

Something borrowed...

Some of the best business ideas emerge out of the need for a change. So it was for Debra McVicker and sister Tracey Houston who have just launched Hampton Blue, an online boutique for jewellery, accessories and gifts.

"As a mother of two young children I was faced with the choice of going back to work as a training and events coordinator and having to pay for childcare or going self employed," Debra said. "As much as I enjoyed my job, I had reached a time in my life when I didn't want someone else telling me what time I had to start work or how many days holiday I could have and wanted to spend as much time as possible with my kids. Hence the idea for Hampton Blue."

Having also talked her sister Tracey into the business, Debra launched Hampton Blue on June 5 and started out on a steep learning curve.

"The whole domain of e-commerce is something we've had to learn from scratch but we know our limitations so we brought in professionals when needed," she said. "We hired a graphic designer and web designer to look after our logo and brand along with the website. It was extremely important to project ourselves and our business in a very professional manner and this begins with what people see on screen.

The aim of the website is to offer a stress free and relaxing shopping experience and at the same time find unique and interesting gifts for any occasion and both Debra and Tracey have big plans for the future.

"We want to build on our product line and bring new and innovative gifts to the consumer," Debra said. "It's a work in progress and we hope to add gifts for men, a wedding and baby gift section as well as offering gift vouchers very soon."



The Hampton Blue team, sisters Debra McVicker (left) and Tracey Houston.

Renewable electricity plant can power 6,000 homes – Foster



Energy Minister Arlene Foster officially opened Belfast City Council's first landfill gas electricity generating plant. The installation is situated on the former landfill site at the North Foreshore, now known as Giant's Park, and will provide enough renewable electricity to supply around 6,000 households.

Pictured (l-r) are Nigel Dodds, DUP MP for North Belfast; The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor, Councillor Naomi Long MLA; Energy Minister, Arlene Foster and Andrew Leach, Managing Director of Renewable Power Systems.