



SLR
AWARDS

2026



SLR AWARDS ENTRY
GUIDANCE
2026

SLR AWARDS 2026

A CELEBRATION OF THE STARS OF SCOTTISH LOCAL RETAILING

The last year has been another challenging one for the Scottish local retailing sector and that looks set to continue for the foreseeable future but, despite the formidable hurdles we continue to face, Scotland's local retailers continue to rise to the challenge as they have always done.

At the SLR Awards 2026 we aim once again to recognise and reward those stores, individuals and teams that have met those challenges and have continued to ensure that our sector remains at the forefront of retailing in the UK.

So, the entry deadline in your diary - Friday 13 March. Entry is completely free, and you can enter as many or as few categories as you like.

As always, we'll be doing the SLR Awards the way we always have. Unannounced judging visits – to ensure our judges see your stores as they really are – and hundreds of photographs and hours of video to show on the night of the awards on 17 June 2026.

Those photographs and videos help us to clearly demonstrate how fantastic our winning stores are on the night, but they also help inspire other retailers in the room to push on.

Only by working together and driving each other forward can we make sure that the local retailing sector in Scotland remains vibrant, progressive and relevant long into the future.

We can't wait to hear from you!



ANTONY BEGLEY

Editor, Scottish Local Retailer

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)

ENTRY PROCESS & KEY DATES

HOW TO ENTER

Step 1: Visit www.slrawards.com

Step 2: Click on 'Enter' to view the list of categories.

Step 3: Download the relevant entry form in word format.

Step 4: Submit your entry – along with supporting photos and/or videos.

Entries should be sent to events@55north.com

Upon completion, you will receive a confirmation email from the SLR team.

A PICTURE IS WORTH...

Key to a great entry and impressing the judges is providing lots of good photographs to support your entry. We would suggest as a minimum:

Exterior store shot – ideally including you, the retailer!

Interior wide shot or two for context.

At least **four** or **five shots** to support the **specific category** you are entering.

JUDGING

Once again, there will be two stages to the judging process:

PAPER JUDGING

The paper judging will be carried out by a highly experienced panel of judges from across the UK, representing all aspects of the local retailing sector, supported by the expanded SLR editorial team.

The judges will vote for the shortlist for each category with every member of the panel carrying equal voting rights.

All entrants will be contacted by the events team to notify them if they have been shortlisted or not.

STORE INTERVIEWS

All shortlisted stores will be personally visited by representatives of the judging panel.

All winners will be announced at the Awards on 17 June 2026.

ENTRY DEADLINE **13 March 2026**
WINNERS ANNOUNCED **17 June 2026**

AWARDS CATEGORIES

IN-STORE CATEGORIES

We will once again be accepting entries in a number of vital product categories. These categories have been chosen carefully to encompass the key sales drivers in the local retailing sector.

- ★ **Food-to-Go Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Forecourt Convenience Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Fresh & Chilled Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Newtrade Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Off-Trade Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Scottish Brands Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Smokeless Alternative Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Soft Drinks Retailer of the Year**

IN-ACTION CATEGORIES

In addition to our product categories, we will also be accepting entries in a range of categories created to recognise the outstanding efforts of local retailers across Scotland in key areas of their business.

- ★ **Community Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **New Store of The Year**
- ★ **Refit of The Year**
- ★ **Team of the Year**
- ★ **Sustainability Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **#ThinkSmart Innovation Award**

INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES

As usual, we will also make a number of individual awards but please note that these categories are not open to entry and will be chosen by the judging panel.

- ★ **Outstanding Achievement**
- ★ **Special Recognition**
- ★ **Young Scottish Local Retailer of the Year**
- ★ **Scottish Local Retailer of the Year**

OUR SPONSORS

A NEW AWARDS FOR A NEW ERA

This edition of the SLR Awards, like the many that have preceded it, wouldn't be possible without the support of sponsors. We would therefore like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the companies listed on this page in helping us stage what we are sure will be an incredibly special night.



ENTRY TIPS & ADVICE

THE GOLDEN RULES

SLR AWARDS 2026 GENERAL CRITERIA

- * The SLR Awards 2026 are free to enter. They are open to all independent and symbol convenience stores in Scotland as well as to independently-owned convenience stores chains.
- * The content of all entries should cover the period running from June 2025 to March 2026.
- * Entries can be made by individual businesses, those officially representing them or anyone wishing to nominate a relevant entrant.
- * Entries without photos will be discounted.

THE GOLDEN RULES

With hundreds of entries every year, it's vital that you ensure that you do all that you can to ensure that your entries stand out. Here are some great tips and hints on ensuring that you catch the judges' attention.

STICK TO THE FACTS

Provide as many reliable facts and figures as you can. Epos data is a great source of information and can add real weight to your entry. Don't say: "sales have grown year on year," when you could say: "sales are up 25% year on year."

Don't skip any questions! Blank spaces in an entry form don't help the judges and can even hinder your entry.

Each entry must be individual and tailored to the award category. Providing one generic entry form for multiple categories rarely proves successful.

MAKE IT VISUAL

A photo is indeed worth a thousand words – so include as many relevant photos as possible to illustrate the quality of your entry.

ENTRY TIPS & ADVICE

THE GOLDEN RULES

It may seem obvious but try to only include photographs for each category that relate specifically to that category. It's fine to include shots of the wider store, but don't forget to include at least three shots specific to the category you are entering.

Feel free to include other visual documentation that might help strengthen your case: letters of commendation, certificates, other awards, customer testimonials, newspaper clippings, screengrabs from social media or websites – it's all good.

ADD VIDEO

Why not add a short video to enhance your entry and really bring it to life for the judges?

THINK OUTSTANDING

The judges are always on the lookout for innovation, creativity, thought and passion that goes above and beyond basic best practice.

Don't be afraid to blow your own trumpet or sing the praises of your team. That's what the Awards are all about!

TELL A STORY

When you're entering awards, you're telling a story. Give a little context but focus on what you did, why you did it, how you did it and what the results were.

Use stats and facts to bring your entry to life. Don't say: "We're seeing lots of new customers," when you could say: "Customer count is up 20%".

Don't say "customers loved what I did," when you could include some customer testimonials or screen grabs from your Facebook page showing positive customer comments. You get it!

Remember too, that making real progress in developing a category in-store doesn't always need to mean innovation and creativity. Real success can equally come from doing the basics exceptionally well. If, by taking that approach, you've seen sales and profits grow substantially – that's a great story to tell and is equally likely to land you on the shortlist – just make sure you back it up with facts and figures!

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ADVICE

SOME TOP TAILORED TIPS

IN-ACTION CATEGORIES

In the In-Action category awards, the judges are seeking those who go that extra mile to deliver something exceptional. Most retailers are doing exceptional things but often fail to mention it in awards entries. Put some detailed thought into your entry to make sure you have a chance of being a winner.

COMMUNITY RETAILER OF THE YEAR

In this category, the judges are looking for retailers that went above and beyond the call of duty in serving the needs of their communities.

Telling your story clearly and concisely is critical in this category: be specific about some of the initiatives you implemented over the last year, explain exactly what you did and why, and tell us as best you can the positive impact it had on your community.

Supporting material is vital in helping the judges understand your commitment to your community: photographs, press clippings, screen grabs from social media or websites, customer 'thank you' cards – it's all good.

NEW STORE OF THE YEAR/ REFIT OF THE YEAR

Be completely clear that you are entering the correct category:

- * New Store of the Year is open only to new build stores or very significant rebuilds.
- * Refit of the Year is open to stores that have been developed and re-fitted in the eligible period, including existing stores that are now under new ownership.

In these categories, plenty of photographs and/or video footage are vital.

Please answer all entry questions with as much detail as possible - we want the full story! If you can, share some data on what the results of the build/refit have been in financial terms.

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ADVICE

SOME TOP TAILORED TIPS

TEAM OF THE YEAR

It pays to be specific and precise in this category. Describe particular initiatives or ideas. Tell the story of how your team helped you deliver for your community in the last year.

Supporting evidence is important in this category. Anything that helps the judges understand how fantastic your team or unsung hero has been will enhance your chances of a spot on the shortlist.

SUSTAINABILITY RETAILER OF THE YEAR

With sustainability more important than ever, this category aims to unearth the retailers who are making sustainability a core plank of their business strategy and communicating that fact to shoppers.

Communication is vital in this category. Improving your store's carbon footprint is fantastic – but are you telling your customers about all the work you're doing behind the scenes? Do you mention sustainability instore, or on social media?

#THINKSMART INNOVATION AWARD

This category, as the names suggests, is all about innovation – and that doesn't necessarily mean technology. It can include a great many things, from new customer services to unique product ranges, social media innovations and more.

What have you done that is truly innovative and had delivered business benefits or improved the experience of your customers? What do you offer that shoppers can't get anywhere else?