

DAVID SANDS

your FRIENDLY LOCAL STORE

A growing brand in convenience

COMMUNITY retailing is enjoying its highest profile for a number of years with many consumers preferring, where possible and when practical, to shop in their own neighbourhoods and support local producers. And there is one long-established, independent retail business in Scotland – David Sands Ltd – that understands exactly who its customers are, what they want and, crucially, why they want to shop locally.



David Sands, managing director

The big supermarkets will always have their place in today's society. But it has become

increasingly apparent to managing director David Sands and his staff that the multiple retailers' record-breaking profits and less personal approach to customer service have created an overwhelming consumer desire to get back to basics. People want to be able to shop locally in a modern store where the environment is welcoming and the staff friendly.

With 18 stores located within vibrant communities in Fife, Perth and Kinross, the company has vast experience of the retail industry and, in particular, the convenience store sector. A number of similar retail businesses whose names were once synonymous with local retailing in Scotland have disappeared, their owners selling out to supermarket groups who want their share of a lucrative sector of the market.

David Sands is not one of these retailers and the business is "categorically not for sale". The company has invested £1.5 million in its new state-of-the-art warehouse and head office to provide the capacity for David and his team to

further drive the business through future store acquisitions. At Alligin House, there is also much-needed space for David Sands to develop its staff training programme.

Says David: "We are rightly proud of our rich history but we are firmly looking to the future. The company has a clear vision for the future and moving into our superb, new premises is a celebration of who we are, what we have achieved over many years and what we hope to achieve in the future as we look ahead to our 200th anniversary in 2015.

"But our best and most important asset is our staff. Without such a dedicated team of people, our company would not be where it is today – or in a position to contemplate such ambitious future growth plans. The people who run our stores and train our staff, the people who ensure that our warehouse operation runs smoothly and efficiently, our buying team and admin staff – every individual member of staff has an important role to play in our future."

David Sands - another chapter begins

SINCE its very early days, David Sands Ltd has been a pioneering local business, always seeking out new opportunities for growth yet remaining fiercely independent.

Each generation of the Sands family has possessed a natural aptitude for retailing although it was probably not until the 1920s when the present managing director's grandfather – David Sands – took control of the reins that the business as we know it today began to take shape.

Current chairman Lindsay Sands took charge in 1966, assuming responsibility for a thriving business that was ripe for growth and development. The Kinross store had just been converted to self-service – a major innovation in those days – and a car park added. The business was changing and so, too, was the retail scene.

Kinross pioneered late opening and seven-day trading and, by the late 1980s, had become one of the busiest independent stores in Scotland. But when Lindsay's son, David, joined the business in 1989 after completing a graduate trainee programme with Sainsbury's, the seeds were firmly sown for David Sands Ltd to achieve sustained growth in an ever-changing retail marketplace. A second store in Methilhill was acquired the same year

and, during the 1990s, Lindsay and David's shared vision for the future direction of the business saw more stores – and a new central office and warehouse in Milnathort – come on stream.

David's sister, Marjorie Sands, joined the family business and gained vast experience by holding many different positions within the company before being appointed a director. The company has also been extremely fortunate in finding Stephen Brown, a dynamic operator whose experience of running his own business and working in newspaper wholesaling has brought fresh ideas to the business – he is also now a company director and shareholder.

But the focus for David Sands Ltd is firmly on the future. Important milestones in the company's history have been instrumental in shaping this future and both David – the fifth generation of the Sands family to run the business – and his father have learned to embrace change and new challenges.



The youngest generation of the Sands family, Ruaridh and Dugald, with David and Lindsay Sands

David Sands Ltd has evolved by responding to the change in a positive manner and constantly investing in the business. And, by actively seeking out new ideas for growth, the company has provided a platform for staff development and kept its customers satisfied.

As David Sands Ltd moves into this next ambitious phase of its history, there is more than one reason to celebrate.