

## PRESS RELEASE

# Business owners supported Small Business Saturday

*5<sup>th</sup> December 2017:* More local businesses took part in the national Small Business Saturday campaign on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, spreading the word on why they chose Northampton town centre as their base.

Northampton town centre Business Improvement District (BID) businesses used **#smallbizsatuk** to highlight the reasons they love trading in the town centre to promote their small business, products, services and offers.

The BID's support of the social media activity is all part of its ongoing objective to promote small retailers and businesses and celebrate the important role they play within the town and economy.

### **'The future of Northampton is in small independent businesses'**

#### **MOOCH**

Rachel Roberts, who with her husband Paul, owns the new boutique gift shop MOOCH on St Giles Street said: "We strongly believe that the future of Northampton is in small independent businesses, and being part of Small Business Saturday is a fantastic opportunity for us to highlight that. We have only been trading for six months but business has been so strong that we have already had to grow our team, increase our shop floor space, and recruit more customer advisors to help with demand. It shows there is a huge appetite for quality and unique products and that is what small independent businesses provide, which is why we are excited about our future in the town centre. We want to continue what we have started, to work with our neighbouring businesses to promote small independent traders, provide a wide choice of products for our customers within a range of budgets, offer great value and excellent service, and to grow our small business."

### **Brooklyn Pizza Bar**

Ryan Wakeman, co-owner of Brooklyn Pizza Bar and his business partner wanted to bring their passion for New York to Northampton, and the town centre was the perfect base for new business, Brooklyn Pizza Bar. Ryan and his business partner Anthony said: “We both love New York for its relaxed vibe, laid back atmosphere, great service and great quality so we came up with an idea to open a New York style pizza bar in Northampton town centre. We wanted to get it right so we did lots of research during a four-day tour of New York before opening and were really set on making sure the restaurant had a homely feel. Our business has gone from strength to strength and we have just started doing deliveries as well as pizza eating challenges. We are confident the University of Northampton is going to transform the town when the new campus opens and that independent businesses will be at the forefront of that. When you shop independent you get to the heart and soul of a business.”

### **Naked Hair & Beauty**

Owner Matt O’Neil-Kemp has been trading in the town centre for five months – Naked Hair & Beauty is his first salon.

“I like how diverse the town is, and how everyone gets on. There’s lots of independent shops, bars and restaurants too that offer more than just the usual big chains,” said Matt. “Being a small business allows us to really focus on anyone who walks through the salon doors. We are a team of seven and we all get on. We are like one big family and our customers are part of that too – I really feel that’s what independent businesses offer customers. Northampton has a soul and is inclusive. I love trading here and I plan to be here for a long time.”

### **Bias Gift Shop**

Bias Gift Shop in Market Walk shopping Centre has been described as gift heaven in the town centre, and owners Majid and his wife want to make sure their customers leave with smiles on their faces, every time. Majid said: “In our shop we offer something a little more unusual and unconventional, that’s what makes people happy. Being a small business has allowed us to meet new people in the community and build a connection with so many of our customers. We love trading in our home, Northampton, for that reason and we want customers to stay tuned for a wonderful initiative which is coming to our shop very soon. It aims to help businesses in Northampton and raise money for charity. We hope to get many locals involved.”

### **The Magic Bean Emporium**

Michella Dos Santos wanted to create a coffee shop with a young vibe in Northampton town centre. Her town centre coffee shop, The Magic Bean Emporium, was designed with various magical and fantasy themes including Harry Potter and Jack & the Beanstalk. Since opening, The Magic Bean

Emporium has become well known for its quirky, welcoming atmosphere. She said: "I wanted to create something different and at the time there were no independent coffee shops, there were cafes, but not specific coffee shops. I also have a passion for books and have written two books and a film script myself, so I wanted to reintroduce everyone to reading – young and old. We hold often hold storytelling sessions which is quite a unique business offer. The décor is based on a Victorian café in one of my books too and has a very magical, fantasy feel. Some of our speciality drinks have been inspired by my books too, like our Bubble 'n' Nog drink. Having an independent business allows you to really bring your passion and dreams alive."

### **Voni Blu**

Coming up to her tenth-year trading as an independent business, Yvonne Spence, owner of ladies' fashion boutique, Voni Blu, believes that passion and high-quality service is the key to running a successful small business. She said: "We love working and living in the cultural quarter of the town centre, enjoying much of what Northampton has to offer - an award winning theatre and film house close by, along with many unique small shops, businesses, restaurants and fine dining venues. And there are some stunning buildings and lovely parks and walks nearby too."

Yvonne believes it is important to support local businesses. She added: "As much as it is important to me that I support businesses in the area in which I live, I also like to shop at independents. I spend time getting to know my customers and often share experiences about other products and businesses to encourage them shop in the area too. It is that high level of product knowledge and customer interaction, and the ability for customers to touch and feel the products in store and get something different, that you just don't get anywhere else. We have some really exciting plans to grow the business over the next five years too and that passion is what drives me."

### **Montague Jeffery**

Jonathan Williams, managing director of the family-run men's clothes store Montague Jeffery said: "We have been running as a small independent business in the town centre for 116 years and are just as passionate now as we have always been. Small businesses are a major selling point of Northampton town centre and visitors from far afield will travel for our selection of niche shops which you won't find anywhere else. We are among lots of likeminded businesses in St Giles Street and it is great for us to all come together as part of Small Business Saturday to collectively promote what we do."

### **Market Square News**

Andrew Cruden, BID director and owner of Market Square News sees himself staying in the town centre for many years to come. He said: "Being a small business in the town centre has many positives. There are strong links with local sports clubs and lots of positive developments and changes taking place which helps drive footfall for independent traders like us. We plan to stay in the town centre and are even looking to expand in the next few years too to open another convenience store."

### **St Gyles Jewellers**

Ali Gibson, assistant manager St Gyles Jewellers says they have been a thriving town centre business for 35 years. She said: "We are a brilliant example of how a small business has continued to succeed. We have always focused on providing a traditional jewellery service with a boutique feel and our location on St Giles Street means we are set among other strong independent shops, which has definitely helped us become so established over the years. We want to remain a small business but also to grow our offer and make sure we continue to provide customers with the choice they want."

### **The Hub of Northampton**

New business owner George Charalambous recently opened The Hub coffee shop on The Drapery. He said: "I have lived in Northampton since 2001 and opened up in the town centre because I am passionate about bringing something back to the community. I know I am a small fish in a big pond, trading among lots of prominent businesses but I genuinely feel that small traders have a big part to play in the town and its economy. It might take us longer to become established but people still want excellent service and that's definitely one of the things that sets us independent businesses apart, we offer something different. I have lots of plans to grow my business in the town centre and I will do that by making sure the customer is at the heart of every business decision I make."

### **Peppertrees**

The owner of Peppertrees, Megan Eyles took over the independent card and gift shop in Ridings Arcade in 2016. She said: "Our location in a prominent spot on an award winning high street is one of the best in the town centre and definitely helps with footfall. As a business we are keen to put our name out there and we have won national awards ourselves too, most recently the RETAs greeting

card awards. Winning awards shows we are doing something right and shows that independent businesses can compete against the bigger names.”

### **Abraxas Cookshop**

Manager of Abraxas Cookshop on St Giles Street said: “Our shop is located among a lovely mix of independent businesses, retailers and cafes and that’s important for us as we all collectively attract our target customer. We owe our success as a small business to being a destination shop so people come into the town centre just to visit us. We see ourselves as staying in Northampton town centre for years to come and obviously want to increase footfall and build awareness of our shop with new customers. We offer something really different in terms of customer service and products and that is usually what makes small independent traders unique.”

### **The Dressing Room**

John Dowick, owner of The Dressing Room has been trading in the town centre for 16 years. He said: “Small Business Saturday is a brilliant idea to celebrate little businesses who offer a high level of service and unique products and we will certainly get behind it. We have thrived over the years because we give customers a different shopping experience which is the same at most independent businesses. Building a strong reputation, focusing on your unique selling point and not being pushy with customers is crucial to small business success and we have managed to achieve all this during our 16 years in the town centre.”

### **Jynja Jynja**

“Our Chefs at Jynja Jynja have created a mouth-watering menu of authentic dishes from across India. We use fresh ingredients and traditional Indian cooking techniques to create authentic bold flavours to provide a real taste of India. We have banned food coloring from our kitchen and we pride ourselves in serving the dishes in their natural way to give you an authentic taste of India. We are also the first concept restaurant in Northampton to offer Indo-Chinese style food.

“We offer a variety of cocktails and all our syrups, infusions and garnishes are prepared in house by our mixologist and our bar stocks a wide variety of Artisanal and Micro Distillery stock. The ambience of the restaurant offers both those who are wanting to dine with us and those who are sitting at the bar a buzz for the atmosphere of dinner and drinks under one roof. So if you want to go out for a nice meal or just unwind with a few drinks at the bar then come join us and experience JYNJA JYNJA.”

Small Business Saturday was originally founded by American Express in the U.S. in 2010.

If BID businesses wish to be featured in the campaign, email [info@northamptonbid.co.uk](mailto:info@northamptonbid.co.uk).

For more information on the national Small Business Saturday initiative, visit [www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com](http://www.smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com).