shop.

On a lighter note, I have ordered two foot of snow, so have your sledges and shovels at the ready and the tills will be ringing. Ho ho ho!

Graeme Pentland
District President



NFRN CONNECT FINDS PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF...

NFRN Connect's persistence has certainly paid off for one member from the Northern district this quarter who had been subject to significant issues surrounding late papers from Menzies Distribution.

It was back in June that the member contacted NFRN Connect, wanting to take advantage of the team now being able to claim restitution on his behalf.

Despite the news wholesaler consistently arriving late at this member's shop and the Press Distribution Charter (PDC) guidelines on restitution being quite clear, NFRN Connect was aghast to hear back that the claim was being rejected on the grounds that the newspapers had only arrived 20 minutes after the required delivery time (RDT).

Needless to say, Connect was in no mood to back down and reminded the news wholesaler of the obligations it had agreed to when it signed up to the PDC charter.

Eventually, and following several challenges to senior management within Menzies, the news wholesaler agreed that it had breached the PDC guidelines and agreed to pay the member the full amount of £224.95 that had been claimed.

If you experience a similar issue and feel that you are due restitution, then please ensure that you contact NFRN Connect at the earliest opportunity on 0800 121 6376 or by emailing connect@nfrn.org.uk. One of the team will take the details required and ensure that your claim is processed accordingly.

...AND ALLOCATION HEADACHES ARE ALSO EASED

Following a temporary closure for refurbishment, one member was stunned to find that her newspaper supply had not been restarted in time for her grand re-opening.

Unfortunately, the bad news did not end there as the member continued to have issues with allocations in the days that followed.

Following a call to NFRN Connect, the team was able to get in touch with the supplying news wholesaler to confirm that the allocation issues had been resolved and that the member would receive her supply in full.

Connect also advised the news wholesaler that compensation should be given for the lack of supply as, ultimately, the member would have lost sales. Much to everyone's delight, the news wholesaler agreed to refund three weeks carriage service charge.

Remember that Connect is here to help with all manner of wholesaler queries. In this case, we were able to quickly get to the root of the problem and ensure that allocations returned to normal as soon as possible. Indeed, one phone call was all it took this member. If you find yourself experiencing similar problems why not give us a try and see for what we can do for you? Phone 0800 121 6376 or email connect@nfrn.org.uk.





HOWZAT! MEMBERS HIT FOR SIX WITH CRICKET MATCH

What better way to spend a warm summer Sunday afternoon than listening to the glorious sound of leather on willow? That's exactly what Northern members, their family and friends did when the district organised an afternoon of Sunday T20 cricket at the Emirates Riverside ground of the Durham Jets on August 12.

Although the match got off to a great start with the home team winning the toss and deciding to bat, it turned out to be a nail biting game that ended with opponents Lancashire winning by just 65 runs.

Besides watching some great cricket, the 90 strong NFRN party also enjoyed afternoon tea, comprising sandwiches and cake!





SMITHS NEWS NEWCASTLE OPENS ITS DOORS TO MEMBERS FOR DEPOT TOURS AND TRADE SHOW

Smiths News Newcastle was the latest depot to open its doors to its customers thanks to a trade day organised jointly by the NFRN and the news wholesaler.

The opportunity to tour the building and speak face to face with senior Smiths News management proved to be a big draw and there was a strong turnout of independent retailers.

All those attending took full opportunity of the chance to visit the stands at the trade show happening at the same time and snapped up some attractive bargains.

Local retail development manager (RDM) Tarun Das was on hand to assist with retailers' queries

and he also obtained four non member leads to follow up, as well as recruiting a new member.

Of the trade partners present, Andrew Glen from Riverside Cards said he had obtained 13 extremely good leads to follow up, had spoken to existing customers and had been extremely impressed with the whole day and how it had been organised.

Echoing these comments, Martin Smith from Reposs said he had enjoyed speaking to enthusiastic and professional retailers.

Other companies in attendance were Camelot, RDP, Espresso Essential, NFRN Newspro and NFRN Connect.





DON'T BECOME A VICTIM OF ATM CRIME, SAYS THE RETAIL MUTUAL

It has been widely reported that retail crime is on the rise and convenience retailers are particularly vulnerable. The high resale value of tobacco stock and the ease with which it can be sold on has meant that newsagents and c-store owners have long been a target, but the increase in ATM crime in recent years has added to the woes of many.

According to industry publication, RN, in 2017 50 per cent of all ATM crimes occurred in convenience stores, with one in every hundred stores affected. Card scams continue to be a major concern, but perhaps more worrying for retailers and insurers alike is the increase in violent ram raids, the results of which can be devastating. With many ATMs mounted on the fascia or just inside the shop entrance, criminal gangs are using heavy vehicles such as diggers, trucks and forklifts to break through, often causing extensive damage.

Even the use of explosives is not unknown. In a recent case in Derbyshire the entire frontage was blown off a Post Office, ravaging not just the shop itself but also damaging the residential units above. Indeed, with such incidents occurring mostly in the early hours of the morning whilst still under cover of darkness, the perpetrators seem to have little care as to whether anyone is on the premises.

At The Retail Mutual we have seen a rise in ATM crime claims from our members over the past two years that echoes the rise in cases nationally. So what can retailers do to minimise the risk of being targeted?



Security is certainly a contributing factor, with many smaller retailers lacking the resources to put sophisticated systems in place. However, alarms and CCTV can be an effective deterrent, and camera footage can help to identify the perpetrators.

It is also important to nurture your relationship with your community – your customers' loyalty can go a long way in keeping you afloat when you suffer an interruption to your business, and may even make you less likely to be targeted in the first place.

Always make sure you are adequately protected. Check your buildings, contents and stock levels are sufficient to cover any damage or losses, and that you have suitable business interruption cover in place to keep you afloat in the event that you are unable to trade. Sadly, it is not always possible to prevent crimes from being carried out, but having the right cover in place can help to ensure that the repercussions do not devastate your business.

The Retail Mutual specialises in providing business cover to newsagents and convenience store owners.

To find out more or get an immediate quote visit www.TheRetailMutual.com or call 0333 2127 263. We look forward to hearing from you.

WELCOME HOME! NATIONAL PRESIDENT VISITS NORTHERN DISTRICT

There were plenty of familiar faces to greet Mike Mitchelson when he made his official presidential visit to our district on September 11. After all, he and wife Anne have been Northern members for almost 40 years!

In a wide ranging speech to members, Mr Mitchelson explained how the Federation's objective has always been to protect and further the interests of independent retailers and putting members first would be its ethos in its centenary year and beyond.

To achieve this, communication would be improved with members and concerns raised would be listened to and acted upon; help, guidance and support would be forthcoming whenever and wherever required; and the NFRN would constantly look for new and additional ways to boost members' businesses.

In an ever-changing and challenging retail landscape it was important that the NFRN identified the needs of members and tapered its



District president Graeme Pentland presents a picture of Durham Castle and cathedral to National President Mike Mitchelson

structure accordingly so it was fit for purpose and best placed to serve independent retailers, Mr Mitchelson said.

Key updates were provided on NFRN discussions with the Racing Post and Citipost regarding new distribution arrangements for the Betting Shop Display Edition and with Smiths News regarding carriage charge increases. Mr Mitchelson also detailed a new trial by Egmont to supply multiples and supermarkets with copies of its Toxic and Lego Star Wars titles first. The National President described this move as "hare-brained", adding that it was wrong for independent retailers to be treated as second class outlets.

In closing, Mr Mitchelson said that today's retailing environment was more demanding than ever but that independent retailers everywhere could continue to count on the assistance, practical support and encouragement that the NFRN provided to enable them to run financially successful businesses.

After formal proceedings were completed at the meeting at Ramside Hall Hotel in Durham, the National President and district president Graeme Pentland exchanged gifts. A bouquet of flowers was also presented to Anne Mitchelson.



Graeme Pentland presents flowers to the National President's wife Anne Mitchelson



Bay Bashir receiving his Community Champion award!



July Champion Mike Brown is congratulated



DISTRICT GOES TO THE DOGS BUT ALL IN A GOOD CAUSE!

Our district, together with the North Northumberland and Newcastle branches, sponsored races when industry charity NewstrAid organised a night at the dogs on Wednesday September 28.

Nearly 50 people from all sectors of the newstrade attended the event at Sunderland Greyhound Track.



NORTHERN RETAILERS ARE COMMUNITY CHAMPS!

We are delighted to announce that two of our district members have been named Northern Community Champions!

Bay Bashir of Belle Vue Convenience Store in Middlesbrough was the first Northern winner in the new scheme that the NFRN runs with newspaper publisher Reach, while Mike Brown of Stokesley News in Stokesley was unveiled as the Community Champion for July in our region.

In both cases the awards were presented in recognition of the difference that both men make to their communities.

Each month, the NFRN and Reach want to recognise and reward members who go that extra mile for their communities.

If you feel you are worthy of a Community Champion award complete the application form at www.nfrnonline.com. An overall Community Champion will be announced at the glittering NFRN Awards at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel on February 12 next year