

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 5:10 pm

My friends at the Irish Congress of Trade Unions have just issued this press release, which I welcome and support:

The revelation that the Starbucks coffee chain has paid no UK taxes for three years is a national scandal with profound implications for local traders across Northern Ireland, says the ICTU Assistant General Secretary, Peter Bunting.

Speaking to a meeting of trade union activists ahead of the anti-austerity march and rally next Saturday, 20th October, Mr Bunting said:

"The retail and private sector service sector has been particularly badly hit during this recession. Hundreds of small businesses and thousands of workers in shops, bars, hairdressers and cafes have lost their jobs as over a quarter of retail spaces in Belfast and across Northern Ireland lie empty.

"We in the trade unions warned the government of the consequences of wage freezes and mass redundancies in times of inflation, and every day proves us right. The Austerity policies of this Tory-led administration are creating havoc in the private sector.

"But there is another reason why locally-owned small businesses are going under — they are being forced out of the game by the unfair competition from multinational corporations such as Starbucks who use tax avoiding scams which are perfectly legal but fundamentally immoral.

"Consumers should realise that every time they buy something from a company which skirts its civic duty and pays no taxes, they are taking business from a good local employer who pays the taxes which pays for the education and health of their workers.

"Starbucks represent the deliberate detachment from all social decency which is too typical of tax-avoiding corporations — exactly the anti-social behaviour encouraged by the Tories who refuse to take on Starbucks, while laying the blame and the boot into welfare claimants and low-paid workers.

"Ethical consumerism begins at home. Support local cafes and bars, and send

Starbucks and other tax dodgers a clear message — Unless you contribute to society, this society has no cash for your coffee.”

For all those seeking a fairer way to the methods of Starbucks and the message of the Tories should come out and join their trade union brothers and sisters [rallying against the cuts](#) in welfare, education, health and other public services on Saturday 20th October.”