

Divisional review continued

Ulster Bank Ulster Bank paid tribute to footballing legend George Best with a commemorative five pound note this year. The response from fans around the globe was overwhelming and the limited edition of one million notes sold out in ten days. Barbara McNarry, his sister, is pictured with one of the notes in the family home.





Ulster Bank



YouthBank Ulster Bank has launched a network of 30 YouthBanks in partnership with three national community youth foundations. This initiative encourages youngsters to take decisions on which youth-led community projects to support, underlining Ulster Bank's commitment to its community investment programme across the island of Ireland.

- Contribution £602 million (2005 – £530 million)
- Total income up 15%
- Operating profit up 20%

Ulster Bank, including First Active, provides an extensive range of retail and wholesale financial services for personal and corporate customers across the island of Ireland, through branches, business centres, the telephone and the internet.

- Total customer numbers increased by 6% to 1.7 million. Business customer numbers grew by 6% or 10,000, while personal customer numbers also grew by 6% or 90,000. Use of internet and telephone banking increased 47%.
- We opened 80,000 new current accounts in 2006, following the introduction of transaction fee-free banking for all retail customers.
- We acquired 18,000 new student customers (9,000 in Northern Ireland and 9,000 in the Republic of Ireland), representing a 50% increase on 2005. Additional relationships were established with the two major universities in Northern Ireland.
- In 2006 we became the No 1 financial institution for business in Northern Ireland, with 32% of all businesses classifying Ulster Bank as their main bank.
- We have increased staff numbers by 9% to provide additional service in our branches and Business Centres. We have grown our Corporate Markets sales force by 15% in the last 18 months, with 200 new recruits.
- We continued our £50 million branch improvement and maintenance programme, transforming an additional 66 branches in 2006. The programme is now 70% complete and scheduled to finish in 2007.
- We increased the number of our Business Centres, opened a new bank branch in Midleton, Co. Cork, and relocated our Donegal and Dundrum branches to larger premises.
- First Active introduced an offset flexible mortgage that allows customers to link savings accounts and a current account to reduce the cost and duration of their mortgage.

- We have successfully integrated our banking systems with the RBS Group IT platform giving us a unique competitive advantage in Ireland, as well as access to a wider range of products.
- We won the financing of Belfast's Titanic Quarter, one of the largest urban waterfront regeneration projects in Europe, with a first phase that includes 475 apartments, a 120-bed hotel and a large office complex.
- Ulster Bank Structured Finance together with the RBS Power Sector Team successfully structured the funding of a 59.5 Megawatt windfarm involving 70 wind turbines situated in a large bogland site in Gort, Co. Galway, for Gort Windfarms Limited, a subsidiary of ESB.
- In conjunction with RBS Private Placement Group, Ulster Bank arranged a \$150 million Private Placement providing Bord Na Móna, the Irish state-owned energy company, with long term funding for the roll-out of its energy, environmental and waste management business strategy.
- We provided £360 million financing for a group of Irish investors to buy Fosse Park, a shopping centre outside Leicester, in the largest single retail property acquisition in the UK since the late 1990s.
- We have diversified our funding base through securitisations, issuing Ireland's largest residential mortgage securitisation of €3.9 billion and confirming Ulster Bank's status as the largest issuer of securitisation bonds to date in the Irish market.

Selected awards

Business Banking Excellence Award

KPMG

Environmental Management Survey Award

Business in the Community Arena Network

Big Tick Award

Business in the Community

Ability Award

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