



REPUBLIC OF IRELAND DISTRICT SPRING BULLETIN

LOCAL NEWS AND VIEWS FOR NFRN MEMBERS

April to June 2019

They say “fraud never sleeps”. The recent publication of a review of the Garda Youth Diversion Office (GYDO) carried out by An Garda Síochana identified serious failings with the Garda Youth Diversion Programme. The report examined the period between July 25 2010 and July 28 2017 and revealed that 7,894 referrals committed by 3,500 juveniles (the majority of whom were already known to the Gardai) should have been prosecuted but were not appropriately progressed to a conclusion by An Garda Síochana.

The review showed the bulk of crimes was in the areas of public order, theft, traffic and criminal damage. This report is alarming and together with the increase in fraudulent activity in the retail trade, I strongly urge you all to be vigilant and to review your security systems. Be sure all your cameras and alarm systems are functioning and in good working order, share any suspicious activity in your area with your fellow traders and ensure that you report any suspicions to the Gardai.

More and more retailers are reporting that they have fallen victim to fraudulent transactions recently, with one retailer alone losing more than €1,000 to credit card fraud and another more than €11,000 after being distracted by a customer, while others were gaining access to an area where cash was being prepared for banking. Please be careful and security minded at all times.

On the political front, with local and European elections due to take place later this year, please keep to the forefront of your minds the recent decision of a number of local councils to increase their commercial rates. In Laois these are +10%, Limerick +7.5%, Longford +15%, Waterford +2.5% and Wexford +10%, to name but a few.

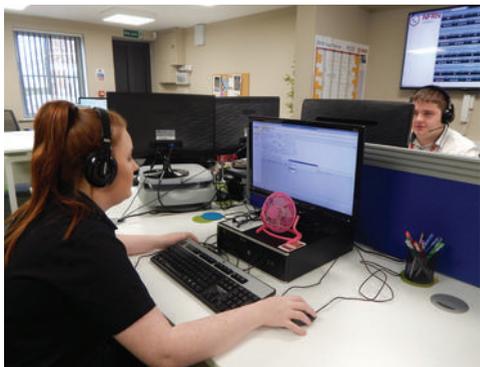
Ensure that you take this opportunity to raise these decisions directly with your local representatives face to face on the doorstep when you are being canvassed for your support in these elections. It seems to me that the local

councillors have lost or simply handed over their control to managers and officials with little thought to the effects of such decisions on already struggling small businesses.

If you would need any advice on any of these issues please do not hesitate to contact NFRN Connect.

Martin Mulligan
District President





NFRN CONNECT – YOUR HELPING HAND

As our district president **Martin Mulligan** mentions in his welcome, **NFRN Connect** exists to help members solve any issues they may have.

For many, NFRN Connect is the fifth emergency service with the highly skilled team trained to provide guidance and support on dealing with shop crime and scams, business development, news and magazines - whether it is a query, complaint or you are seeking restitution -, Newspro or supplier deals.

NFRN Connect is open Monday to Friday between 7am and 5pm and at weekends and bank holidays between 7am and 11am. To contact the team call 01 453 5822 or email connect@nfrn.org.uk

DON'T BE CAUGHT OUT BY BOGUS PHONE CALLS

The NFRN is warning members to be aware as a number of individuals have received phone calls from a person purporting to work in Revenue and advising that a tax refund is due, demanding the immediate payment of a tax bill or stating that a criminal case is being taken against the individual. This person is not calling from Revenue.

If you receive a telephone call purporting to be from Revenue about which you have any doubts, particularly if the call is unexpected, you should contact your Revenue Office. If you receive contact demanding payment of tax about which you have any doubt, you should contact the Collector General's Division (1890 20 30 70 or 01 738 3663).

Anyone who mistakenly provides personal information in response to these types of fraudulent phone calls should contact their bank or credit card company.



NEW CRACKDOWN AGAINST ILLICIT CIGARETTES

With the assistance of detector dog Kelly, Revenue officers seized 1 million smuggled cigarettes in Dublin Port recently.

The cigarettes, branded 'Marlboro', were worth almost €500,000, representing a potential loss to the Exchequer of €422,000. They were discovered by the Revenue's mobile x-ray scanner, when officers conducted an examination of freight, which arrived into Dublin from Rotterdam.

In a separate operation, officers also seized 7,800 unstamped cigarettes and 20kgs illicit tobacco in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

The seized cigarettes, branded 'Excellence' and 'Winston' and tobacco, branded 'Amber Leaf' and 'Virginia', have a combined retail value of over €16,500, representing a potential loss to the Exchequer of almost €13,500.



LADY LUCK SHINES ON KILDARE NEWSAGENT AT PRESTIGIOUS NFRN AWARDS AND HIS SHOP!

Lady luck has been shining on Kildare newsagent Louis Hennessy of late.

First Louis was shortlisted in the Newsagent of the Year category of the prestigious NFRN Awards for his dedication, commitment and innovation in newspaper and magazine retailing.

Then just a matter of weeks before flying to London for the awards ceremony one of his customers came within two lucky star numbers from winning a EuroMillions jackpot worth over €38 million. The owner of the Match 5 ticket won an impressive €43,356 instead.

Louis had shot to fame when he sold a Lotto jackpot ticket worth over €5.7 million in 2012. This sparked a further lucky streak with the shop then selling a €250,000 Lotto Plus 2 prize in 2012 and a host of other top prize winning scratch cards, TellyBingo and Winning Streak tickets.

Speaking after his shop sold the winning €43,356 EuroMillions ticket, Louis told his local newspaper: "We have a reputation for being a lucky shop. We have people come from all over to buy their tickets here because they think they might have a good chance of winning."

And although Louis didn't win at the glittering NFRN Awards at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel on February 12, he did not walk away empty-handed as he won the second prize of

a television in the raffle to raise money for the NFRN's Ratcliffe Fund, which helps Federation members in times of distress.

Meanwhile in December 2014 his shop L Malone was named the oldest in the country when it celebrated its 150th anniversary!

It has remained in the ownership of the same family since it first opened in 1864 – a time when there were considerably fewer newspapers and magazines for sale. The original owner, Brigid Malone, ran a number of shops at the time and called the business after her daughter Lily.

More than 450 guests attended the NFRN's centenary dinner, including our district president Martin Mulligan and national councillor Peter Steemers.

As well as marking how far the NFRN had come over the past 100 years, the centenary dinner was "a nod to the future of what our industry has to offer and the exciting challenges ahead as we lead the independent retail sector forward," National President Mike Mitchelson said.

He added that by working with suppliers and publishers the NFRN would remain "strong, vibrant and forward looking" and ready to face the next 100 years, with members that were "innovative, able to remain on the front foot and positive and passionate about the future of independent retailing."



Kevin 'Boxer' Moran (centre) with National President Mike Mitchelson and NFRN members

NFRN DELIGHT AS CREATION OF A SMALL BUSINESS OMBUDSMAN COMES A STEP CLOSER

The NFRN has been campaigning for a small business ombudsman for many years. These calls have come a step closer to fruition with Minister Kevin 'Boxer' Moran T.D. advising that his bill to create an ombudsman for independent retailers was imminent when he spoke at our district council meeting at the Hodson Bay Hotel in Athlone on Tuesday April 2 2019.

Welcoming Minister Moran's announcement, NFRN president Martin Mulligan stated: "Small businesses are critical to the Irish economy but with shrinking margins and rising costs we need help if we are to survive."

The NFRN calls for an ombudsman come against a backdrop of challenging times for independent retailers with ever increasing payroll costs, higher utility bills, punitive bank charges and rising insurance premiums and during a period of heightened regulation and declining margins.

We believe that it is vitally important that small businesses have an avenue of appeal when new legislation and regulation becomes overly burdensome, unfair and damaging.

The appointment of an ombudsman to act as a community champion for Ireland's smallest businesses and to shine a spotlight on their current plights will restore confidence among SMEs, bringing investment and innovation that will benefit not just retailers but consumers and the communities that they serve.

The NFRN hopes that as part of her or his remit, the ombudsman will look into the carriage charge that news retailers pay to news wholesalers and distributors in order to be supplied with newspapers and magazines. These carriage charges increase annually and NFRN members say they are making the newspaper and magazine category unsustainable.

IT'S HERE! LET NEWSPRO TAKE THE STRAIN WHEN IT COMES TO HANDLING NEWS

We are thrilled to advise that the NFRN's Newspro offer is now available to members in Ireland.

When both time and space are at a premium, Newspro is designed to assist in the management of your newspapers and magazines. More importantly, this service is free as it forms part of your NFRN membership.

Among the recognised benefits are improved cash

flow, access to a seven-day helpline for guidance and advice, no unwanted titles, less time for you to spend on the category and better customer experience.

Newspro will operate with your EM News supplied titles only.

Joining could not be easier! Simply visit <https://nfrnonline.com/grow/news-mags/nfrn-newspro/>