

When it comes to the crunch Wigton customers rally round

Residents support local businesses and help buck national trend

BY SARAH NEWSTEAD

TRADERS in Wigton squared up to the credit crunch this Christmas as residents rallied to support local businesses.

Gloomy financial forecasts threatened to overshadow the festive season and high street chains such as Woolworths and Zavvi collapsed.

But despite the looming recession, business was booming in Wigton according to its shopkeepers and hoteliers.

Harrison's Butchers on Wigton's King Street saw queues stretching out the door in the run up to Christmas.

"The family-owned butchers sold 400 turkeys, 80 capons, 80 ducks and 50 geese."

Owner Paul Harrison said: "We look after people and give them good quality stuff. All of our meat is local and we had queues into the street from 7am until 6pm on the Tuesday before Christmas."

Harrison's has been in Wigton for more than 25 years. Shop manager Nigel Rickard added: "We didn't see much of the credit crunch."

"We have loyal customers and I think that's the trick."

Bill Lightfoot, of Lightfoot's greengrocers on High Street, agreed local support has helped boost takings.



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BEN RUSSELL

bit later than usual, but in the last few days it all came in.

"People say they usually get their vegetables in supermarkets, but they tell me at Christmas they like to buy fresh."

Nationally - they like to get the proper goods."

National reports revealed families across the country would tighten their belts and slash spending.

orah Thomlinson, owner of Sally's clothing store on Duke Street, said Wigton shoppers bucked the trend.

"I can't speak for everyone," she said.

fine. This year has been much the same as last."

"We've done well with scarves - the accessories have been selling well this year."



Hazel Duiy: 'Without local trade more shops will end up closing'

pass up on a good night out according to Greenhill Hotel's receptionist, Sarah Jameson.

She said: "We've been very busy, almost too busy! Business has been as good as, and if not better, than last year."

According to Ms Jameson, party nights and festive menus at the hotel were popular and the hotel's New Year's Eve bash drew the crowds.

Hazel Duiy, Wigton businesswoman and Spark's women's enterprise ambassador for the North West Development Agency, said: "Without local trade more shops and businesses will end up closing, which increases the need to travel further for resources, minimises consumer choice and takes money and trade away from your home town."