

Responsible  
Business Report  
2015



Achieving sustainable  
growth together



**This publication is the first responsible business report to represent all divisions of A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd. While the concept of corporate responsibility and CR reporting is certainly not new to our business, I am delighted that we can now showcase the great work that takes place across our wider group in one single document.**

A.F. Blakemore & Son is a unique family business that is committed to growing in a profitable and sustainable way for the benefit of our staff, customers and the community. This commitment is reflected by our decision to reinvest 98% of all the company's profits back into the business, with the remaining 2% received by the Blakemore Foundation charitable trust. This ongoing reinvestment has resulted in the significant growth of our business in recent years, represented by a sales growth from £673m to £1.3bn since 2007.

Yet these figures only reflect a narrow view of A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd and this report seeks to provide a wider perspective of who we are and what we stand for. This can be seen in the ongoing cascade of our bespoke Leading the Blakemore Way leadership development programme and our commitment to our independent retail customers through activities such as the Guild Academy and co-investment scheme. The contribution of A.F. Blakemore can also be seen in the triple re-accreditation recognition that we have received through Business in the Community's Big Tick Awards for our work with small suppliers, local schools and our wide ranging environmental programme.

We are operating in uncertain times within some of the most challenging sectors in the UK economy. As we face up to these challenges it is vital that our business continues to innovate and collaborate further. We must also listen to and respond to our customers' needs, develop stronger partnerships with our suppliers, contribute to the communities that we serve and drive efficiencies through our distribution network.

This combined Group Responsible Business Report demonstrates practical examples of our approach to business in accordance with our Blakemore Way values and showcases how we will achieve sustainable growth together in the years ahead.

**Peter Blakemore**  
 Group Managing Director – A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd  
 November 2015

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## Welcome to A.F. Blakemore

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd is one of the largest and most forward-thinking family-owned businesses in the UK. The company began life in 1917 as a counter-service grocery store, and has grown from these humble beginnings into a company that now employs more than 7,900 people with a turnover of £1.35 billion.

Food and drink have always been the lifeblood of A.F. Blakemore and the business now entails retail, wholesale, distribution and shop fitting operations amongst its divisions.

A.F. Blakemore is the largest division of SPAR UK, owning more than 290 SPAR stores and serving over 1,000 stores across England and Wales. The company is also the largest member of the Landmark Wholesale group and a significant supplier to the independent grocery sector across the UK.

A.F. Blakemore has always been committed to developing a loyal and dedicated workforce that is focused upon excellent customer service and behaving with integrity. The company has always strived to build partnerships with suppliers and trade partners while never underestimating the role that it plays within the communities it serves.

Underpinning everything that A.F. Blakemore does is the company's values statement, the Blakemore Way. This highlights what A.F. Blakemore stands for and the way that the company has always done and will continue to do business.



## the **blakemore** way

### Our Purpose

To grow a family business in ways that are profitable and sustainable for the benefit of our staff, customers and community.

### Our Values

- Maximise staff potential and their contribution to the company's success
- Give great service to all our customers and add value to our trade partners
- Make a significant, positive contribution to the community
- Attain excellence in everything we do
- Behave with honesty and integrity in all our relationships

## Blakemore Divisions



Turnover: **£1.35 Billion**

## Key Stats for 2014/15



Total number of Employees: **7,900+**



Total number of Depots: **24**



Total number of Divisions: **11**



Total Carbon emissions: **42,516 CO<sub>2</sub>t** for 2014/15 year



Overall employee engagement score: **3.02/4**



Number of stores (SPAR & Lifestyle Express): **1,500+**



Total Community Volunteering Hours: **9,568**



Total Number of Community Volunteers: **893**



Total Donated by the Blakemore Foundation: **£184,248**

## A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd - Corporate Responsibility Policy

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd is committed to responsible business practice. This commitment is demonstrated through the company's corporate responsibility programme and purpose, as outlined in the organisation's values statement – The Blakemore Way:

**“To grow a family business in ways that are profitable and sustainable for the benefit of our staff, customers and the community.”**

### Our Workplace Objectives:

**“We will maximise staff potential and their contribution to the company's success.”**

- Monitor key workplace indicators such as staff absenteeism, turnover and satisfaction.
- Fully induct, appraise and develop our staff and measure the value of our training.
- Create a working environment that supports and promotes the health, safety and well-being of staff.
- Establish two-way communication channels with our staff such as consultation groups and surveys.
- Promote diversity and equality in the workplace via recruitment, staff development and work practices.

### Our Marketplace Objectives:

**“We will give great service to all our customers and add value to our trade partners.”**

- Engage with suppliers and customers to generate positive environmental, social and business outcomes.
- Provide a great service to our customers by responding to their needs and measuring our service levels.
- Diversify our products and services to support new and underserved markets.
- Support local and small suppliers.

### Our Community Objectives:

**“We will make a significant, positive contribution to the community”**

- Use the skills of our staff to support education, employability and economic renewal in the communities we serve.
- Promote community engagement across our workforce and listen to the views of staff in relation to the good causes that they want to support.
- Maximise the resources of the Blakemore Foundation to help us achieve our community objectives.
- Measure, evaluate and report upon the inputs, outputs and impacts of our community activity.
- Use community activity to engage and inspire our customers, suppliers and other external stakeholders.

### Our Environment Objectives:

**“We will acknowledge, measure and minimise our environmental impact”**

- Undertake activity to minimise waste in our operation.
- Minimise our impact upon climate change by improving efficiencies in fuel and energy usage.
- Help suppliers and customers minimise their environmental impact
- Measure and minimise the carbon footprint of our organisation.



## A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd Group Safety, Health & Environmental Policy Statement

The management of A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd; incorporating all areas of business and subsidiary companies (The Company), regard the promotion of safety, health and environmental protection measures as an absolute requirement for management and employees at all levels.



### The company has made a commitment to:

- ✓ Comply with current and forthcoming legislation in regards to matters that relate to health and safety or the environment.
- ✓ Take account of the views of its stakeholders when formulating and reviewing its policies and procedures.
- ✓ Take all reasonably practicable steps to eliminate or otherwise reduce to an acceptable level, risks of injury and ill health to its employees, customers and others who may be exposed to such hazards.
- ✓ Prevent pollution and ensure effective control of the aspects of its business that could impact upon the environment.
- ✓ Develop and maintain occupational safety, health and environmental management systems that are compatible with the BS EN OHSAS 18001 and ISO 14001 standards and implement them across all sectors of its business.
- ✓ Set clear targets to ensure continual improvement within its management systems and the performance of its undertaking.
- ✓ Provide employees with suitable and sufficient information and training in order that they are able to carry out their responsibilities in a manner consistent with this Group Policy.
- ✓ Ensure that this policy has been effectively communicated to all persons that are employed by or otherwise undertake activities on behalf of The Company.



### Primary responsibility for setting objectives and reviewing performance resides with the Managing Director and the Board of each division of the company.

A copy of the Group Safety, Health and Environmental Policy Statement shall be clearly displayed at each of the premises occupied by The Company. A copy of the Company's Policy Manual is kept in the Senior Manager's office and will be made available to interested parties upon request.

This Group Policy Statement shall be reviewed annually by the Main Board or more frequently as circumstances require.



Our 2014/15 Responsible Business Achievements

337 employees attended Leading the Blakemore Way workshops



A total of **1,500** students received interviews from A.F. Blakemore employees



48,334 members of the community have been supported through our volunteering initiatives, that's a **21%** increase from 2013-14



Blakemore Wholesale and Fine Foods both launched online ordering platforms

Launched our first company-wide staff survey, achieving a **3.02/4** engagement score and 58% response rate

Training delivered to **5,297** employees

We have seen an overall year on year reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of **5.34%**



We picked up a number of awards including Convenience Retail and Forecourt Trader Awards



A whopping **£542,061** has been donated to good causes across our trading area

**127** new SPAR or Lifestyle Express stores recruited

Cycle to Work was launched in June 2014 and has so far seen **244** employees take this benefit up

The business scooped three Business in the Community Big Tick reaccreditations in the categories of Education, Enterprise Growth and Sustainable Products and Services



The business welcomed four graduates into the business as part of our first Graduate Scheme





**With more than 5,500 employees and 295 SPAR stores located across England and Wales, Blakemore Retail is the largest independent convenience store operator in the UK.**

The group forms part of the convenience retail arm of A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd, which is based in Willenhall, in the West Midlands.

Stores offer a wide selection of both fresh and chilled food products, including many regional lines sourced from local suppliers to support the local economy.

Blakemore Retail is recognised as an Investors in People employer and is always looking for new ways to train, retain and reward colleague achievements.

As a progressive, modern company, they take their responsibility to local communities seriously. All aspects of the business are reviewed to operate in a way to minimise environmental impact, ranging from paperless tills to the introduction of energy metering across the estate.

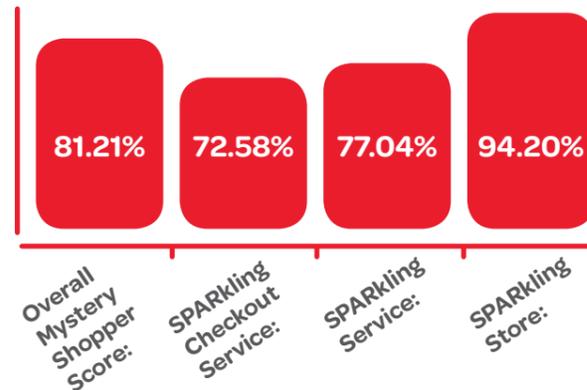


**295**  
Company  
owned stores

**Mystery Shopper**

During 2014/15 a total of 1,800 Mystery Shopper visits were carried out across the Blakemore Retail estate. Independent customers check specific area such as standards, service, availability, training and other key initiatives. This can highlight areas of best practice and stores that require improvement.

**Mystery Shopper Scores 2014/15**



Average food  
hygiene score:  
**4.55/5**



Number of Store  
Managers graduated  
Your Development  
Programme:  
**26**



**320**  
Managers attended  
Leading the Blakemore  
Way workshops



Number of colleagues  
engaged in learning &  
development activity:  
**4,318**



Number of learning  
& development  
units delivered:  
**58,184**



**Maximising Staff Potential**

Over the last 12 months a number of leadership and development opportunities have been made available to Blakemore Retail employees to maximise their potential.

A total of 26 new store managers successfully completed Your Development Programme in 2014/15. The programme is a coached management development course aimed at staff already performing at a supervisory level as well as newly appointment managers. The course consists of nine modules covering operations, managing legalities, customer services, human resources, loss prevention, fresh food, IT, forecourts and commercial awareness.

During the 2014/15 financial year 320 store and post office managers attended a two day Leading the Blakemore Way workshop.

Leading the Blakemore Way has been designed with a clear purpose to develop leadership attitudes, skills and capability to lead the Blakemore Way effectively and enjoyably.

This is an ongoing process aimed at supporting leaders to work more effectively across divisions, develop people, engender customer loyalty and create long term sustainable growth.

The programme will be rolled out to assistant managers over the next 12 months.



**NSPCC and ChildLine Fundraising**

Blakemore Retail employees have continued to demonstrate their commitment to the NSPCC's ChildLine Schools Service by donating £271,057 over the 2014/15 year.

More than 5,500 Blakemore Retail employees have supported the children's charity through a range of fundraising initiatives including fun days, raffles, bike rides and sponsored walks to name but a few.

Blakemore Retail is a dedicated supporter of the ChildLine Schools Service and since the partnership began in 2007, has raised more than £2m for the charity.

ChildLine offers vital support to children and young people when they need it most the ChildLine Schools Service works in schools across the UK, with specially trained ChildLine Schools Service volunteers going into primary schools to teach children aged 9 – 11 how to keep themselves safe from abuse and neglect.



**Total donated to the NSPCC ChildLine:**  
**£271,057**



**The Two Johns Charity Cycle**

Over the last five years two Blakemore Retail Area Managers have each cycled 1,500 miles and raised over £40,000 towards the great work of the NSPCC and ChildLine.



**Post Office Fundraising**

Three employees from Blakemore Retail SPAR Dolgellau Post Office took part in a 10,000 ft sky dive in aid of Prostate Cancer UK. Suzanne Williams, Bernese Jones and Emma Davies have raised more than £2,000 for the charity which includes a £200 match fund donation from the Blakemore Foundation.



Percentage of workforce engaged in volunteering activity:  
**8%**



Number of Blakemore Foundation donations:  
**2,130**



Total community volunteering hours:  
**3,752**

**Convenience Retail Awards**



**Blakemore Retail SPAR Leegomery Store Manager Stacey Best picked up the Zero Tolerance Award for Crime Prevention at the Convenience Retail Awards from ACS Chief Executive James Lowman.**

**Energy Efficiency**

Energy usage represents Blakemore Retail's biggest impact upon the environment. To counter this the division has begun to introduce Smart Metering across the estate to monitor and ultimately reduce energy usage. An increased focus in recent years has been upon the introduction of more energy efficient refrigeration and lighting in stores. Through the energy saving initiatives introduced, the stores involved have seen savings of more than 40%.



**Communicating with our Colleagues**

Employee engagement plays an integral role within Blakemore Retail. A number of communication methods are in place across the division to ensure employees are engaged and motivated.

These include Operational Excellence literature, in store colleague forums and annual employee magazine which highlights staff achievements as well as divisional and store news.

Our commitment to communicating with our colleagues culminates in an annual conference. This year's conference theme '2020 Vision- Attain Excellence' was attended by more than 600 managers and field staff who heard about the company's key achievements, financial performance and vision for the future.

**Colleague Engagement Survey 2014**





Blakemore Design & Shopfitting specialise in providing customers with cutting edge store designs and energy saving solutions to help drive retail sales, profitability and reduce operating costs.

Celebrating 25 years of success with many long term customers, the division take pride in high standards, giving clients a fast, reliable and efficient service with quality workmanship guaranteed.

Continual innovation through research and development has proven to be the driving force behind Blakemore design and shopfitting's expertise in the convenience store sector.

Colleague Engagement Survey 2014:



We Aim To:

- Produce store proposals that maximise sales and profitability
- Provide the most energy efficient equipment available
- Constantly benchmark our prices against those of our competitors
- Offer a high level of customer service by continually investing in our business

Number of employees  
**29**

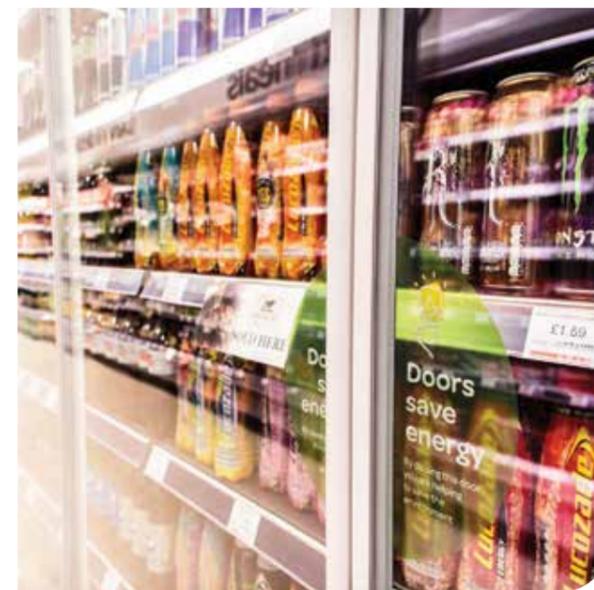
**37**  
Independent SPAR store refits

**57**  
Blakemore Retail SPAR refits

**40**  
Subway installations

Joinery Workshop

The in house joinery workshop reduces the outsourcing of certain manufacturing projects including end panels, perimeter freezers, coffee surrounds and service counters.



New Store Formats

The division provides bespoke design solutions to help maximise sales and profitability.

Store specific imagery and bespoke fixtures and fittings not only helps integrate the store in the local community



Energy Efficiency

Blakemore Design & Shopfitting uses energy efficient lighting and chillers in all store refits.

LED light fittings save around 28% more energy compared to the previous T8 light fixtures used.

Refrigeration cases with double glazed doors reduce energy consumption and improve equipment performance to reduce costs and the impact on the environment.

SPAR Newark recently received a store refit which included the installation of energy saving chillers.

This exercise has reduced the energy saving costs from £32,000 to under £16,000, saving the retailer approximately 50-60% a year in energy costs.

but creates theatre, character and impact in the store.

Blakemore Design & Shopfitting have completed more than 40 Subway installations across the SPAR network and the rise of new store formats help lead the way in convenience retailing.





### Welcoming Independent Retailers

Blakemore Trade Partners launched a brand new retailer induction in 2015 to welcome new retailers to SPAR.

The two-day induction programme aims to provide new retailers with an overview of the key support services offered by the business and assist with their transition to SPAR.

### Blakemore Trade Partners Managing Director Jerry Marwood commented:

"Blakemore Trade Partners is committed to working in partnership with retailers to help them develop successful businesses, and we want to demonstrate this partnership from day one.

One of the key benefits for retailers who choose Blakemore Trade Partners is the breadth of services provided by the wider A.F. Blakemore group, so the induction provides joiners with a great opportunity to meet key people from across the whole company."



### Blakemore Trade Partners supports the independent SPAR estate of A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd.

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd looks after all stores located across SPAR UK's Meridian & Welsh Guild. This is the largest guild of retailers within SPAR UK and covers an area which stretches from the Welsh coast to East Anglia and from the south east coast to north Lincolnshire.

The guild system encourages retailers to exchange ideas with each other and to build successful partnerships with both their customers and suppliers.

Blakemore Trade Partners also has a number of national accounts including Bourne Leisure, Euro Garages, ISS foodservice providers, and leading privately-owned convenience retail groups.

The company is constantly seeking new ways to support its independent retail estate and in 2011 launched the pioneering Retail Partners Programme. This represents a £3m investment to reduce wholesale prices and the removal of distribution charges to participating stores across the Meridian & Welsh Guild.



### Blakemore Trade Partners Open First 'Not for Profit' Store

Blakemore Trade Partners and YMCA North Staffordshire launched their very first SPAR social enterprise in Hanley, Stoke on Trent in June 2015.

The store has provided 12 new jobs- many of which have been filled by customers who have taken part in employability programmes offered by the YMCA. All profits made in-store will be re-invested in extending the YMCA's specialist services.

### YMCA North Staffordshire resident Jordan Harris said:

"I think the SPAR shop is a great thing for our local community and I really like that it is bringing jobs to our area. I am hoping to get some experience in the shop and I will definitely be applying for any future jobs. It's great seeing businesses working with charities to support the good work that places like the YMCA do."



Total number of employees: **113**



Total number of SPAR stores: **646**



New stores recruited in 2014/15: **42**

### Colleague Engagement Survey 2014:





The Guild Academy provides free practical training solutions to SPAR stores across the Meridian & Welsh Guild.

The Guild Academy offers targeted learning and development activity covering areas of compliance, best practice and management.

Total number of people trained: **1,213**



**23** independent retailers on the Your Development Programme



**23** training courses available to independent retailers



The Guild Academy aims to:

- Support independent retailers to maximise business potential, enabling owners and staff to recognise their contribution to their company's success
- Give great service and support to all members of the Meridian & Welsh Guild and our partners
- Encourage retailers to recognise their role in the community and make a positive contribution
- Attaining excellence in everything they do
- Behave with honesty and integrity in all relationships



#### Retailer Roadshows

A series of Retailer Roadshows were hosted for retailers across the Meridian & Welsh Guild to keep them up to date with latest initiatives.

The aim of the roadshows is to update retailers on the latest advancements in the convenience sector and the most recent tools available from Blakemore Trade Partners to help them develop their businesses.

A total of 212 retailers attended the sessions which included updates on e-learning, category management tools, product ranges and national sales and marketing strategies.

#### Blakemore Foundation Independent Retailer Scheme

The Blakemore Foundation Independent Retailer Scheme aims to recognise the wide range of community activity independent retailers undertake with a £150 match fund donation. A total of 45 grants have been made to retailers during 2014/15.

A great example of this is a store manager from SPAR Ely who raised £520 in aid of the British Heart Foundation by taking part in a 10,000 ft sponsored sky dive.

Muhammad Shoaib Nawazish completed the sky dive in September 2014 due to his passion for supporting children with heart conditions.



#### Sustainable Partnerships

In 2015, A.F. Blakemore announced a new partnership with award winning SPAR retail and Restaurant business Eat 17 Ltd.

The joint venture with the East London-based company will enable the Blakemore group to gain a greater understanding of its success in the food service sector.

Established in 2007, EAT 17 has become a world renowned in the convenience sector for its entrepreneurial flair, innovation and unrivalled quality produce.

The business has been recognised with a number of industry accolades including Innovative Store of the Year at the IGD awards and Best New Store at the Convenience Retail Awards.

#### Eat 17 co-founder James Brundle commented:

“Having worked in partnership with A.F. Blakemore since 2010 we have seen the great benefits that their industry expertise and symbol group backing has brought to our company and are confident that this partnership will help us to grow our business and develop it to the next level.”

Value of donations made to good causes via the Blakemore Foundation Independent Retailer Scheme: **£6,750**



Total employee volunteering hours: **336**



Percentage of workforce engaged in community activity: **33%**





**Blakemore Fine Foods is a unique distribution network that connects British producers with their customers.**

Blakemore Fine Foods consolidates orders onto a simple 'One order, One invoice, One delivery' across more than 3,500 chilled, ambient and frozen product lines from more than 200 producers.

Blakemore Fine Foods works in partnership with British producers and recognises that individuality is a local producer's greatest strength. Fine Foods works closely with producers to ensure that they retain this point of difference.

By allowing producers to work together in a consolidated approach whereby Blakemore Fine Foods takes care of the operational tasks, producers' time is free to concentrate on producing product, developing their business and speaking to customers.

Blakemore Fine Foods is also unique in the support they give retailers from product showcases, recycling facilities and point of sale provided to customers.



**Online Ordering**

In 2015 the division launched a brand new online ordering system and reduced delivery lead times to enhance its service to customers.

The online ordering site enables customers to view and order from the entire 'Best of British' food and drink range, consisting of 3,500 products.

In addition, the business has reduced delivery lead times by 24 hours so that retailers can now order from the chilled, ambient and frozen ranges on a day-one- for-day- three basis.



**Producer Growth Scheme**

The Blakemore Fine Foods Producer Growth Scheme helps small producers to grow their business.

The scheme, which was launched in 2013, allows producers who have been working with the company for more than 12 months to access a loan of up to £5,000 to help develop their business.

Emma Cardwell from The Flavoured Butter Company was one of the first products to benefit from the scheme and as a result has invested in new machinery to help automate her butter production process.

The loan scheme has also enabled Emma to buy a commercial fridge and freezer to improve storage capacity and invested in new branded outer case packaging that can be used by retailers as a display unit.



In 2015, Blakemore Fine Foods were reaccruited with a Business in the Community Big Tick award in the Enterprise Growth category.



Total number of employees:  
**33**



**88%** of employees involved in learning & development activity over the last 12 months.

**Seeing is Believing Visits**

Blakemore Fine Foods Commercial Director Caoire Blakemore took part in a Business in the Community Seeing is Believing visit exploring how big businesses can level the playing field for small and medium sized enterprises through their procurement processes.

Caoire shared with the group what Blakemore Fine Foods is doing to support and procure from SMEs.

Number of Producers:

**+200**

Number of Product Lines:

**+3,000**

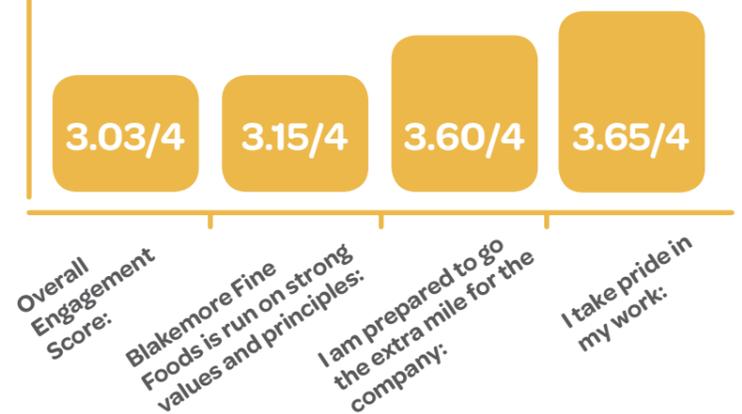


Members of the community supported:  
**32**



Percentage of the workforce engaged in community activity:  
**6%**

**Colleague Engagement Survey 2014:**





Blakemore Logistics distributes to more than 1,000 SPAR stores located across the UK. The company's overall distribution network spans across Wales to the east coast of England, reaching as far north as North Yorkshire and as far south as Kent and Sussex.

The division boasts more than 514,000 square feet of warehousing space, including 166,000 square feet at its headquarters on the Longacres Industrial Estate in Willenhall in the West Midlands and a further 60,000 square feet within the Walsall borough at Axxess 10 in Darlaston.

The company also operates a 150,000 square foot warehousing facility in Talbot Green, South Wales, and another 90,000 square foot site in Hastings, East Sussex.

Blakemore Logistics operates according to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and BRC Food Storage and Distribution standards and has also achieved Silver Investors in People status.

As part of its commitment to serving the communities in which it trades, Blakemore Logistics also supports A.F. Blakemore's Fine Foods operation, which helps local producers to get their products to market more efficiently.



Total number of employees:  
**771**



**327** Colleagues participated in staff social events

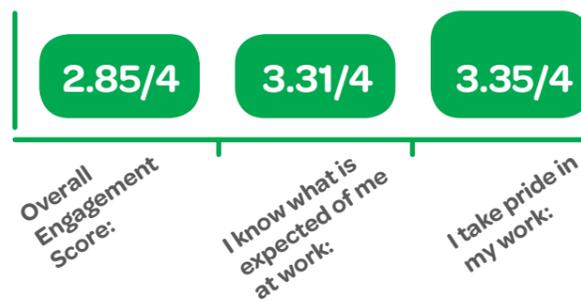


Number of people signed up to Cycle to Work Scheme:  
**83**



Total number of depots:  
**4**

#### Colleague Engagement Survey 2014:



#### London to Paris cycle

Two Blakemore Logistics transport managers have raised more than £7,100 for Bowel Cancer UK by cycling 300 miles from London to Paris.

On April 8th Dave Higgs and Pete James embarked on a four-day bike ride from Bexley Heath in London to the Eiffel Tower in Paris, covering an average of 75 miles per day through towns and countryside.



#### Business in the Community Responsible Business Awards

In 2015 Blakemore Logistics was reaccruited with a Business in the Community Big Tick award in the category of Sustainable Products and Services.



#### Road Safety Week

Primary school children from across all three of Blakemore Logistics' distribution hubs have been educated on the rules of the road as part of the company's annual road safety campaign.

A total of 1,175 pupils from 14 schools across the West Midlands, South Wales and Hastings took part in the annual road safety event which runs alongside Brake's National Road Safety campaign and is supported by the Fire Service.



Total employee volunteer hours:  
**1,951**



Blakemore Foundation support:  
**£5,482**

Percentage of workforce engaged in community activity:  
**15%**



Employee fundraising:  
**£14,140**



### Prince's Trust

A group of unemployed young people from across the West Midlands has found work in the logistics industry thanks to a partnership between A.F. Blakemore and youth charity The Prince's Trust.

Working alongside training provider GTG West Midlands, eight 16-25 year olds undertook The Trust's six week 'Get into Logistics' course consisting of two weeks training and four weeks of vocational experience at Blakemore Logistics' chilled warehouse.

As part of the programme candidates took part in an initial assessment day and ready for work training in addition to obtaining their RTITB forklift licence.

As a result, Blakemore Logistics has offered full time permanent positions for five young people while other candidates have secured employment elsewhere. All participants receive mentoring support from The Prince's Trust to help them find a job or training opportunity.

The Prince's Trust Get Into programme aims to give young people who are work ready but do not have vocational skills the opportunity to develop the relevant skills and experience to enable them to move into a sustainable job in a specific sector.

### Developing Drivers of the Future

In 2014 Blakemore Logistics hosted a driver apprenticeship scheme in partnership with the Logistics Apprenticeship Training Academy (LATA).

The scheme enables young people to gain the qualifications and experience required for a career in professional LGV driving.

Since the scheme began, the division has been able to offer three candidates full time employment after qualifying as an LGV Class 2 Driver.



**191** employees taken part in learning & development activities.

### Waste Reduction

Waste is a key focus area for Blakemore Logistics and the £700,000 investment in a recycling centre aimed at reducing the environmental impact of the business enables SPAR retail customers and the wider A.F. Blakemore group to recycle paper, cardboard, polyplastics, aluminium and glass.

Waste food is processed at an anaerobic digestion plant, which generates biogas to supply the National Grid and agricultural supplements.

A new returnable packaging initiative has also been launched that consists of a tray rental and washing scheme. This reduces both inbound and outbound product packaging waste.



**5,000t** of waste processed each year



### Energy Efficiency

Blakemore Logistics is committed to improving the efficiencies of the business whether through the energy efficiency of its warehouses or the fuel efficiency of the vehicle fleet.

A total of £85,000 has been spent on energy-saving lighting across the company's ambient and chilled warehouses to help improve energy efficiency and reduce the company's carbon footprint.



### People with Potential

In 2014, 19 promising leaders from across Blakemore Logistics took part in an interactive assessment day to identify future talent across the business.

People with Potential aims to identify future team leaders by asking candidates to take part in a number of exercises designed to highlight the attributes of good leaders.

Of the 19 candidates, two were identified as team leaders and will undertake ILM level 2 as well as gaining essential knowledge and experience needed as a new team leader.



**Blakemore Wholesale entails the cash & carry arm of A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd.**

The division operates from 14 cash & carry depots in Bangor, Barnsley, Birmingham, Cardiff, Gateshead, Grimsby, Hexham, Killingworth, Middlesbrough, Newport, Penrith, Swansea, Walsall and the company's head office at Wolverhampton Science Park.

The company is the largest member of the Landmark Group and employs 693 people.

Blakemore Wholesale is committed to supporting independent retailers across the country and provides the products, prices and services to help stores compete against the major multiples. This commitment can be seen in our Lifestyle Express retail club that play an increasingly important role in the UK convenience store landscape.

Today Blakemore Wholesale's customer base far exceeds the traditional role of a cash & carry operator and now serves key vending, forecourt and catering customers nationwide.



**Maximising Staff Potential**

Operations managers from across the division have taken part in an internal leadership development programme. The programme aims to develop key leadership behaviours and introduce the key skills of coaching, process improvement and leading change.



**159** people attended learning & development courses over the last 12 months



Total number of employees:  
**693**

**Colleague Engagement Survey 2014**



**Online Ordering**

In 2015 the business launched a new online ordering platform enabling customers to order online for both delivery and for free same-day Click & Collect service.

The improved site allows customers to search for products faster than ever before, with product images improving the overall shopping experience. The site also boasts a dedicated retail area, offering Lifestyle Express customers downloadable point of sale, store planograms and category advice.



**Depot Buyer of the Year**

In 2015 Louise Hill from Walsall Cash & Carry was awarded the title of Blakemore Wholesale Depot Buyer of the Year for the third year in a row. The award recognises Louise for excellent performance in the areas of active selling, core range compliance, sales and margin growth, waste control, innovation, merchandising and maintenance of standards.



Total number of Lifestyle Express stores:  
**654**



**Community Champion Awards**

Lawrence Smith, Gateshead Cash & Carry, and Jo Steventon, Trading, were recognised as Blakemore Wholesale Community Champion Award Winners in 2015 due to their outstanding contribution to their communities. Collectively the duo have donated 464 hours of employee time and £6,390 to local good causes.



Total number of depots:  
**14**



**Awarding Excellence**

Blakemore Wholesale has scooped a number of accolades in the last 12 months including three Landmark Wholesale awards and two industry awards for Lifestyle Express retailer Bay Bashir.

Blakemore Wholesale collected Catering Business Development Member of the Year, Delivered Depot of the Year (Penrith Cash & Carry) and Own Brand Depot of the Year (Barnsley Cash & Carry) at the 2014 Landmark Wholesale Awards.

In addition, Lifestyle Express retailer Bay Bashir was crowned Responsible Retailer of the Year at the Asian Trader and Independent Achievers Academy awards.

Both awards recognised Bay for his tireless work in ensuring his stores never sell age-restricted products to underage customers.



**Supporting Small Enterprises**

Employees from Swansea Cash & Carry have taken part in a Business in the Community event aimed at helping smaller companies in the Welsh food and drink industry access new business.

The Access the Buyer event was set up to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from the food and drink sector do business with larger organisations and provide insight into procurement processes and specific challenges faced by buyers. The event also provided attendees with the opportunity to participate in discussions on emerging trends in the food and drink sector and to network and build relationships.



**Make a Wish Foundation UK Fundraising**

More than 80 convenience store retailers from across the Lifestyle Express stores group have raised £2,640 for Make-A-Wish@ UK, the charity that grants magical wishes to children and young people fighting life-threatening conditions.

Lifestyle Express stores across the Blakemore Wholesale estate sold tickets for a grand prize raffle to raise funds for the children's charity.

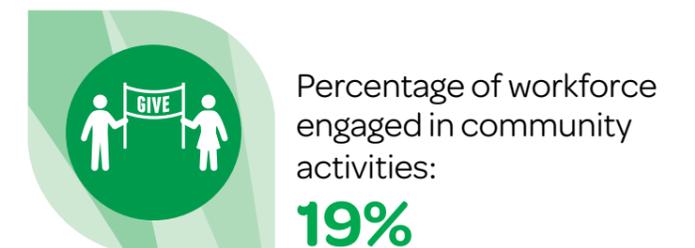
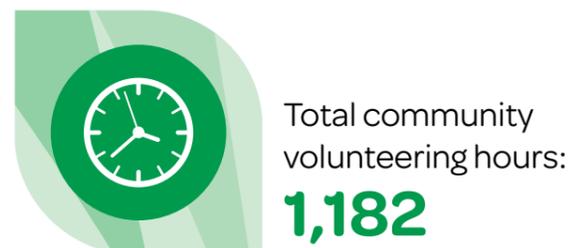
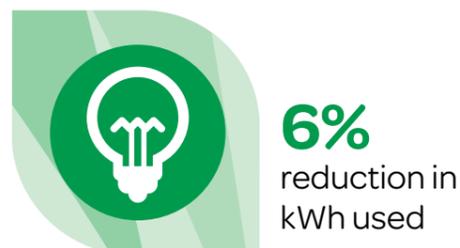
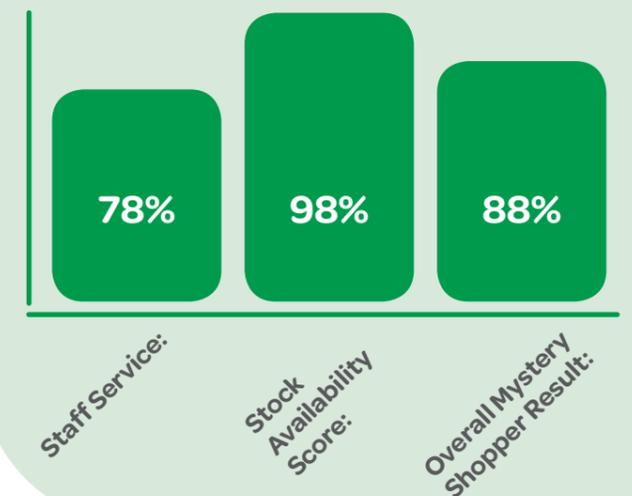
There are currently 20,000 children and young people in the UK fighting life-threatening conditions. Make-A-Wish will grant around 1,000 wishes in 2015, and needs to raise £7.5 million to achieve this. The charity receives no government funding or lottery grants – so every donation really does count.



**Mystery Shopper Results:**

Mystery Shopper visits are carried out at all cash & carry depots. Scores are awarded based on customer service, product availability, depot cleanliness and promotions.

**Here is a snapshot of the results:**





**Blakemore Foodservice is a leading multi-temperature food distribution company that supplies the public, private and free trade sectors.**

The business has a diverse range of nationwide customers that include public houses, restaurant chains, the leisure industry, schools and professional caterers amongst many.

Blakemore Foodservice now employs 392 people across sites in Darlaston, West Midlands and Wakefield, West Yorkshire and is set to record a turnover of £160 million for the forthcoming year.

This success has been built upon the development of a partnership approach with customers via our team of friendly and knowledgeable staff.

In addition to a strong customer focus, Blakemore Foodservice has developed a great team ethos across the workplace and is committed to making a positive impact across the communities it serves.

This approach has led to the company picking up numerous external accolades including the Investors in People standard, Business in the Community Big Tick awards and ISO 9001 and 14001 certification.



Number of employees  
**392**



Number of depots  
**2**

**Customer and Supplier Satisfaction Scores:**

**Supplier Survey**  
**95.7%**

**Marstons Survey**  
**95.3%**

**Local Authority Survey**  
**98.65%**

**National Accounts Survey**  
**98.65%**



**Fuel Efficiency**

As a part of its commitment to reducing the impact its fleet has on the environment, Blakemore Foodservice has invested in a DAF Euro 6 slipstream vehicle.

The latest addition to the fleet features a tail-curved roof to accelerate airflow off the trailing edge of the body, reducing turbulence to improve vehicle efficiency. Slipstream vehicles are on average 10.67% more fuel

efficient than identical vehicles without the body kit.

To further reduce its environmental impact, the division delivers safe and fuel efficient driving (SAFED) training to all company HGV drivers as part of the Driver CPC.

The SAFED module educates drivers on the most fuel efficient way of driving to prevent harsh braking, over revving and speeding.

|                    | Packs Per Litre |         | Sales Per Litre |         |
|--------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|                    | 2013/14         | 2014/15 | 2013/14         | 2014/15 |
| <b>Jamesbridge</b> | 11.89           | 12.23   | £71.37          | £73.37  |
| <b>Wakefield</b>   | 14.01           | 23.99   | £84.09          | £143.96 |



1.63%  
year on year  
reduction  
in kWh used



92.67% of  
total waste  
is recycled

6.41%  
year on year  
reduction  
in CO<sub>2</sub> kg  
per delivery



Total  
CO<sub>2</sub> kg:  
6,588,358\*

\*Estimated figures based upon our energy and distribution fuel usage



**Developing our People through Volunteering Activities**

As part of Blakemore Foodservice’s commitment to maximising staff potential, the division has linked learning and development opportunities to community activities in order to bring skills learnt in the classroom to life.

During 2014/15 two employees completed an Effective Team Leader qualification and as part of the course assessment also completed a community project.

A team of volunteers spent a week at Salisbury Primary School in the West Midlands painting and decorating their corridors.

The project enabled the two delegates to put into practice skills such as team leading, delegation, communication and team work.

This project was part of a long standing partnership with the school with activities including school governor, regeneration and reading volunteering.



**19%** of workforce engaged in volunteering activities



Total number of employee volunteering hours  
**874**



Funds raised for charity  
**£7,172**



**Foodservice Cash Boost to Acorns Children’s Hospice**

Blakemore Foodservice, Jamesbridge donated £2,500 to Acorns Children’s Hospice following 12 months of employee fundraising initiatives including raffles, barbecues, bake sales and a half marathon to name but a few.

The donation will be used to help the charity continue its work caring for life-limited and life-threatened children and young people, and their families, across the heart of England.

**Wholesale Driver of the Year**

Martin Hancox, a delivery driver from Wakefield was crowned Delivered Wholesale Driver of the Year at the Federation of Wholesale Distributors (FWD) Gold Medal Awards 2014.

**Blakemore Foodservice Catering Awards**

Blakemore Foodservice celebrated the achievements of their catering customers at the eleventh annual awards.

The awards acknowledge and reward the company’s customers for their initiative, skill and dedication to their businesses.

The Royal School for the Deaf picked up the Public Sector award whilst the University of Chester was crowned Private Sector winner.



Overall staff engagement Score  
**2.97/4**



**84** Colleagues taken part in health & wellbeing initiatives



**Blakemore Wholesale Distribution is one of the UK's leading delivered wholesalers.**

The business has a diverse range of customers across the UK, servicing multiple and independent retailers, forecourts, vending operators, fellow wholesalers plus education, leisure and hospitality sites.

The division is a leading supplier of goods to the UK vending market and supplies 20,000 ambient, chilled and frozen product lines.

Blakemore Wholesale Distribution's main centre is a purpose built 84,000 sq ft site in Great Bridge in the West Midlands.

The success and growth of the business has been achieved by working in partnership with customers to develop bespoke solutions tailored to individual requirements.



Distribution Fleet  
**40**



Total number of employees  
**80**



**Jericho House Sheltered Accommodation**

In 2014 a team of six volunteers spent four days transforming a disused area into a kitchen garden and relaxation area at Jericho House Sheltered Accommodation in Wolverhampton.

The project involved painting a seating area, planting two vegetable and herb beds and creating a relaxation area using fragrant plants and flowers.

The project took place as part of the Institute of Management and Leadership (ILM) Level 2 Certificate in Team Leading, where delegates are required to carry out a volunteering activity in the community to demonstrate skills learnt.



Percentage of workforce engaged in volunteering activity:  
**16%**



Employee volunteering hours:  
**278**

**84,000 Sq Ft**  
Main Distribution Centre at Apex II, Great Bridge





**Blakemore Fresh Foods is a UK-based international wholesaler and distributor of fresh meat, committed to the highest standards of quality and customer service.**

The division is based at a £3.5m, 30,000 sq ft meat-cutting plant and storage facility located at Hilton Cross Business Park South Staffordshire.

Blakemore Fresh Foods specialises in meat manufacturing and is a major importer of quality meat sourced across Australia, New Zealand, South America, North America and Europe.



Total number of employees  
**58**



Total CO<sub>2</sub> t\*  
**1,013**



Ethnic Sales  
**£9,535,459**



**91%** Year on year increase in pallets backhauled



**200** tonnes of waste recycled



### Environmental Responsibility

Blakemore Fresh Foods takes its responsibilities in regards to food standards and hygiene very seriously and has achieved the Grade A Global Standard for Food Safety BRC / EFSIS SAI Global (Issue 7) accreditation.

Environmental best practice is a key consideration at the company's cutting plant at Hilton Cross, South Staffordshire.

The site includes the installation of a new HCFC R404A system, which provides energy efficient refrigeration that is low in toxicity.

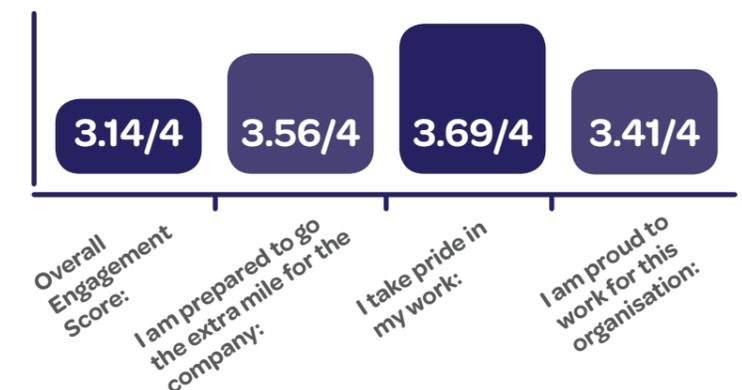
A heat reclamation system has been installed that will provide free hot water across the production area while LED lighting in the main storage area provides the brightness of standard bulbs, without emitting the same level of heat to negatively impact refrigeration motors. Sensors have also been fitted to reduce energy usage by up to 10% during inactive periods.

The facilities are managed via an RDM system that will measure, monitor and control energy usage across the site to ensure optimum levels of efficiency.

Blakemore Fresh Foods prides itself on a cooperative and flexible approach to dealing with both customers and suppliers. The division provides a range of ethnic food via a dedicated multilingual sales person and is also happy to backhaul or undertake reciprocal trade with business partners.



### Colleague Engagement Survey 2014:



\*Estimated figure based upon our energy and distribution fuel usage

The A.F. Blakemore Group receives support from the company's Technical Services team. These encompass Finance, IT, HR and Management Services.

A total of 220 people provide a wide range of services to the business including internal and external communications, operational HR support, learning and development, IT support, payroll and accounts support.



### Practice interviews

Staff from across IT, HR and Accounts have shown a continued support of the A.F. Blakemore Education Programme by supporting practice interview sessions across the year, over 1,000 pupils from schools in the West Midlands and South Wales have benefited.

Practice interview events, which form part of A.F. Blakemore's award-winning Education Matters programme, aim to provide school students with the practical, real-life advice and support necessary to successfully enter the job market or higher education.

Each student is allocated a business volunteer who discusses their CV, conducts a short interview based on a fictional job role and then provides feedback offering advice for future interviews.



Number of employees  
**220**



### Business in the Community Big Tick

In 2015 the A.F. Blakemore's Education Matters Programme was reaccruited with a Business in the Community Big Tick in acknowledgement of its commitment to supporting schools within its trading area.

Since the programme began in 2008, A.F. Blakemore has supported more than 44,000 students across 253 schools involving 934 employee volunteers.

Activities have ranged from practice interviews, enterprise events, mentoring students, business workshops, reading support and practical regeneration projects.



### Colleague Engagement Survey 2014

**3.03/4**

Technical Services Engagement Score:

**3.13/4**

Human Resources Engagement Score:



Total amount donated to good causes:  
**£7,657**



Number of community volunteering hours:  
**1,185**



Community projects completed  
**29**



**46%** of workforce engaged in community volunteering



**67** individuals taken part in learning & development courses



**15** learning & development courses taken place



### Fundraising

Employees within Central Function have helped to raise more than £600 for CLIC Sargent's Wig Wednesday.

In total four sites across the Blakemore estate took part in Wig Wednesday on Wednesday May 21<sup>st</sup> where employees donned their craziest wigs for charity.

The company's charitable trust, the Blakemore Foundation also helped to match fund employees fundraising.

All the proceeds from the day will go to providing clinical, practical, financial and emotional support to children and young people, and their families dealing with cancer.



### Learning & Development

During the 2014/15 financial year a leadership development programme was launched across Blakemore Technical Services to help the business achieve its 2020 vision.

Delivered by the A.F. Blakemore Learning & Development department, the programme is focussed upon delivering change, leadership, coaching and communication across the Finance and IT teams.

A total of 17 managers, supervisors and team leaders attended the course.

## Our 2015/16 Responsible Business Commitments

### Environment

- Improve our energy efficiency by 3% across all depots and report on any new initiatives to support this
- Recycle 95% of our total waste
- Undertake and report upon initiatives to reduce emissions and improve the efficiency of the fleet by 3% from 2014/15
- Undertake a full Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving campaign and aim for 100% of drivers across all depots to complete this
- Aim to recycle 25% of all oil sold and begin to monitor BA and Lowries oil sales
- Launch a scheme to backhaul cardboard and plastic waste from all our delivered customers and investigate recycling opportunities for customers in depot



### Workplace

- Hold a further two Cycle to Work application intakes
- Run and monitor health and wellbeing programmes and report on their impact
- Conduct a second colleague engagement survey and aim to increase the response rate and engagement score.
- Work with an external consultant to develop a business case and strategy for equality and diversity.
- We will launch a programme to offer apprenticeships within our business and monitor and measure the success of these.



### Marketplace

- Work with suppliers to investigate and develop opportunities for product backhaul and returnable packaging
- We will continue our Lifestyle Express Retailer of the Year programme to recognise the best performing retailers
- Continue to maintain BRC accreditation
- Review our Sustainable Procurement programme alongside external benchmarking activity such as the CR Index
- Aim to carry out another supplier survey across Foodservice and Central Distribution suppliers
- Improve our Mystery Shopper programme and aim for a SPARKling Service score of 80% and an overall rating of 86%



### Community

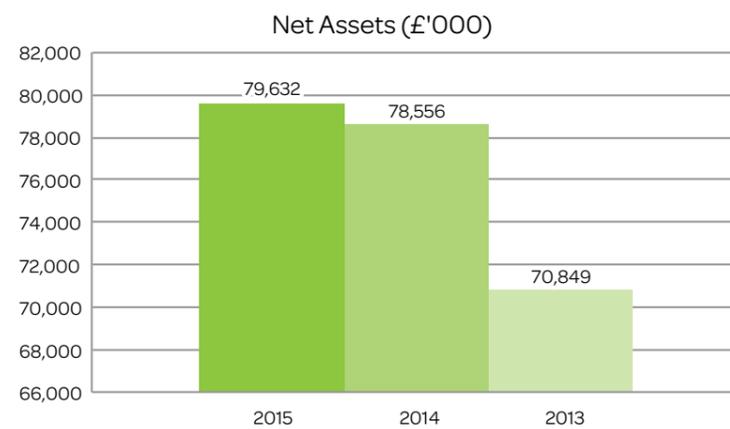
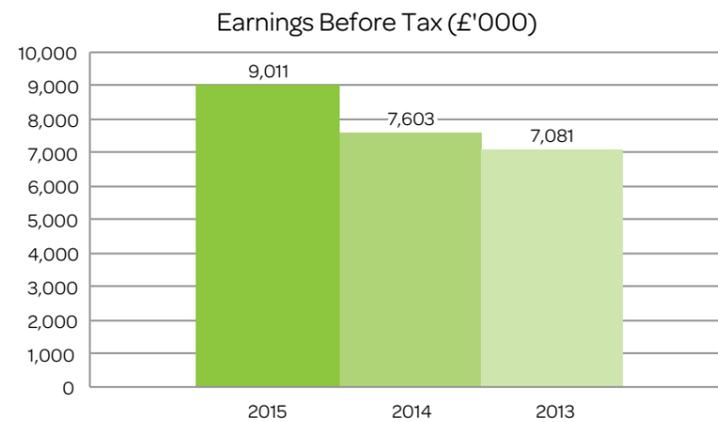
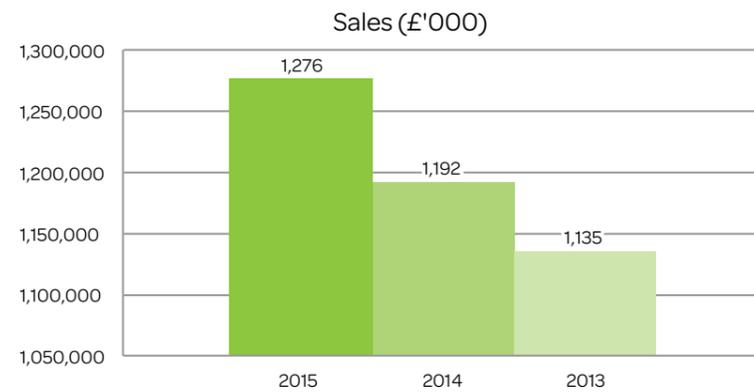
- We will engage 15% of our workforce in community volunteering activity
- We will support 250,000 members of our local community through volunteering and the Blakemore Foundation
- We will host 50 work experience placements
- We will engage 100 independent retailers in the Blakemore Foundation Independent Retailer Scheme
- We will help to generate £700,000 of staff and public leverage via the Blakemore Foundation
- Target a 99% staff satisfaction for the questions 'I am proud to work for a company that supports the local community'
- We will score over for the question 'to what extent do you believe A.F. Blakemore positively contributes to the community' on the company colleague survey



## A.F. Blakemore Group Financial Performance

The following graphs represent A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd's recent financial performance to April 30 2015.

Our 2015 results are very encouraging at a time when there are significant challenges faced by all operators across the retail and wholesale grocery market.



## a.f. **blakemore** 2020 strategy

### Looking Ahead – The A.F. Blakemore & Son 2020 Strategy

**A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd has developed a strategy that has set out our vision of what the company will be like in 2020.**

The need for collaboration and innovation across the A.F. Blakemore Group has been identified as key enablers for the business to achieve its strategic goals and its vision to be a multi-market national food operator with a fantastic reputation for service by trade partners and consumers.

The 2020 strategy is focussed upon generating sustainable growth and long-term prosperity, not just short-term success. It is also important that the business deliver increased profitability and a clear target has been set to achieve 2% profit before tax by 2020.

A.F. Blakemore is a business that has been built upon reinvestment in both its internal infrastructure and the customers and trade partners who we work alongside. The need for increased profitability is therefore vital for us to achieve sustainable growth for the benefit of our staff, customers, suppliers and the communities that we serve.

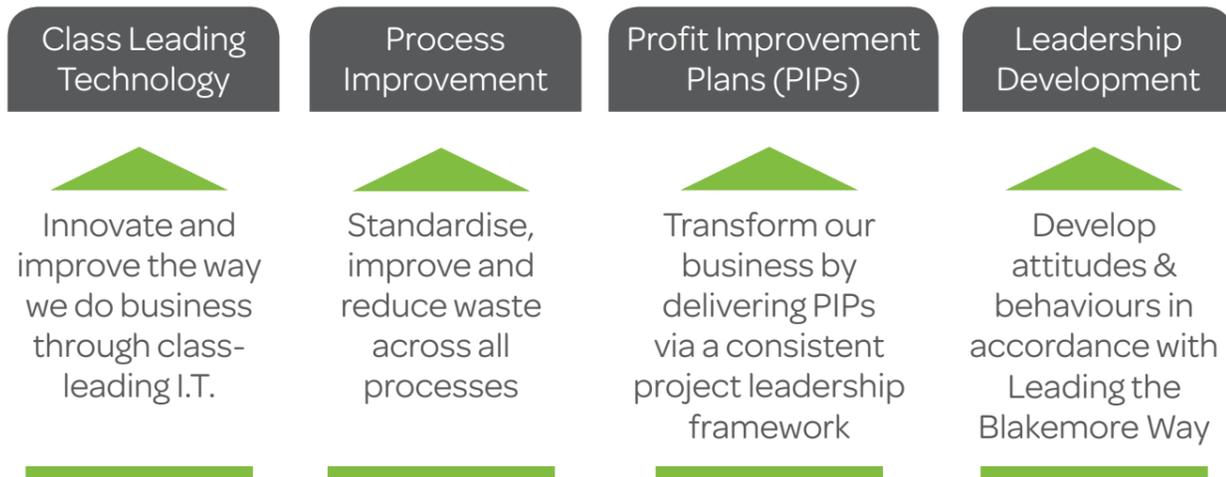
### The Future of our Responsible Business Strategy

While our business changes so will our approach to Responsible Business. In 2015 A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd undertook a private benchmarking exercise with Business in the Community aligned with its Corporate Responsibility Index.

The C.R. Index has enabled the company to identify strengths in the management of corporate responsibility, assess where future progress can be made and benchmark itself against like-minded organisations.

The results of this review will allow the company to develop an action plan that will shape the future strategy, governance, management and implementation of our responsible business programme to help us remain true to our values in response to new external challenges, risks and issues.





**Purpose**

To grow a family business in ways that are profitable and sustainable for the benefit of our staff, customers and community

There are a number of ways that A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd seeks to achieve the 2020 Vision that can be encapsulated below:

**Profit Improvement Plans:**

The 2020 Strategy is built upon a series of Profit Improvement Plans (PIPs) that have been prioritised and categorised into four key areas:

- a) Group PIPs – The “Game Changers”
- b) Cross Divisional PIPs – Collaborative projects that will make a big impact
- c) Divisional PIPs – Significant projects taking place in individual divisions
- d) Business Unit PIPs – Continuous business improvement activity

These plans are governed through a bespoke Project Leadership framework that ensures a consistent approach to projects across the Blakemore Group.



**Process Improvement**

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd sees process improvement as new way of working, designed to meet customer requirements through the elimination of waste across all aspects of the operation. As the business grows and continues to leverage value from its scale, size and diversity it is vital our processes are lean and exceed our customers’ expectations.



**Class Leading Technology**

Throughout its history A.F. Blakemore has innovated and used new technologies to grow, improve the way we operate and serve our customers. The need to further evolve and develop class leading I.T. will remain a core part of our future business success.



**Leadership Development**

Leading the Blakemore Way is an attitudinal leadership development programme that forms an integral part of the company’s culture. It is vital that as our business grows we further embed a culture of responsive leadership built around the core competencies of engagement, strategic analysis, empowerment and evaluation.

All this is underpinned by the clear purpose outlined in the Blakemore Way and the core values of maximising staff potential, giving great customer service, positively contributing to the community, attaining excellence and behaving with honesty & integrity.



# a.f. blakemore 2020 strategy

“ We have the values outlined in the Blakemore Way, the leadership behaviours delivered through Leading the Blakemore Way, strategic profit improvement plans, a project leadership toolkit to deliver these plans and a process improvement programme to help eliminate waste and improve the customer experience.

I am confident that we have the strategy, tools and the people to achieve our 2020 vision. ”

- A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd Group Managing Director Peter Blakemore.



