

E-commerce drives UK exporter's healthy snack revolution

A swift switch to e-commerce has saved healthy snack start-up OLLY'S during the Coronavirus pandemic after 40% of its monthly revenue disappeared due to grounded airlines and cancelled rail services.

Founded in his parents' kitchen three years ago, a love of olives inspired Olly Hiscocks to create the world's first unpasteurised olive snack pouch. He quickly went from selling them at Richmond's Duck Pond Market to supplying major airlines and over 8,000 global stocking points.

Due to growing demand for nutritional snacks, Olly had just decided to expand his company's portfolio to include nuts and pretzels when the pandemic hit.

Forced to furlough staff in order to stay afloat, OLLY'S sought advice from the Department for International Trade about sourcing new exporting opportunities to compensate for the loss of business. This resulted in the company pivoting its effort towards e-commerce with impressive results.

Olly Hiscocks, Founder & Director at OLLY'S said:

With no airlines, trains, or pubs to supply our products to, we had a large amount of leftover stock at the start of lockdown.

We knew that we had to find a way to sell this stock in order to stay afloat, so we decided to ramp up our online store and launch our new range of bulk nut mixes on Amazon. The response was incredible – our monthly online sales are up 800%.

We are now focusing on the launch of OLLY'S PRETZEL Thins and continuing to work with the Department for International Trade as we look to maximise our online sales and tap into new markets.

OLLY'S currently exports to 9 countries, with overseas sales accounting for 20% of the company's annual turnover.

In July OLLY'S secured a contract with a distributor for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and signed a deal with Middle Eastern supermarket retailer Spinneys. The company is currently expanding into Australia, as well as Wholefoods in the US.

In ongoing negotiations with Australia and the US, the Department for International Trade aims to strike comprehensive free trade deals that make it easier for SMEs, such as OLLY'S, to trade with these key markets.

Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart, said:

The fantastic success that OLLY'S have enjoyed is a great example of the power of e-commerce and what can be achieved by overcoming barriers and exporting to new markets.

More trade is essential to our economic recovery from Coronavirus and that's why we are negotiating a number of free trade agreements that provide exporters with greater opportunities overseas.

In June 2020, the proportion of retail sales made online in Britain reduced slightly to 31.8%, following the record 33.3% seen in May, up considerably from the 20.0% reported in February.

Olly discusses his story in more detail [here](#).

[Dounreay explores decommissioning with robotics experts](#)

News story

Dounreay is exploring ways of decommissioning with the help of robotics experts.



Representatives from RAIN with Jason Simpson and the R0V

The nuclear site in the north of Scotland, which was the centre of the UK's research into fast reactor technology in the last century, is being cleaned up and taken apart. The most contaminated areas of the site are found in the Fuel Cycle Area (FCA) facilities, which examined and reprocessed spent nuclear fuel. The nature of the facilities means that the most contaminated areas are generally also the most inaccessible.

The site is collaborating with the Robotics and Artificial Intelligence in Nuclear (RAIN) Hub, a consortium of universities led by the University of Manchester, to explore ways to overcome some of these challenges.

A group of scientists from RAIN carried out trials earlier this year in the FCA laboratories of a small remotely operated vehicle (ROV) equipped with sensors, cameras and a manipulator 'arm', which provided useful information.

Jason Simpson, project manager for the decommissioning of the laboratories, said:

The legacy of the operations in our labs is that we have areas of contamination that are very radioactive and difficult to access using our normal procedures. These decommissioning challenges could be addressed using robotics and we are pleased to be working with the RAIN Hub to find solutions.

A survey of the under-floor drains in the laboratories is planned for later in the year.

Published 12 August 2020

[Appointments to the Boundary Commission for Wales and the Boundary Commission for England](#)

News story

The Lord Chancellor has announced the appointment of Deputy Chairs to the Boundary Commission for Wales and the Boundary Commission for England.



The Lord Chancellor has announced the appointments of Mrs Justice Jefford QC to the role of Deputy Chair for the Boundary Commission for Wales (BCW), and Mr Justice Lane to the role of Deputy Chair for the Boundary Commission for England (BCE). Both appointments will be for a period of 3 years and commenced on 23 June 2020.

Appointments and re-appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and have been made under Section 3(a) and (c) of Schedule 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, and are in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The Boundary Commission for Wales carries out boundary reviews of parliamentary constituencies in Wales, and submits its recommendations to the government.

The Boundary Commission for England is required by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 to review the parliamentary constituencies in England every 5 years.

Both the BCW and BCE are advisory non-departmental public bodies, sponsored by the Cabinet Office.

Biographies

Mrs Justice Jefford was appointed as a Recorder in 2007, as Queen's Counsel in 2008, and as a Deputy High Court Judge in 2016. She was appointed as a High Court Judge of the Queen's Bench Division in 2016 and sits in the Technology and Construction Court, and the Administrative Court. In 2019 she was appointed as the Administrative Court Liaison Judge for the North Eastern Circuit and in 2020 as a Presiding Judge of the Wales Circuit.

Mr Justice Peter Richard Lane was appointed as a fee-paid immigration adjudicator in 1996, a salaried immigration adjudicator in 2001 and a Vice President of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal in 2003. In 2005, he became a senior immigration Judge in the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal. In 2010, he became an Upper Tribunal Judge. In 2014, he was appointed as President of the General Regulatory Chamber of the First-tier Tribunal. He was appointed a Deputy High Court Judge in 2016 and, in 2017, a High Court Judge in the Queen's Bench Division. Since October 2017, he has also been President of the Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber.

Published 12 August 2020

[Two members appointed to the Tribunal](#)

Procedure Committee

News story

The Lord Chancellor, after consultation with the Lord Chief Justice, has announced the appointment of Philip Brook Smith QC and Susan Humble as new members of the TPC.



The Lord Chancellor has announced the appointment of Philip Brook Smith QC and Susan Humble as members of the Tribunal Procedure Committee (TPC) for 3 years with effect from 4 July 2020 to 3 July 2023.

Philip Brook Smith QC, has a broad commercial and civil practice and has substantial experience of a wide variety of areas of commercial and civil law, achieving notable distinction in the field of Product Liability.

Susan Humble is a partner at RIAA Barker Gillette, Chair of the Taxation Disciplinary Board, and a Lay Panellist on the Professional Conduct Committee of the Teaching Regulation Agency. Between 2010 and 2018, Susan was the Chief Executive Officer and Clerk of the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.

Both appointees have declared no political activity.

The TPC was established on 19 May 2008, under the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act (TCEA) 2007, to make rules governing practice and procedure in the First-tier and Upper Tribunals. The TPC is responsible for nine sets of Tribunal Rules, covering 11 Chambers in the Unified Tribunals System. The subject matter of the appeals heard in those Chambers includes immigration, tax, mental health and transport.

These appointments to the TPC are made under Schedule 5(21) of the TCEA and are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The recruitment campaign was conducted in accordance with the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Published 12 August 2020

Save up to £2,000 with Tax-Free Childcare in Scotland

As schools return in Scotland, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding working parents they could save up to £2,000 per child per year to pay towards after-school clubs and other childcare services.

Around 110,000 families in Scotland are eligible for Tax-Free Childcare, which can cut thousands of pounds off childcare bills.

All families have to do is pay into their Tax-Free Childcare account and for every £8 that they deposit, the UK Government immediately makes a top-up payment of an additional £2. The scheme is open to working parents, including the self-employed, who earn between the minimum wage and £100,000 per year and have children aged 0-11 years old. Families with a disabled child, aged 0-17 years old, can receive up to £4,000 in government support each year.

Families in Scotland can choose from childcare providers that have signed up to Tax-Free Childcare, including nannies, nurseries, childminders or after-school clubs.

HMRC's Deputy Chief Executive and Second Permanent Secretary, Angela MacDonald, said:

As more parents across the country return to work and kids head back to school following the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, there has never been a better time to sign up to Tax-Free Childcare.

It takes just minutes to set up an account on our Childcare Choices website and soon you could be receiving up to £2,000 per child towards the cost of childcare each year.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

Tens of thousands of families in Scotland are eligible to access savings towards after-school clubs and other childcare services thanks to the UK Government's Tax-Free Childcare scheme. As more parents return to work and children to Scotland's schools following the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, I urge people to make full use of the support. The scheme is part of a significant package of measures that the UK Government has in place to help families in Scotland.

You can find out more and apply through the [Childcare Choices website](#). It includes a [Childcare Calculator](#) that compares all the government's childcare offers to check what works best for individual families.

Tax-Free Childcare is just one example of the support available to families in Scotland from the UK Government. More information on other schemes such as Help To Save and Marriage Allowance can be found on the [Delivering for Scotland website](#).

How Tax-Free Childcare works:

- Working parents can apply, through the childcare service, to open an online childcare account. The scheme is available for children under the age of 12, or under the age of 17 for children with disabilities.
- If you or your partner have an 'adjusted net income' over £100,000 in the current tax year, you will not be eligible. This includes any bonuses you expect to get.
- For every £8 that families pay in, the UK Government will make a top-up payment of an additional £2, up to a maximum of £2,000 per child per year (or £4,000 for disabled children). This top-up is added instantly and parents can then send payments directly to their childcare providers. The maximum government top-up is £500 per quarter for each child, or £1,000 if the child is disabled.
- All registered childcare providers – whether nannies, nurseries, childminders or after-school clubs – can sign up online to receive parents' payments through Tax-Free Childcare.
- Parents need to sign back in every three months and confirm their details are up-to-date, to keep getting government top-ups.
- Families who were already signed up to Tax-Free Childcare but have fallen below the minimum income requirement due to COVID-19 will continue to receive financial support until 31 October. [Critical workers](#) who may exceed the income threshold for the 2020-21 tax year due to working more to tackle the pandemic, will continue to receive support this tax year. [More information](#).
- You can check your eligibility for Tax-Free Childcare in [relation to COVID-19](#).