

Company behind The Naked Deli liquidated amid 'restructure' that will keep three cafes open

A founder of Newcastle healthy eating chain The Naked Deli has said the firm is undergoing a "restructure" in an attempt to recover from the pandemic.

Three of the brand's cafes will remain open, including its sites in Gosforth Shopping Centre, on Chillingham Road in Heaton and on Newcastle's Grey Street. But a recently opened York outlet has been closed and there are negotiations about the future of the business' outlet at Newcastle International Airport, which is currently closed.

Liquidators have been appointed to The Naked Deli Ltd and a new company – Naked Deli North East Ltd – was set up last month to take over running of the eateries and takeaways which employ about 29 people. Speaking to BusinessLive, Naked Deli co-founder Chris Jones said the "knock on effects of Covid" had led to the move.

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He said: "This is about restructuring to make the business more profitable. We've closed one of the units in York."

Since launching in 2014 from Heaton The Naked Deli built a reputation for nutritious, healthy products such as juices, superfood salads, sandwiches and raw vegan cakes as well as gluten and dairy-free, vegan and paleo dishes. The firm initially expanded with a concession in Fenwick Food Hall that has since closed. Later it transformed the former Post Office

unit in Gosforth Shopping Centre into a restaurant and 2,000 sqft kitchen, where dishes were prepared the other outlets.

And in 2017 the firm attracted £2.5m investment from Foresight Group – a specialist investor in SMEs – that was earmarked to help the chain grow with as many as 15 new sites around the country. John Upton, the former managing director of natural fast food chain LEON and a former boss at McDonalds UK, joined the business in 2018 following the investment but is no longer a director.

Mr Jones has previously said he wanted The Naked Deli to become the healthy equivalent to food-on-the-go giant Greggs, a firm he said was a Northern brand that had taken on the UK with a strong offering.

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