



DEBBIE HARDING ANNOUNCED AS NEXT CHAIR OF THE SCOTTISH RETAIL CONSORTIUM

The Scottish Retail Consortium (SRC) has announced that Debbie Harding, Chief People & Corporate Officer at Dobbies Garden Centres, is to become SRC Chair in Spring 2024.

Debbie will succeed John Brodie M.B.E. who has served as SRC Chair since January 2018.

Debbie is a board director with Dobbies Garden Centres which is the UK's leading garden centre retailer. Headquartered in Scotland, Dobbies Garden Centres employs in the region of 4,000 colleagues across 77 stores located in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland with its latest store opening in Antrim this week.

Debbie is a member of the Scottish Government's Retail Industry Leadership Group and joined SRC's Board in early 2021. She will be the first female Chair of the Scottish Retail Consortium since it formed in 1999 and will work with the 14-person Board and Director David Lonsdale to champion the retail industry and enhance its prospects for growth.

The retail industry is Scotland's largest private sector employer with 258,000 colleagues.

Debbie Harding said:

"Scotland's retail industry has proved its resilience during the turbulent times of the pandemic and costs crunch, and continues to make an enormous economic and social contribution to our country."

"However, this remains a challenging time for the industry. Technological change and customer behaviour are evolving at pace, operating costs remain elevated, and demands from public policy appear to be ever-increasing."

"That is why it is important the SRC continues the work John oversaw, to tell the story of a changing retail landscape and to encourage policy makers to pursue a more coherent approach towards the industry which helps retailers adapt and evolve to meet the challenges ahead. I look forward to taking on the leadership of the SRC Board and ensuring a continued strong voice for the sector."

SRC Director David Lonsdale added:

"I'm thrilled Debbie has agreed to take on the role of SRC Chair. She is an outstanding industry leader and I'm sure she'll bring those skills to support the work of the SRC in advocating on behalf of retailers and the customers they serve."

"I would like to pay enormous thanks to John Brodie for the very significant contribution he has made as chair over the past almost six years. He has been a brilliant servant of the industry through unprecedented and remarkably active times for the SRC, overseeing and guiding our efforts through the pandemic lockdowns and costs crunch. We wish him all the

best for the future and an enjoyable retirement when he steps down from Scotmid next August."

John Brodie M.B.E. added:

"The Scottish Retail Consortium does an important job in representing the industry to policy makers and stakeholders in Scotland and across the UK, and I have every confidence that Debbie will be a first class Chair and further strengthen the work of the SRC."

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