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The PayPoint Group marks International Women's Day by celebrating inspirational female business owners

05 March 2021: The PayPoint Group – which houses leading payments brands such as PayPoint and Handepay – is shining a light on inspirational female business owners within its network of convenience stores and merchants, to celebrate International Women's Day.

In particular, The PayPoint Group has picked out Natalie Lightfoot, owner of Londis Solo Convenience Store in Glasgow, Kim Fox, owner of Mockbeggar Farm Shop in Kent, and Kerry Docherty, founder of the Wild Flowers florist in Wigan.

Katy Wilde, Human Resources Director for The PayPoint Group, comments: "This last year has been unbelievably challenging for independent retailers across the UK. We believe it is incredibly important to celebrate female talent in the retail sector and Natalie, Kerry and Kim, who have adapted in creative ways to thrive while supporting their local communities through the Covid crisis, should be seen as inspirations to other self-starting entrepreneurs."

Londis Solo Convenience Store, Glasgow (PayPoint customer)

Natalie moved from Bedford to Glasgow to run her own convenience store. During lockdown, she saw footfall in her store drop by an average of 150 people a day. Despite this, she still achieved record sales. By taking orders over Facebook and doing free deliveries for the most vulnerable in the area, she not only turned her business around but ensured that it became a focal point for the community.

On whether women in convenience face any challenges that men don't, she says: "People are often surprised when I say that I'm the owner of my convenience store. They think that perhaps I'm the manager. It's a feeling that you get used to but that doesn't make it right.

"However, aspiring female retailers shouldn't let it deter them. If you're passionate about retailing and you have a strong work ethic, running a convenience store is a great business to be in."

Mockbeggar Farm Shop, Rochester (Handepay customer)

Kim Fox jointly owns Mockbeggar Farm Shop with her business partner and former school friend Debra Richardson. She made a radical career shift, having previously worked as a Chief Operating Officer for an international insurance company, to set up an independent business specialising in fresh, local produce. Like many other businesses in the last year Mockbeggar Farm Shop has had to adapt and has gone the extra mile by introducing a delivery service for the elderly, vulnerable and those self isolating and a click and collect service, as well as ensuring the highest levels of health and safety for customers visiting the shop.

On her advice to women interested in starting their own businesses, Kim says: "Don't be afraid to do it. Look into it, research it, get advice, ask questions, but ultimately do it. My experience has been a bit of a whirlwind and 2020 in particular has been challenging particularly only being our second year so we're still learning and adapting. In the festive period, we even turned the tea room into a Christmas shop.

“We’re very much an all women team! That was another adjustment that I had to make. I came from an industry which was very male dominated and it was much harder for women to get recognised and progress to senior roles. There’s much better gender balance in the retail industry.”

Wild Flowers, Wigan (Handepay customer)

Kerry Docherty has been running Wild Flowers since 2008. After a career in banking where a company car, travel and other benefits came as standard, Kerry traded it all to pursue her passion in floristry and run her own enterprise. She has used the last year as an opportunity to experiment with new approaches.

She says: “An idea called Flower Fix Friday was born out of adapting to covid restrictions – it has been very successful. Our staff pick seasonal flowers every Friday and deliver them to local customers. We’ve also used the power of social media to amplify our products and grow an online presence to drive traffic to our website whilst the shop must be closed. We are always looking at new trends and styles for the store.

“I am hoping that people come back to the high street and continue to support independent stores once restrictions allow. More people shopping locally is key to a thriving and positive community for female business owners everywhere.