



A PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

Diarmuid O'Donovan tells Ireland's Forecourt & Convenience Retailer how joining the Gala Group has changed his store

The O'Donovan's store at Leemount Cross first opened in 1981. In 1996, with big plans for expansion, the store moved to a bigger site across the road from its original location and in October 2018, the store joined the Gala group becoming Gala Leemount Cross and forecourt, a decision that store owner, Diarmuid O'Donovan hasn't looked back on.

As you would expect for a forecourt store situated on a busy road in Cork, the store's customer base is wide and varied, and caters for everyone from members of the local community to commuters and truckers from throughout Ireland.

Since joining the Gala Group the store has enjoyed huge success, something store owner, Diarmuid is thrilled about: "We are really proud of how business has been going since joining the Gala Group in 2018. The switch to Gala and the





introduction of the in-store concepts they offer have taken off magnificently well with customers, changing the day to day flow of business. Where previously, our customer base was heavily commuter oriented, we now have customers calling in throughout the day to avail of our great deli counter offerings, to grab a coffee or to pick up some fresh baked goods from Baker's Corner."

With nearly 40 years of experience in running a community retail store, having control over the running of the store was of paramount importance to Diarmuid so the Gala Group was an obvious choice for him.

"Being able to retain control of the business, while simultaneously being aided by the support of a national symbol group was a huge part of what attracted me to join the Gala Group," says Diarmuid.

"The support of our local wholesaler, M&P O'Sullivan, and the chilled distribution network that Gala operate mean that we can offer the local community high quality fresh food and convenience shopping at competitive prices which was another big factor that influenced the decision to become part of the Gala Group. This, combined with national marketing campaigns and in-store promotions has helped us to create a store that caters for the needs of the local community."

In the past, Diarmuid's mother had ran the store as a premium quality bread and cake shop, an offering which was hugely popular in the local community and Diarmuid feels the introduction



of the Baker's Corner concept has helped to re-ignite this tradition.

"Fresh bread and baked goods are always in demand and introducing Baker's Corner to the shop's offering has proven this is the case, drawing in customers who are after freshly baked breads and pastries each day."

Speaking about the stores other concepts, Diarmuid adds: Gala's coffee brand 'Coffee Junction' compliments our Baker's Corner offering and draws customers in. "Fresh food-to-go is more popular than ever, particularly with commuters and those leading busy lives. The introduction of New Street Deli, the new deli offering from Gala, has proven to be a big hit with its wide range of options, catering for all tastes.

"As well as offering our classic hot food counter options, New Street Deli has an innovative street food inspired menu, with offerings ranging from New Street Spice Boxes and Messy Taco Fries to on-trend Healthy Protein Salad Boxes and New Fusion Wraps, so there really is something for everyone."

Customers looking for a sweet treat will enjoy the latest concept from the Gala Group. Last year, seeing an upturn in the demand for and

popularity of frozen desserts, the Gala Group launched its own fresh whipped ice cream and dessert station, Galato. It's an excellent addition to Gala's expanding concept range and one Diarmuid was keen to introduce.

"I wanted the store to offer customers a bit of everything, including dessert. Galato has been popular with our customers, from kids to commuters, everyone loves an ice cream, especially given the great summer we've had this year."

Speaking about plans for the store in the longer term, Diarmuid discusses the possibility of expanding the forecourt to incorporate a car wash and the opportunity to build on the success of concepts such as Coffee Junction and New Street Deli by developing a sit-in area for customers.

"Based on the success of the store since joining the Gala Group, I see further opportunity for growth in the future. What Gala offers retailers is a personal touch, the team are always available. With their expertise and retail experience, Gala has the people I want on my team when making decisions about how to continue to grow the business as a profitable and successful community convenience store."