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From Knit like a Viking to historic guided tours, taster printmaking sessions, and Felting with the Bees in Helen's Bay Walled Garden, Mayor Jennifer Gilmour is encouraging everyone to discover what Ards and North Down has to offer with more than 40 fabulous experiences running between April and January

EXPERIENCE ARDS AND NORTH DOWN IN 2024!

Fantastic experiences, fascinating places, delicious food and more.

Discover what Ards and North Down has to offer with more than 40 fabulous experiences running between April and January, providing the opportunity to immerse yourself in the beauty of the Borough.

The experience season kicks off at Kiri Cottage in Kircubbin where you can learn to Knit like a Viking (6 April) using Nalbinding, a fascinating way to create textiles. Meanwhile, Castle Espie will host a Wee Birds Art Workshop (14 April) for children who will be able to use nature as inspiration to create birds using collage.

If you fancy getting your

feet wet, the SUP, Sauna and Swim (21 April) will take you paddleboarding across Strangford Lough before relaxing at Sudor Sauna's wood-fired haven, and Helen's Bay Walled Garden provides the perfect location for Felting with the Bees (27 April). You can enjoy some locally produced honey mead and find out how to make your own garden a haven for bees, before creating some felted 2D bee themed artwork with crafter Karen Stevenson.

Looking beyond April, other experiences include an Electric Picnic (19 May)

with a guided electric bike tour around the shoreline of Strangford Lough followed by an artisan picnic. There will be taster sessions in printmaking in May, September and October, as well as plenty of opportunities to jump on a boat during the summer months with tours in Bangor, Killinchy, Portavogie and Portaferry.

There are lots of food and drink related experiences too, including a new Tea with the Bees and Cake with the Cows (8 June) at 'The Orlock' farm, as well as historic guided tours across

many of our towns and villages, while the entire family can enjoy a special Alpaca and tree-planting experience at Eastwell Farm in December.

All experiences must be pre-booked so book early to avoid disappointment. For more information, including ticket prices, terms and conditions, and a full list of available Experiences, go to visitarndsandnorthdown.com/experienceAND, or avoid online booking fees and visit the Bangor or Newtownards Visitor Information Centres to book!

Freedom of Borough to be conferred on Fire & Rescue Service

Ards and North Down Borough Council is set to confer its highest honour.

This is in recognition and appreciation of the Service's unwavering dedication to duty and selfless service; its bravery in the face of danger; for saving lives and for protecting our community with great honour and distinction.

The formal ceremony to bestow the Freedom will take place on 14 September 2024 and include a public display of firefighting skills by Firefighters from the local area at Bangor City Hall.

NIFRS respond to fires, road traffic collisions and specialist rescue incidents, including flooding, chemical incidents, collapsed buildings and other types of emergencies to make Northern Ireland a safer place. In addition, NIFRS delivers a range of community engagement initiatives and provides advice on how to stay safe

from incidents it responds to.

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service Chief Fire & Rescue Officer, Aidan Jennings said: "We are honoured to accept the prestigious Freedom of the Borough from Ards and North Down Borough Council. This is a testament to our Fire & Rescue Service and in particular to all of our Firefighters and support employees in the Ards and North Down area who serve the local community. It's a privilege for us to keep our people safe delivering a service that protects the community.

The Council has bestowed the honour only three times since it was formed in 2015 - to staff from Health and Social Care in September 2018, to the Irish Guards in 2022 and to Gary Lightbody, also in 2022.

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Blair Mayne Bursary Awards Ceremony

Local teenagers receive bursary awards

Local teenagers Jamie Moffatt, Rebekah Murdock and Ben Henning each received a £500 bursary at Ards and North Down Borough Council's Blair Mayne Bursary Awards ceremony recently.

The award will help them with their respective endeavours in sport, academic study and adventure training.

The Bursary Awards were originally created in 1997 after a public appeal to raise funds for commissioning a bronze memorial statue of Colonel Mayne. Monies raised exceeded the amount required for the statue, which was subsequently installed in Newtownards' Conway Square, so the Council opted to use the surplus funds to establish the Blair Mayne Bursary.

This year's ceremony was hosted at Ards Arts Centre in Conway Square and featured guest speaker, Rhys McClenaghan BEM, who took time out of his busy training schedule ahead of the Olympics to inspire and encourage the award winners. He was joined by Lt Col Simon Nichols MBE, Chairman of the Blair Mayne Bursary Committee, as well as two previous winners of the award, Noah Leeman and Toby McKelvey.

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, said:



"The Blair Mayne Bursary Award Scheme was created to support individuals aged 25 or under to aspire to excellence in sport, academic study and adventure training. Congratulations must go to this year's three very worthy recipients, Jamie Moffatt, Rebekah Murdock and Ben Henning. The calibre of applications is always exceedingly high and they are very deserving recipients."

The Blair Mayne Bursary Subcommittee, which consists of four elected members and three external representatives, had a challenging job to select the winners after a total of 33 applications were received.

Winner: Jamie Moffatt (Sport)

Bangor's Jamie Moffatt is a sprint athlete who has battled through adversity to reach elite level. He suffered a pars fracture of his spine shortly after starting secondary school but such is his determination and outlook on life, he used that experience and subsequent recovery to build his knowledge of sports science.

Winner: Ben Henning (Adventure Training)

Bangor's Ben Henning is a member of the Urban Saints youth club in Newtownards. He is setting out to raise £2,200 to enable him to travel to Johannesburg in July where he will be taking part in Rebuild South Africa - a programme to build houses for homeless families in the township of Botleng.

Winner: Rebekah Murdock (Academic Study) Newtownards' Rebekah Murdock is a highland dancer and is currently studying for her associate exam with the intention of becoming a qualified highland dancing teacher. Dancing has always been her passion and she started dancing when she was just two years old. She has since worked her way through the ranks and has gone on to compete as a championship premier dancer.

As she strives towards becoming a teacher, she very much enjoys the theory side of highland dance too and has already completed several theory exams, receiving an 'honours' award in all of them - the highest grade possible.

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS AWARDS: WINNERS ANNOUNCED!

The 2023 Ards and North Down Sports Awards were held at Clondeboye Lodge recently where all award winners were announced at the prestigious ceremony.

Reigning World and European Champion gymnast, Rhys McClenaghan BEM, has been named as Ards and North Down Sports Person of the Year. He was among several individuals and teams recognised at the annual Ards and North Down Sports Awards, which was hosted by radio presenter Denise Watson at Clondeboye Lodge.

Former rally co-driver, Terry Harryman, secured a place on the prestigious Wall of Fame. The Bangor man enjoyed a motorsport career that spanned more than 50 years and was one of rallying's pace note making pioneers. He navigated for the world's leading drivers at the sport's highest level, including Ari Vatanen with whom he claimed

victories at the Safari Rally, Monte Carlo Rally, Finland's 1000 Lakes Rally, Sanremo Rally, Swedish Rally, and Britain's RAC Rally. In recognition of his achievements, a plaque will be erected in Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex, and Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex.

Bangor Bowling Club took the Sports Team of the Year title, Ards Ladies Under 18 Indoor Hockey Team were named as the Under 18 Junior Team of the Year, and Glenlola Collegiate Under 15 Elite Trampoline Team secured the Under 15 Junior Sports Team of the Year award.

More individual success came for Grace Davison (swimming) who won Under 18 Young Sports Person



of the Year, and Haleigh Miskimmin (gymnastics) took the same title in the Under 15 category as well as the Special Recognition Award. Sports coach, Luke Carson, also achieved success as he was announced as Sports Coach of the Year.

The commitment and service of Alex Jones (football) was acknowledged with a win in the Volunteer of the Year category, and Lifetime Achievement

awards went to Nan Allely (Bowling) and Michael Spence (Rugby).

Speaking at the awards ceremony, the Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, said:

"Many nominations from across the sporting sphere were received for this year's awards and we can be in no doubt of the strength of sporting talent in Ards and North Down. Congratulations to all nominees and award

winners, and thanks also to those volunteers who dedicate their time and work tirelessly behind the scenes."

AWARD WINNERS
Sports Person of the Year

Sponsored by Mervyn Stewart Rhys McClenaghan (Gymnastics) Wall of Fame Inductee

Sponsored by Ards and North Down Sports Forum Terry Harryman (Rallying)

Lifetime Achievement Award

Sponsored by the Mayor of Ards and North Down

Nan Allely (Bowling) Michael Spence (Rugby)

Volunteer of the Year In memory of Alderman Menagh

Alex Jones (Football) Special Recognition Award and Under 15 Sports Person of the Year

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British Legion Haleigh Miskimmin (Gymnastics)

Under 15 Junior Sports Team of the Year

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Glenlola Collegiate Under 15 Elite Trampoline Team

Under 18 Junior Sports Team of the Year

Sponsored by K9 Search and Rescue

Ards Ladies Under 18 Indoor Hockey Team

Under 18 Sports Person of the Year

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Grace Davison (Swimming) Sports Team of the Year

Sponsored by Progressive Building Society

Bangor Bowling Club Sports Coach of the Year

Sponsored by RNLI Luke Carson (Gymnastics)

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Celebrating Volunteers in Ards and North Down

Ards and North Down Borough Council hosted an event at the Queens Hall in Newtownards to celebrate volunteering across the Borough.



Members of the local Community Networks were invited and received certificates from the Mayor in recognition of their tremendous volunteering efforts. In recent years, several community groups in Ards and North Down have

been recognised with prestigious awards, most recently with Greyabbey and District Community Association receiving the King's Award for Voluntary Service. The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, said:

"The Celebrating Volunteering event provided an opportunity to thank those who selflessly give up their time for the good of their community. Volunteers are worth their weight in gold and are vital to the health and wellbeing

of the Borough. You can't buy their level of passion and enthusiasm, and quite often it is the same faces that appear with multiple hats on. Thank you to all those who attended the event as well as many others throughout Ards and North Down."



Thank you to all our Staff, Suppliers and Customers.

We welcome Schools and Community groups to visit our farm.

Roy Lyttle has been growing vegetables in Ards and North Down for over 45 years. Scallions, and Leeks are the main crops with Scallions continuing to be harvested until October. Roy and Sheila's son Alexander now takes responsibility for crop growing and maintenance. When ready, the vegetables are harvested before being trimmed, prepared, washed, packed and labelled in the farm's packhouse. Products are delivered across Northern Ireland & South of Ireland to multinationals, independent retailers and processors.



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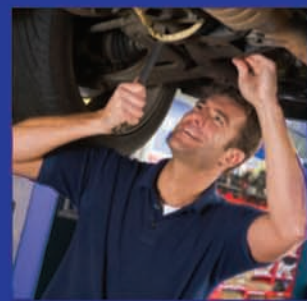
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LOCAL FOOD AND DRINKS PRODUCERS RECOGNISED AT TASTE AND FOOD HEROES AWARDS

Celebrating one of most successful years ever for the Borough's food and drink sector.

Local food and drinks producers have been recognised at the third annual TASTE AND Food Heroes Awards, hosted by Ards and North Down Borough Council at Bangor Castle. Individuals from across the food and drink industry attended the prestigious evening, including representatives from Food NI, the Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association, and the renowned Blas na hEireann awards.

2023 was one of most successful years ever for the Borough's food and drink sector with a range of regional, national and international awards received by local producers, restaurants and independent food retailers. Ards and North Down currently ranks third among Northern Ireland's local authorities for the number of awards won by our talented producers.



This third edition of the Taste AND Food Heroes Awards celebrated 21 producer winners and eight restaurant winners, who secured 90 awards across a range of national and international standards from the most globally reputable competitions. Award winners at this year's event included Nina Cristinacce from Lightfoot Kitchen

won the Local Food Champion award and Wayne Adair Papas Mineral Company who secured the prestigious Lady Dufferin Producer of the Year award which was judged by representatives from the Clondeboye Estate, Clondeboye Courtyard and Clondeboye Estate Yoghurt Company. Many other businesses were recognised for their

achievements during the evening too, with a wide range of producers from across the Borough celebrating their successes. The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, said: "These awards are a celebration of what has been the most successful year ever for our food and drink sector. Our Borough boasts an increasingly strong and impressive sector that continue to do us very proud and the Taste AND Food Heroes Awards show that innovation, tenacity, and resilience are the hallmarks of our local food and drink producers." For more information, see Taste Ards and North Down - County Down, Northern Ireland (visitardsandnorthdown.com)

Sports Development Capital Grant Programme

The Sports Development Capital Grant Programme is now open for applications. The initiative supplies financial assistance to eligible Sports Clubs for the delivery of capital projects, within Ards and North Down.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has £45,000 available for the 2024/2025 financial year and can award up to 50% of eligible capital costs with a maximum award of £5,000 in respect of any one project. Grants are available for capital expenditure such as facilities or equipment, defined as "expenditure for technical assistance and/or purchase, improvement, restoration and construction of an asset directly related to the applicant organisation". St. Paul GAC has received the Sports Development Capital Grant Programme for

several years and has developed many parts of their ground via the money received. Michael Monaghan, St. Pauls GAC Chairman commented: "Expenditure on Infrastructure improvement and upgrade, whether required by increased need, safety or for other reasons, can be costly for small voluntary sports organisations. The Sports Forum Capital Grant scheme provides a really valued source of funding and I very much welcome the announcement today of the continuation of the programme for 2023/24." Capital Grant Applications will be



open from Thursday 4th April 2024 at noon and close on Monday 29th July 2024 at noon. Applications will be assessed in August 2024 and presented to Council in September 2024. Notification to sports clubs will

be in early October following Council ratification. Programme Guidance and Criteria and the Programme Application Form can be found: Online at <https://www.leisureardsandnorthdown.com/>

sports-development/sports-grants By emailing sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk the Sports and Recreation Development Officer Robert Geary on 0300 013 3333 ext 40327

18,000 trees planted in Ards and North Down during latest tree planting season

From November 2023 to March 2024, Ards and North Down Borough Council has facilitated the planting of 18,000 new trees across the Borough.



This includes the planting of new woodland, native hedgerows, and community orchards.

Each of the tree planting events was made possible thanks to the help of community groups, schools and parks volunteers across the Ards and North Down area. Council has an annual tree-planting programme which sees many trees of both native and interesting varieties planted during each tree planting season. The Council's STANDB4TREES initiative aims to plant a

tree for every person in the Borough, which is approximately 160,000 trees by 2032.

Trees play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and people's quality of life. Trees act as carbon sinks and absorb carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas) and produce oxygen. In addition, trees filter, absorb and reduce pollutants. Trees can make our Borough a healthier, more attractive and more comfortable place to live and work. Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife such

as birds, squirrels and insects, as well as for people.

Below are the key aims of the Council's Tree and Woodland strategy and guide the Council's management of trees in the Borough.

Community Engagement: to actively engage and collaborate with the community and others in valuing trees as a vital community asset.

Tree Planting: to increase the native tree canopy within the Borough by planting more trees to ensure a healthy balanced tree population that

positively responds to the impacts of climate change and urban expansion.

Managing Trees: to ensure good tree care, through sustainable management of the tree population and reducing risk.

If you would like more information on the Council's STANDB4TREES initiative or would like to get involved in some of our upcoming tree-planting events, please email ANDparks@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk or visit [Trees and Woodland](http://TreesandWoodland)

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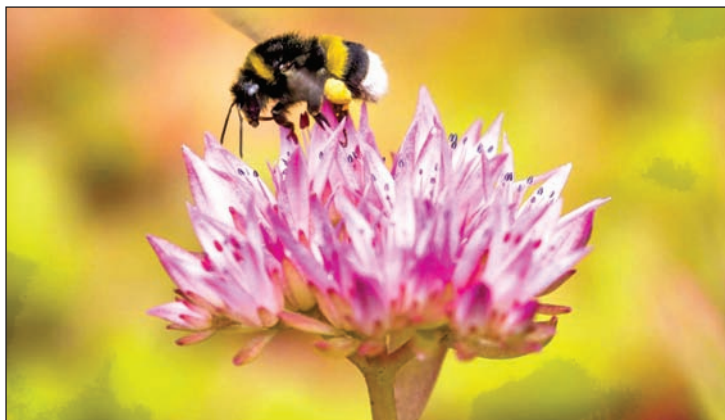
their shapes and, particularly, colours.

We base our colour combinations (how we 'see' colour) on red, blue and green, while bees base their colours on ultraviolet light, blue and green, so they can't see red, but can see reddish wavelengths, such as yellow and orange. According to scientists, the most likely colours to attract bees are purple, violet and

blue, but, as we know, they're partial to yellow dandelions in spring.

Their colour vision is also the fastest in the animal world, five times faster than humans. So, while we might struggle to distinguish one flower in a group, bees don't. They see each individual flower.

With their incredible vision, bees can pollinate plants with pinpoint accuracy. They can see what we



can't, and because of that ability, they're the ultimate pollinators.

Amazingly, they are responsible for an estimated 80% of the pollination of all plants, and we humans are ultimately dependant on pollinated plants for food and our survival. Yet, sadly, bees are in serious decline around the world, including Ireland, because of the degradation and

poisoning of our environment.

People can help in their own gardens. Businesses can help, communities can help, housing developers can help, schools can help, farmers can help, the list goes on and on. If we all pitch in, we can save our bees. Have a look at the excellent All-Ireland Pollinator Plan for ideas and simple guidance: <https://pollinators.ie/> JVA

Moving from Tax Credits to Universal Credit – important information

Employers For Childcare

Over the past few months lots of working parents who have been in receipt of Tax Credits have received notification that they have to move onto Universal Credit instead.

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Universal Credit allows for higher financial support towards registered childcare costs than Tax Credits and so families using childcare can often find that they are better off moving to Universal Credit.

The Government has committed to ensuring no one is worse off by moving to Universal Credit by providing

'Transitional Protection' to make up the loss between what is received under the old benefits, and Universal Credit.

However, there are strict rules around the eligibility for Transitional Protection so you should always seek independent advice before applying for Universal Credit.

Other benefit changes in 2024

In addition to being moved to Universal Credit as mentioned above, the amount that is being paid through all benefits, including Universal Credit, Tax Credits, Housing Benefit etc, is increasing from April 2024 by at least 6.7%. So, if you receive benefits, you may be entitled to more money from April onwards.

For free, independent advice on the financial support your family is entitled to, including with registered childcare costs, call our Family Benefits Advice Service on Freephone 0800 028 3008.

Last year, where we did a 'better off' calculation for a family, we identified an average of £5,600 in additional financial support.



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Special Promotions Encourage Ards and North Down Shoppers to Support Local

Special promotions are available for shoppers across the Borough following the launch of a new 'Support Local' campaign by Ards and North Down Borough Council, in conjunction with the Department for Communities.

The last few years have been very challenging with many traders struggling due to the pressures associated with the pandemic as well as the cost-of-living crisis. To help, the Council is encouraging people to support local businesses by shopping with them for their everyday purchases, meals out, short breaks, home improvements and more. This will not only support the local traders but also local jobs, businesses, and the communities throughout Ards and North Down.

Communities Minister, Gordon Lyons MLA, said:

"The Ards and North Down Support Local campaign is an excellent initiative to provide much needed support for the city and towns across the

Borough and reinforces my Department's commitment to the regeneration of our towns and cities. Local businesses in town and city centres continue to experience the negative impacts of changes in shopping habits, and the current cost of living. This campaign is a positive step in helping remind residents of the Borough and beyond, of the products and offers available in the city and town centres in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area."

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Jennifer Gilmour, said:

"Right across the Borough, our traders offer real value for money through great products and personal service.



Ards and North Down has so much to offer and when you choose to keep it local, you are helping to support local jobs and the local economy. Supporting local is a win-win for us all."

Special promotions are being offered by

a number of local businesses to encourage shoppers to 'support local'. From food and drink to photography, household items and more, you can discover a fantastic array of offers from across the Borough on the Council website.

For more

information, including a full list of available promotions, visit www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/supportlocal.

This campaign is funded by Department for Communities and is brought to you by Ards and North Down Borough Council.

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£70M SUPPORT PACKAGE UNVEILED

Health Minister Robin Swann has announced a £70million support package for social care providers and hospices.

The funding will help independent sector organisations deal with rising costs from the start of the new financial year, particularly forthcoming minimum wage increases.

The Minister said: "I am making this intervention to stabilise the provision of key services and ensure legal requirements are met.

"I have made clear that my ambition for

social care is to see wages climb well beyond the minimum wage level. That is vital for the long-term sustainability of the sector and is an issue that will have to be tackled. I have established structures to advance this work and I hope to see progress on this issue in the coming months.

"This £70m package includes an increase in the regional funding rate for domiciliary

care providers to £20.01 per hour, which I believe can help stabilise the service and support enhanced pay.

"The 2024/25 budget is going to be severely challenging for all Departments, but I am determined to provide as much ongoing support as possible to the social care sector."

The £70m funding has been made available for pay cost increases in:

- Independent Sector



The Health Minister Robin Swann pictured with Ruth Crawford (aged 86) at her home in Belfast alongside her carer Julie-Anne Hosick from Connected Health.

(IS) Nursing Homes

- IS Residential Homes
- Supported Living settings

Jointly Commissioned Supported Accommodation

- IS Children's Homes
- IS Domiciliary Care
- Self-Directed Support (SDS) and Direct Payment contracts

• HSC contracts in Community & Voluntary and Hospice

sectors

The Minister added: "I want to reiterate my sincere gratitude to care workers for everything they do. They play a vital role in society and we are immensely grateful for their contribution. Social care is uniquely placed to provide critical support to citizens, enabling them to live healthy and independent lives while also protecting capacity in our hospitals."

Here's why you SHOULD fall asleep with your pet!

In 2023, 53% of UK adults owned a pet, a 2% rise compared to 2020. And while it's natural to want to share most of our lives with our furry friends, how far is too far?

According to a YouGov sleep survey, almost half of Britons admit to letting their pets sleep in the same bed as them – Sleep expert Ashley Hainsworth from Bed Kingdom has looked at the pros and cons of doing this and whether it's right for you.

What are the benefits?
Helps with Insomnia
Falling asleep with your pet beside you can increase endorphin levels, thus reducing stress and anxiety. In turn, this can help you fall asleep quicker, which is ideal if you're someone who has difficulty getting some well-needed shuteye.

Security and comfort
If you live alone, sleeping with a pet can increase your sense of security and heighten comfort levels. Feeling safe and relaxed is extremely important and can drastically improve your sleep quality.

Warmth

A key factor in determining whether you have a good night's sleep is body temperature. If you feel the cold more than the average person, cuddling up to a warm pet at night may be precisely what you need to drift off.

Bonding
Sleeping with your pet can significantly increase your bond and strengthen your relationship. You might find that you can read their body language better, and simply be more in tune with one another, which can improve their behaviour and overall happiness as a result.

Are there any risks involved?
Like most things, letting your pet sleep in the same bed has some potential risks.

Sleep disruption
Our pets are living beings and therefore, move around a lot; you may find that your

pet is finding it difficult to settle and won't stay still, so their constant movement and rearranging may disrupt your sleep. One way to combat this is to invest in a bed large enough to accommodate you and your pets – this allows for any movement that does occur to go unnoticed.

Hygiene
Our pets can carry dirt and other unwanted guests in their fur. Fleas, ticks, and lice are all common problems, and the last thing you want is for those to end up in your bed. Dirt may also cause allergies, as well as getting all over your sheets.

To tackle this, keep up to date with your pet's vaccinations and make sure they are clean after being outside. You should also wash your bedding more frequently if you decide to let your pets sleep with you, specifically every three to

four days.

Behavioural issues
There are varying arguments as to whether letting your pet sleep with you causes them separation anxiety. Either way, it is important to stay vigilant, and if you notice any problem behaviours begin, consult a trainer or an animal

behaviourist. Some signs to look out for include an increase in destructive behaviour, extreme vocalising like howling, barking or whining when you leave, and toileting inside the house, even if they are trained.

Should you let your pets sleep in the same bed?
Sleeping with your pets

can be extremely beneficial to those who suffer from loneliness or sleep disorders such as insomnia. However, if you're someone who likes your personal space at night or cannot commit to the upkeep needed for your bed to remain clean, perhaps letting your pet spend the night with you isn't the best option.

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Room for Improvement: Home Design Trends for Spring 2024

From playful patterns to sustainable materials, here are some of the top home design trends to look out for if you are planning some home décor this year.

Sustainable Materials
Sustainability is a growing concern for many homeowners, and it's no surprise that sustainable materials are becoming more popular in home design. In 2024, we can expect to see more homes incorporating eco-friendly materials such as bamboo, reclaimed wood, and recycled glass.

Bold Patterns
Bold patterns are making a comeback in 2024, with homeowners looking to add a touch of personality to their homes. From geometric shapes to floral prints, bold patterns are a great way to add interest to any room.

Natural Textures
This year we can expect to see more natural textures in home design. From woven baskets to jute rugs, natural textures are a great way to add warmth and depth to any

space.
Statement Lighting
Statement lighting is a great way to add a touch of drama to any room.

In 2024, we can expect to see more homeowners incorporating statement lighting fixtures such as chandeliers and pendant lights into their homes.

Vintage Accents
Vintage accents are a great way to add character to any home. This season we can expect to see more homeowners incorporating vintage pieces such as antique mirrors, old-fashioned clocks, and vintage textiles into their homes.

Bold Colours
Embrace bold colours. From deep blues to rich greens, bold colours are a great way to add drama and interest to any space.

Smart Home Technology
Smart home technology is becoming more popular in homes across



the UK, and it's no surprise why. Voice-activated assistants, smart thermostats, and automated lighting systems are now everyday essentials. By incorporating these home design trends into your home, you can create a space that is both stylish and functional!

Green As A Neutral

Green is transcending its botanical roots to become a versatile neutral. Neutrals create a timeless look, but that does not mean we're confined to only beige, ivory, taupe and grey.



Truman Oslo Pine Leather Power Recliner 2 Seater Sofa 1799 Euros

Axel Rush Green Velvet 3 Seater Sofa €1099

Green is just as universal as most classic neutrals and adds a sense of calm and harmony. Whether it's your main furniture pieces or added as an accent, varied shades of green will bring a touch of organic sophistication to any room.

Nature
Green cultivates a nurturing environment that forms a soothing connection to nature. Especially at this time of year, a sense of calm and

relaxation is welcomed into our homes. Green brings about reminders of renewal, with its connection to grass and plants budding in spring.

The Truman Oslo Pine Leather Power Recliner Sofa is a stunning green centrepiece to add to your living room. It features lush leather upholstery that radiates elegance and is the perfect green hero piece to add to your living room.

New Neutrals
Greys are being swapped for more earthy tones; green makes the perfect addition to this mix. This is branching from the evolution of Scandi-inspired designs from minimalist and cool, to warm and cozy.

The usual greys are being changed out for warmer colours like off-white and taupe's, to create an overall more cocooning vibe in homes. Green adds

the perfect amount of freshness to a new neutral ensemble.

If you're looking to dip your toe into this trend and incorporate a splash of green, accent chairs are the perfect choice. The Scandi inspired Copenhagen Green Fabric Chair captures a cool, contemporary look. Its compact footprint enhances any space without overwhelming your existing scheme.

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Thronies will want to experience an aerial tour of the 'Seven Kingdoms', catch a boat from 'Lordsport Harbour' and enjoy themed afternoon tea in Ballygally Castle Hotel. Or why not pack up the car and do the Game of Thrones® self-drive tour, exploring the various filming locations at your own leisure? The official app will help you navigate your way around each of the '10 doors' and other filming locations

from the show.

Cross that bridge when you come to it... if you're brave enough!

Having been inspired by all the stories of bravery and valour, you will no doubt have the courage to cross the famous Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge... or will you? It's much sturdier now than when it was originally built by salmon fishermen over 350 years ago, yet this experience never fails to stir up all the senses.

With a strong breeze from the Atlantic Ocean blowing through your hair, the sound of the waves crashing and swirling 30 metres below your feet and the smell of the sea filling your nostrils, it's exceptionally exhilarating. An unforgettable opportunity to get back to nature and test your nerves of steel.

If you prefer to view the bridge from an alternative perspective, you can always see what it looks like from the water



with Causeway Coast Kayaking Tours.

Embrace a Giant Spirit Further along the Causeway Coastal Route is Northern Ireland's most famous site. Legend has it that the Giant's

Causeway was created when legendary Irish giant, Fionn MacCool, constructed a bridge to Scotland to take on his arch foe Bannandonner. In reality, the famous causeway is the result of

a volcanic eruption which left behind this strangely perfect hexagonal patchwork that reaches out into the sea.

The most straightforward way of experiencing the Giant's

Causeway is to begin your visit at the Visitor Centre and then stroll down to the intriguing stones to search out distinctive formations such as the Camel, Wishing Chair, Granny and Organ.

Whatever way you choose to explore it, the Giant's Causeway, the only UNESCO World Heritage site in Northern Ireland, is well worth the visit.

If you're keen to keep your feet dry, then you might prefer to take a day trip over to the rugged beauty of Rathlin Island. This is Northern Ireland's only inhabited offshore island, though it's often so quiet you wouldn't really know. There are scenic walking trails that bring you to seal colonies and you can visit the popular RSPB Seabird Centre situated at the distinctive West Lighthouse, known as Ireland's only 'upside down' lighthouse!

Inspiring spirits from the past

Back on the coast road is the stunning Dunluce Castle. Built around 1500 by a local family, the castle sparked the imagination of writer C.S. Lewis who reimagined it

as the Cair Pereval, home to the rulers of Narnia. Though it has been a ruin for many years, it remains as inspiring as ever and is likely one of the most Instagrammed castles on the planet.

Equally dramatic is the Mussenden Temple which perches some forty metres above the Atlantic Ocean and offers spectacular views west over Downhill Strand towards County Donegal and back east towards Castlerock beach Portstewart and Portrush.

With all that going on, where else would you prefer to be?

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure information is correct, we strongly advise checking in advance before you travel to your intended destination to ensure its open and book tickets if applicable.

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Home interior design trends for Spring.

The interior design world is buzzing with new trends and ideas. According to House Beautiful and Zillow, the following are the top interior design trends for spring 2024:

Statement pieces: In 2024, we will see a shift from filler pieces to conversation starters. Sculptural furniture is coming to the fore, which means that even your smallest side table can make a big statement.

New neutrals: The evolution of Scandi-inspired design, from cool and minimalist to cosy and cocooning, informs an array of warm neutrals in 2024. Greys are being swapped for earthy beiges, contemporary off-whites and taupes that sit so well with the natural materials and modest decoration of Scandi homes.

Ruffles: Ruffles – for the most part applied to cushions and table linen

– are adding a bit of fun and whimsy to our homes. It's usually matched with a gingham print, ice cream shades or candy cane stripes like these fabulous Amuse Bouche examples from Rose & Grey.

The one-wall kitchen: The one-wall kitchen is truly an exercise in ingenuity. This diminutive layout requires a real balance between storage capacity, functionality and flow – it can be tempting to install a whole row of cabinets on your one-wall kitchen, but that can be imposing. Open shelving can be a bit of a visual break, and adds opportunity for decoration – an important element in an otherwise functional space.

L-shaped and chaise sofas: The pragmatic amongst us are saving space with L-shaped and chaise sofas, turning awkward alcoves into seating. These sofas are perfect for small spaces and can be used to create a cozy and inviting atmosphere in the living spaces.

Relaxed silhouettes: In 2024, we will see new relaxed silhouettes in interior design. This means that we will see more of comfortable and cozy furniture in our living spaces.

Playful trimmings: Playful trimmings are making a comeback in 2024. We will see more of bold patterns, textured fabrics, and

personalized decor items in our living spaces.

Vintage shopping: Vintage shopping is becoming more popular in 2024. It's a great way to save money and reduce waste. You can find unique pieces from flea markets and secondhand sellers destined for upcycling and repurposing.

Sensory gardens: Sensory gardens are becoming more popular in 2024. They are a great way to connect with nature and create a relaxing atmosphere in your home.

Murano glass chandeliers: Murano glass chandeliers are making a comeback in 2024. They are perfect for adding a touch of elegance and sophistication to your living spaces.

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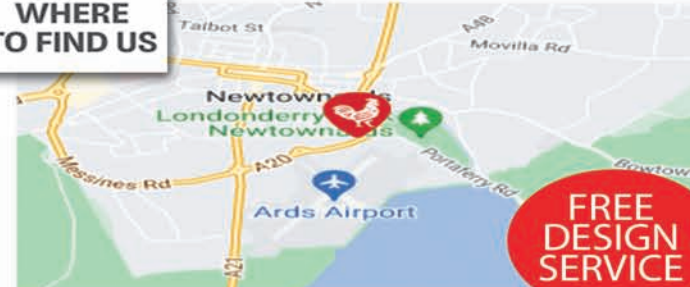
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PORTRUSH NAMED SEASIDE WITH THE THIRD CHEAPEST PARKING!

In a new study conducted by car check experts, Motorscan, Brighton has been ranked as the most expensive seaside to park your car this Easter holiday.

Collating data via Parkopedia, the study evaluates the average parking costs across 30 prominent UK seascides. The analysis focuses on parking spots available on an 8-hour basis within a 30-minute or less walking distance from the centre. Parents always look for ways to keep their kids entertained during half term, and a beach trip is a top choice. However, parking costs can put a dampener on the day. This is particularly true in Brighton, which



takes the top spot as the seaside with the most expensive parking, averaging at £24.21 for an eight-hour stay.

Ranking as second most expensive is popular Cornish town, Newquay, where the

average parking fee stands at £12.32 for eight hours. While still a significant expense, this rate is half that of Brighton's, offering a much more affordable option.

Claiming the third

spot is another beloved Cornish spot, Falmouth, with a marginal difference of just £0.20, totalling £12.12 for parking over the same period.

Southend-on-Sea claims the fourth

spot with an average cost of £11.50, while Bournemouth, a popular Dorset seaside destination, follows closely behind in fifth place with an average of £10.42 for eight hours.

The ten seascides with the most expensive parking:

Seaside parking costs appear to decrease as visitors venture further north. For instance, St Andrews, Fife, claims the title of cheapest seaside to park, with an average cost of just £1.90 for eight hours—12 times less than Brighton.

East Yorkshire seaside town, Hornsea, takes the title of second cheapest, coming in at an average of £1.98 for parking this

Easter, over the same time period.

Portrush, in Northern Ireland, ranks as the third cheapest seaside parking spot, with an average cost of £3.47 - three times less than Falmouth.

Morecambe, located in Lancashire, clinches the fourth spot for the most budget-friendly seaside parking options in the UK, with an average eight-hour cost of £4.33.

Speaking on the findings, Head of Vehicle Intelligence at Motorscan, Oliver Thompson said "As evidenced by our latest study, parking costs can significantly impact holiday experiences, especially during peak periods

like Easter half term. Brighton's staggering average parking fee of £24.21 tops the charts, highlighting the financial strain families may face when planning beach outings".

"On the contrary, St Andrews emerges as a beacon of affordability, offering seaside parking at just £1.90 on average. These findings underscore the importance of informed decision-making and strategic planning to maximise enjoyment while minimising expenses during holiday travels. Just make sure that you're prioritising safety and security when deciding where to park your car too."

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HOW EXERCISE AS A FAMILY CAN IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH!

Summer is the perfect time of the year to stop that sedentary lifestyle that dominates many of our routine lives. Between working office jobs and wanting to relax in the evenings, it is far too easy to put exercise off for another time.

With the onset of longer nights and warmer weather, the summer months are the perfect time to get out and about with your family. Not only will this bring the obvious health benefits that come with healthy living, but it also creates the perfect time to bond and become closer as a family.

For adults, going for an afternoon walk away from the distractions of the house, the TV and the Smartphone will grant you the opportunity of speaking with partners or family members and becoming closer as a

result. For many, having a family pet such as a dog is a great motivation to go for a walk, however if you don't have one, the mental and physical health benefits should be motivation enough.

As for children, babies and toddlers spend an awful lot of time strapped into car seats or plopped in front of the TV. Not only does this prevent them from practicing their emerging motor skills and strengthening their heart, lungs, and muscles, but it can also set them up for a sedentary lifestyle, and even obesity, as adults.

A good habit of physical activity, on the other hand, will last a lifetime.

Ensuring that one achieves appropriate levels of physical exercise has been directly linked with good mental health. Studies have shown that running for 15 minutes a day or walking for an hour can decrease an individual's likelihood of developing depression by 26%. An increased amount of exercise in an individual's life can promote a number of positive changes in the brain which directly combat poor mental health

by promoting feelings of calm and well-being. It also leads to a release of endorphins which energize your experience and make you feel good.

Exercising as a family is a great way of promoting a healthy lifestyle that children can continue throughout their lives into adulthood. This exercise is particularly important for adolescents, whose bodies and brains are still growing. The every same endorphins that make you feel better while working out, also improve cognitive ability and levels of concentration – making

exercise the perfect thing for study breaks or those seeking to prevent age-related cognitive decline.

Exercise can be thought of as an investment in body, mind and soul. As parents, it is important to promote a healthy understanding of body image and doing sporting activities as a family is a great way of both improving the relationship ties within the family dynamic as well as fostering a sense of self worth at an individual level. Greater levels of exercise have been linked to greater body confidence

– something that is becoming more and more important in the lives of young people.

The physical benefits of exercise are obvious. As well as greatly improving the quality and quantity of sleep that each individual gets, it also gives you a greater level of energy during the day, boosts your immune system and can reduce the impact of stress.

Even small amounts of exercise such as a short walk around the park, a cycle to the shop, a dance in the house or even a family trip to the

swimming pool can have notable health benefits in all aspects of one's life. The simple act of raising

your heart rate really can work wonders – and doing it as a family...well that's just the cherry on top.

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WHY OUTDOOR PLAY MATTERS FOR KIDS!

Playing outside isn't just about fun—it's a crucial part of a child's development.

From newborns to toddlers, the great outdoors offers a wealth of experiences that contribute to their growth and well-being. Let's explore why outdoor play is so important:

Better Sleep for Babies
Research shows that babies sleep better at night if they've had some fresh air and sunshine during the day. So, that stroll in the park or playtime in the backyard isn't just enjoyable—it also promotes better sleep for your little one.

Fun Learning Opportunities

Outdoor play is a brilliant sensory experience for babies and toddlers. The ever-changing nature of the outdoors stimulates their senses, allowing them to see, explore, and learn. As they touch leaves, pinecones, and puddles, they're gaining valuable experiences through all their senses.

Motor Skill Development
Young children need opportunities to use their whole bodies and develop both gross and fine motor skills. Whether it's crawling, toddling, running, or jumping, playing outdoors provides the space for physical exploration. Picking up natural treasures like leaves

and fir cones also hones their fine motor skills.

Encouraging a Healthy Lifestyle
Outdoor play helps children burn off energy, promoting a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity supports better sleep, healthier eating habits, and overall well-being.

Positive Impact on the Whole Family
Fresh air has a magical effect on parents too! Even a short walk outside can lift spirits, blow away the cobwebs, and improve everyone's mood.

Environmental Awareness
Being outdoors allows children to connect with



nature. They become aware of the environment, appreciate its beauty, and learn about the world around them. Kids who develop this knowledge and appreciation are more likely to become environmentally conscious adults.

It's especially helpful after a sleepless night or during grumpy moments at home. So, the whole family benefits from outdoor adventures.

Making Friends and Building Social Skills
Outdoor play helps children grow socially. They learn to form friendships, respond to physical interaction, and use their imaginations to entertain each other. Problem-solving, relationship-building, and

respect for nature all happen naturally during outdoor play.

In summary, outdoor play isn't just about swings and slides—it's a gateway to holistic development. So, grab those wellies, head outside, and let your little ones explore, discover, and thrive in the great outdoors!

Remember, the benefits of outdoor play extend beyond the playground—it's an investment in your child's health, happiness, and future.

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FINDING THE RIGHT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY FOR YOUR TEEN

As parents, we all want the best for our teenagers. While academic excellence is crucial, it's equally important to encourage them to participate in extracurricular activities.

These activities provide valuable learning experiences beyond the classroom and contribute to their personal growth. Let's explore why extracurricular activities matter and how parents can guide their teens in making good choices.

What Are Extracurricular Activities?

Extracurricular activities refer to any activities outside the regular school curriculum. They encompass a wide range of interests and skills, allowing teens to explore their passions beyond textbooks. Here are some common examples:

1. **Sports:** Joining a sports club or team helps teens stay active, build teamwork skills, and develop discipline.

2. **Music and Arts:** Whether it's playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, or

creating art, these activities foster creativity and self-expression.

3. **Volunteering:** Engaging in community service teaches empathy, social responsibility, and the value of giving back.

4. **STEM Programs:** Exploring science, technology, engineering, and math through clubs or workshops enhances problem-solving abilities.

5. **Reading and Writing:** Encouraging teens to read widely and write (blogs, stories, or journalism) sharpens their communication skills.

6. **Part-Time Jobs or Work Experience:** Teens can gain practical skills, financial literacy, and work ethics by taking on part-time jobs.

The Importance of Extracurricular Activities

Identity and Confidence: Extracurriculars help teens discover their interests, build confidence, and find their sense of identity. **Social Skills:** Interacting with peers and adults in these activities improves communication and social skills. **Academic Performance:** Studies show that students involved in extracurriculars tend to have better grades and test scores. **Responsibility:** Committing to an activity teaches time management and responsibility. **Leadership and Teamwork:** Many extracurriculars require teamwork and leadership, fostering essential life skills. **Exploration:** Teens can explore different fields and discover hidden talents. **Considerations and Tips**



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academics and extracurriculars. Avoid overwhelming schedules. **Affordability:** Some activities can be expensive, so consider budget-friendly options. **Passion:** Encourage teens to choose activities they're passionate about to prevent burnout. **Support:** Be supportive and involved without exerting pressure. **Variety:** Encourage

trying different activities to find the right fit.

Remember, extracurricular

activities contribute to holistic development and prepare teens for life beyond the classroom.

So, let's guide our teenagers toward meaningful experiences that enrich their lives!

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The MINI FREESTYLE 290 is compact, lightweight and fitted with a bathroom including WC and wash basin. The kitchen is located at the rear while the lounge area is easily transformed into a comfortable double bed. For impromptu weekends, romantic get aways or

holidays with friends, the MINI FREESTYLE 290 will satisfy your every whim, whenever and wherever you want. A low-profile pop up caravan. Easy to tow at just 750kg! Easy to store measuring just 4.42 m long x 1.98 m high x 2.03 m wide!

Designed for sports lovers, sporting weekends or longer adventures, the MINI FREESTYLE 300 will adapt to every situation, offering you the very best solution for your escapades. A low-profile pop up caravan. Easy to tow at just 750kg! Easy to store measuring just 4.42

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TOP TIPS TO ENHANCE YOUR MENTAL WELL-BEING EVERY DAY!

Reframe Unhelpful Thoughts:

Our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interconnected. Sometimes, we fall into patterns of unhelpful thinking. Recognize these patterns and take steps to view things differently. Reframe negative thoughts to improve your mental health and well-being. Example: Instead of thinking, "I'm terrible at this," try, "I'm learning and improving."

Be Present (Practice Mindfulness): Take time to be aware of yourself and the present moment. Mindfulness helps you gain perspective and reduces stress. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and the world around you. Try This: Practice mindful breathing or meditation to stay in the present. Prioritize Good Sleep:

Quality sleep significantly impacts our mental and physical well-being. Ensure you get enough rest. Establish a consistent sleep routine and create a calming bedtime environment. Tip: Avoid screens before bedtime and maintain a regular sleep schedule. Connect with Others: Meaningful relationships are crucial for mental well-being.

Spending time with friends, family, or talking about your feelings can prevent loneliness and improve your mental health. Action: Reach out to someone you care about today. Live a Healthy Life: Physical health and mental well-being are intertwined. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and staying hydrated contribute to overall

wellness. Remember: A healthy body supports a healthy mind. Self-Care Matters: Dedicate time for yourself. Engage in activities you enjoy, whether it's reading, painting, or taking a relaxing bath. Prioritize self-care to recharge and boost your mental resilience. Self-Care Idea: Take a nature walk or listen to

soothing music. Write a Letter to Future You: Reflect on your goals, aspirations, and positive affirmations. Write a letter to your future self, expressing encouragement and envisioning a brighter tomorrow. Try It: Jot down your hopes and dreams for the future. Remember, good mental health is an



ongoing investment. These simple changes can make a significant difference in your well-being. Start today and take care of your mind just as you do your physical health.

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Dreams and Magic in Motion at Rainbow Gymnastics!

Rainbow Gymnastics is under the new ownership and management of Tamlynn Carlson.



Tamlynn started gymnastics at the age of 6 in South Africa, she quickly achieved – becoming National Tumbling Champion 3 times and was on the National SA team for artistic gymnastics. She competed at events like Rosebowl and African Champs. In 2017 Tamlynn Coached gymnasts on the SA national squad and they competed at Olympic Hopes, African Champs. In 2018 she moved to England where she served as Head Coach at a Centre in Stockport. One of her gymnasts attended the National Finals for the North West in 2019 for National 3. In 2022 she produced the North West Compulsory 3 Champion and was on the team in the National Finals – the team came 3rd overall and Tamlynn's gymnast was placed 1st on floor. Tamlynn has FIG Level 2 and BG level 4. She has completed training camps with

Kelly Hill USA and Paul Hall GBR. She was also 1 of 2 gymnasts selected to represent Ireland at the European Gymnastics coaching course in Frankfurt, Germany in 2023. Says Tamlynn: "We have an absolutely brilliant facility – one of the biggest and best in Northern Ireland. We are very proud of the gymnasts excelling in national level competition at present and we are equally pleased to bring the many physical and health benefits of gymnastics to children participating at all levels!" Dundonald's premier gymnastics academy, cater to enthusiasts of all skill levels in a secure, nurturing, and exhilarating environment. From the grace of artistic gymnastics to the dynamic moves of circus acrobatics, tumbling, and exclusive boys' groups which include

Parkour, we've got something for everyone! Pride and prowess define our competitive training programme, celebrating outstanding achievements and sculpting champions of tomorrow. Is your child the next gymnastics star? If they were born between 2018-2019, Rainbow Gymnastics is excited to meet them! Step into the expansive, purpose-built facility – one of Northern Ireland's largest, equipped with cutting-edge gear designed to launch dreams into reality. This year, Rainbow Gymnastics is keeping the momentum going all summer long with a full recreational programme and highly acclaimed summer schemes set to make this season unforgettable. Join the Rainbow Gymnastics family today and watch your child soar to new heights. Your adventure begins here!



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Step into our expansive, purpose-built facility — one of Northern Ireland's largest, equipped with cutting-edge gear designed to launch dreams into reality. And there's more! We're thrilled to offer newcomers a complimentary trial session and a special discount on membership fees.

This year, we're keeping the momentum going all summer long! Our recreational programme and highly acclaimed summer schemes are set to make this season unforgettable.

Join the Rainbow Gymnastics family today and watch your child soar to new heights. Your adventure begins here!



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INSIDE THE DESIGN PHILOSOPHY OF THE AUDI Q6 E-TRON

Designed from the inside out: The interior of the new Audi Q6 e-tron model series is tailored more closely than ever to the user's needs and has been reimagined accordingly.

For example, the three-dimensional, high-contrast design deliberately places elements in the foreground or background, creating a three-dimensional spatial architecture with aesthetics and ergonomics perfectly tuned to the occupants. The Audi Q6 e-tron is the first model series based on the newly developed Premium Platform Electric (PPE) and the new E3 electronics architecture. Both serve as the basis for rethinking the interior's design and range of functions. Technology, aesthetics, and sustainability are in perfect balance in the Audi Q6 e-tron.

The wraparound feel of the dashboard extends from the doors through the entire cockpit, creating a homogeneous and welcoming feeling of space. The colours and high-quality materials, some of which are made from recycled materials, are also used in the seats.

This brings together all

the interior components as though they were designed as a single space; the occupants feel like they are in a snug cocoon. The materials used were selected with functionality in mind and outline the different areas of the vehicle interior through their design. Areas emphasizing comfort stand out with their large surfaces and soft materials. In contrast, the precisely designed operating areas are finished in high-quality, high-gloss black to provide the necessary clarity when interacting with the vehicle.

The aim was to give the materials a much stronger presence by increasing their density and quality. The interior trim now becomes a functional design element. Besides providing a feeling of spaciousness, this philosophy creates clarity as well as comfort. Low-lying and slim horizontal air vents add to the overall appearance. A set of controls in a "black panel"

look is integrated into the door handle on the driver's side and coordinates perfectly with the modern interior.

It contains the most important functions, such as mirror settings, seat and door functions, and light and visibility settings.

Some of the materials used in the Softwrap on the wraparound dash are sustainably produced from the recycled fabric Elastic Melange, which is made from 100 percent recycled polyester. PPE: spaciousness and suitability for everyday use

The Audi Q6 e-tron embodies Audi's DNA and strikes a perfect balance between impressive driving and charging performance and technical innovation. Thanks to the new PPE platform, explicitly developed for electric mobility, the vehicle also boasts a spacious interior, while being highly suitable for everyday use.

The trunk offers 526 litres of storage space. When the rear row of seats is folded down, the storage space increases to up to 1,529 litres. The rear seats fold down individually (40:20:40). Then there are another 64 litres of storage space in the trunk (front boot) under the bonnet - where a mobile charging cable (mode 3) or smaller travel bags can be conveniently stowed.

The interior is dominated by the "digital stage" with the Audi MMI panoramic display and the MMI front passenger display. The clearly grouped displays are perfectly integrated into the design concept and give the interior a spacious and airy feel. The slim, free-standing Audi MMI panoramic display features a curved design and OLED technology and consists of the MMI panoramic display with an 11.9-inch Audi virtual cockpit and 14.5-inch MMI touch display.



Finally, it also visualizes other information, such as the charge level display and charging progress, shown as a pulsating light. The Interaction light is part of the ambient light package

plus. Audi is introducing a completely new, uniform infotainment platform in the Audi Q6 e-tron, developed with the software company CARIAD. It is based on

Android Automotive. Continuous software updates mean all car systems are always up to date.

With this multi-faceted interior, which Audi

recognizes as "the centre of our customers' lives and experiences," the Q6 e-tron fulfils its user's needs through design and technology in ways not previously possible.

ALL-NEW DACIA SPRING

Dacia's first all-electric model, Spring is widely credited for making electric mobility accessible to all. First launched in 2021, it was the third most sold electric car to retail customers in 2022 and 2023. In total, more than 140,000 Dacia Spring have been registered worldwide since its launch.

Spring's energy efficiency and carbon footprint were

particularly praised in 2022, when it was awarded the

maximum 5-star rating from the independent European

organisation Green NCAP. Dacia Spring is the perfect

solution for people looking for simple, affordable and efficient zero-emission mobility. Data collected via the vehicle's on-board connected systems shows that the average daily trip made by Spring drivers covers just 23 miles, at an average speed of only 23 mph.

In 75% of cases, cars are recharged at home.

It is even more attractive than ever, with an entirely renewed and more robust design, and yet still as practical, with exceptional interior storage space for its segment. It is more efficient, thanks to carefully managed weight, while remaining the most affordable full-electric model on the market. Pre-ordering for the All-New Dacia Spring is now open.

Dacia continues its mission to be the best value for money car brand that constantly redefines the essentials. Applying this to Spring, Dacia wants to encourage drivers to make the shift to all-electric cars in an accessible way. A car's design - along with efficiency, price and practicality - is one of the essential pieces in the puzzle.

The All-New Spring features the new Dacia

design, first seen on the latest generation Duster. It is a robust and assertive style that makes the Spring more attractive than ever. The interior has undergone a spectacular transformation with a complete overhaul of the entire space, just as the only part of the exterior body to remain unchanged is the roof.

The highly structured, highly constructed volumes of Dacia's new design style give renewed strength to Spring. A powerful look that comes from a clean, simple, pared-back silhouette, such as that seen on the highly sculpted bonnet.

The new Dacia identity is evident in the two black bands, one at the front, the other at the rear, which meet in a glossy finish, with specific matte stripes at the rear. The two strips are framed by the brand's iconic Y-shaped light signature, which is particularly striking with the full-LED daytime running lights at the front and the parking lights at the rear.

The All-New Spring is available in a range of six shades, including newly introduced Brick Red and Beige Safari colours.

Smart yet practical ac-



cessories further optimise storage capacity in the All-New Spring. Consumers can opt for additional space housed under the front bonnet, providing an extra 35 litres of storage space. The centre console can fit an exclusive cup holder, made using cutting-edge, flexible, and resource-efficient 3D-printing technology.

The All-New Spring also works with Dacia's innovative YouClip system. The simple and clever system invented by Dacia engineers can be used to attach various dedicated accessories, practically and robustly, to key places inside the car.

For an easier driving experience, every All-New Spring features a customisable digital dashboard with a 7-inch display.

Located behind the new

height-adjustable steering wheel, the colour display shows essential information in a simple and efficient manner.

The All-New Dacia Spring is equipped as standard with a 7 kW AC charger that can charge the battery from 20% to 100% on a domestic outlet in less than 11 hours, or in just 4 hours on a 7 kW wall box. A 30 kW DC charger enables fast charging from 20% to 80% in 45 minutes.

More practical than ever before, the New Dacia Spring now features a bi-directional V2L (vehicle-to-load) charger so it can be used as an energy source to power electrical devices. A specific adapter that plugs into the car's charging connector, located under the grille, acts as a traditional 220V/16A socket.

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Abarth reveals the New Abarth 600e, the most powerful ever

The New Abarth 600e recently its first public debut in Milan, where the new commercial was shot. Ready, exciting, muscular, and aggressive, the first pictures instantly reveal the "evil" essence of the Abarth 600e Scorpionissima launch version, which will be produced in a limited edition of 1,949 units.

Designed to leave Abarth fans speechless, the Scorpionissima model is built around three main features: a design to reach maximum performance, a car structure to make it the most powerful Abarth ever, and a competitive spirit to attract motor enthusiasts. Thanks to its loaded equipment, the New Abarth 600e will be able to thrill enthusiasts, giving them the possibility to drive safely without giving up on the aggressive and muscular look of their car.



Equipped with 240HP, the New Abarth 600e Scorpionissima is fiercely competitive and powerful. There has never been a more powerful Abarth. In addition, the equipment of this new Abarth proves that performance is the mantra that inspired Abarth engineers. Made to be unique in the field of electric cars, the Abarth 600e will feature a

mechanical limited-slip differential that guarantees excellent driving stability, improved handling, and traction.

The exceptional performance of the limited-slip differential takes the car to new heights, especially when combined with its high-performance tyres, which were jointly developed with the supplier for Formula E to ensure maximum grip and guarantee excellent racing dynamics in all kinds of conditions.

A harmonious equilibrium is attained by balancing

performance and limited resistance, ensuring an improved range in an electric vehicle.

From the exterior, it is clearly an Abarth! The exclusive Hypnotic Purple, the launch color inspired by the post-puncture hypnotic effect, highlights its aggressiveness, while the aerodynamic rear spoiler is designed to maximize performance. It also features a large footprint, expansive wheels, a low profile, and 20-inch wheels designed to accommodate an extensive brake

system. Moreover, the New Abarth 600e Scorpionissima will come with an authenticity certificate. And of course, there is more to come. Stay tuned.

Abarth's goal - to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary - is once again achieved with the most challenging yet performing project developed in recent years. The new jewel in Abarth's house is a combination of knowledge, tradition, innovation, and performance coming from different expertise and partnerships.

VAUXHALL CORSA IS THE UK'S BEST-SELLING SUPERMINI

Vauxhall continued its strong UK sales performance in March, ending Q1 as the UK's third-best selling brand in the overall car and van market, according to the latest new vehicle registration figures published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

Leading the way as the UK's best-selling supermini so far in 2024 is the Vauxhall Corsa, while in March the Corsa Electric topped the electric supermini segment. The Mokka Electric is the best-selling small electric SUV so far this year with 2,122 registered.

Vauxhall's passenger car market share in March has increased by almost 0.7 percentage points compared to last year, rising to 4.89%. This represents 15,553 car registrations in the month.

In the first three months of the year, Vauxhall's share of the electric car market increased by almost half a percentage point to 4.67%, while in the overall car market its market share stands at 5.25% year-to-date - up from 4.62% last year. So far in 2024, the brand has sold 28,664 cars - 5,810 more than this time last year.



Vauxhall is the UK's third best-selling LCV manufacturer both year-to-date and month-to-date, with 4,364 vans registered

in March. This gives it a market share for the month of 8.08% (up from 7.84%), while its LCV market share year-to-date is 9.01% (up from 8.72% last year).

In total, 37,404 Vauxhall cars and vans were registered in the first quarter of 2024, which saw Vauxhall's overall market share increase by 0.57 percentage points compared to last year, rising to 5.82%. This reflects the success of the wider Stellantis group, which has a combined car and van market share of 14.64% year-to-date, up from 13.58%.

James Taylor, Managing Director, Vauxhall, said: "It's been a successful first quarter for Vauxhall, with the Corsa once again topping the supermini segment and the Mokka Electric leading the way as the UK's most popular small electric SUV. Our continued sales growth shows that our commitment to offering practical and attainable vehicles is proving popular with customers, especially for those looking to transition to an electric vehicle."

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THINGS YOUR HOUSEHOLD INSURANCE MAY NOT COVER

As your home is probably the biggest, most expensive asset you will ever own, it's a good idea to protect it in any way possible.

This might involve buying CCTV cameras, burglar alarms and in some areas even window shutters, and most certainly will involve signing on the dotted line on home insurance.

The right policy will help you to pick up the pieces should an emergency occur, but it's also important to be aware of the things that aren't covered, many current policies don't cover for accidental damage.

All too often, people

forget to read the small print and only find out they don't have adequate protection when they come to make a claim, so here are five things your insurance probably won't cover you for:

1. Fences, gates and moveable property

Believe it or not, fences, gates and other moveable property are not protected in most home insurance policies, so if bad weather is due it's essential to batten down the hatches to ensure extensive damage does not occur. All loose objects including outside furniture and gardening tools should be locked away and repairs to broken gates must be

made in good time to ensure they're not made worse in poor conditions.

2. Structural maintenance

Many homeowners presume that their insurance policy will cover any structural maintenance that needs to take place on their property – but this is simply not the case. Many insurers do not count standard or long-term wear and tear such as loose roof tiles or a crumbling wall as claimable, meaning you'll probably have to foot the bill yourself.

Of course, if lightning strikes and damage is caused this would be seen as a definable event and one which most insurers would

cover, but always read the fine print before make presumptions.

3. Damp

While many insurance companies will pay out in the event of a flood – although expect to pay high premiums if you live in a flood prone area – they will not always cover the cost of damp maintenance. Regular damp caused by poor insulation, for instance, is one of the most common exclusions on insurance policies giving many homeowners a headache when they realise they're responsible for treating the damp.

4. Blocked drains

Not only are blocked drains stinky and annoying, they're also not usually covered by home insurance. This is because a blockage is often caused by people putting the wrong things down toilets and sinks, and therefore many insurance companies aren't prepared to pay out for such general maintenance. The good news is there are many ways to unblock drains yourself from using a good old toilet plunger and a bit of elbow grease to throwing three large tablespoons of baking soda down the sink followed by several glugs of vinegar – the chemical reaction of which gets rid of any gunk that's built up over time.

5. Leaking pipes

If the water pipes in your home are old they may rust and leak. If you notice water dripping from your water system, you might be tempted to jump on the phone to your insurance company, but it's wise to read the details of your insurance policy first. This is because leaking pipes, which have simply deteriorated, are often just considered a generic maintenance issue and are not worthy of a pay out. That said, if the leak has occurred due to a floor, landslide, earthquake or other natural disaster, you might be covered.

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SPRING GARDENING GUIDE

it's time to embrace the spring gardening trends that will shape our outdoor spaces this summer.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting out, here's your guide to creating a vibrant and resilient garden in the United Kingdom:

The Joyful Garden:
Last year's trend of serene, meditative spaces is evolving. Inject some playfulness into your garden this spring. Take inspiration from the RHS No Adults Allowed garden at Chelsea, designed by children – a Chelsea first! It features a den, carnivorous plants, and even a water slide. Channel your inner child with bold colours, playful textures, and whimsical elements that bring a smile to your face. Remember, plants impact our mood, so choose wisely – ornamental grass for movement, roses for scent, and more.

Gardens for All:
Don't have a plot of

your own? No worries! This year, there are plenty of options for urban gardeners. Explore balcony container gardens, portable raised beds, and vertical gardens. Attend the RHS's first-ever Urban Show in Manchester this April for ideas. Guerilla gardening (planting in public spaces) is also gaining popularity. Check out the Garden Organic's Growing Buddies scheme, empowering housing association tenants to green up shared community spaces.

Potty for Pots:
Container gardening saw a 200% increase last year, with more households engaging in it. Sarah Raven's book, A Year Full of Pots, offers endless possibilities for pot gardening. Get creative with containers – from terracotta pots to



hanging baskets. Plant colourful flowers, herbs, or even small vegetables. The versatility of pots allows you to experiment and create mini gardens wherever you like. Blossom Displays and Pruning:

Spring is the perfect time to create stunning blossom displays. Plant flowering trees like cherry, apple, or pear for a burst of colour. Prune winter-damaged shrubs and trees to encourage healthy

growth. Remove dead wood and shape plants as needed. Remember to check specific pruning requirements for different species. Mowing the Lawn: As temperatures rise, your lawn will start growing.

Begin regular mowing, but avoid cutting too short. Aim for a height of around 2.5 to 3 inches. Regular mowing encourages thick, healthy grass. Planting Bulbs: Spring-flowering

bulbs like daffodils, tulips, and crocuses should be planted in autumn, but if you missed the boat, consider buying potted bulbs and planting them now. They'll still bloom beautifully.

Weeding and Feeding:
Tackle weeds early to prevent them from taking over. Apply a balanced fertilizer to boost plant growth.

Soil Preparation:
Improve soil structure by adding organic matter. Compost, well-rotted manure, or leaf mould will enrich the soil and enhance plant health.

Wildlife-Friendly Gardening:
Create habitats for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Plant nectar-rich flowers and provide water sources.

Start Sowing:
Sow seeds of hardy annuals directly into the soil. These include poppies,

cornflowers, and calendula. They'll bloom later in the season.

Prune:
Roses: Prune hybrid tea roses and floribunda roses to encourage new growth and better flowering.

Divide Perennials:
Divide overcrowded perennials like hostas, daylilies, and irises. Replant the divisions for healthier plants.

Spring Cleaning:
Clear debris, dead leaves, and fallen twigs. A tidy garden looks more inviting.

Remember, gardening is not just about aesthetics – it's about connecting with nature, improving mental well-being, and contributing to a healthier planet. So, put on your gardening gloves, grab your trowel, and let's welcome spring with open arms!

10 interior design choices that are keeping from selling your home

A real estate expert has identified the interior decor choices likely to put off prospective homebuyers - with pastel colours named the biggest offender.

The findings, compiled by real estate experts Agent Advice, follow an analysis of decor-related Google searches nationwide over the last year to identify the most and least popular home features and design elements.

Anyone looking to list their property for sale may want to consider making simple changes to better suit buyers' preferences over the next few months, as spring (March through May) is generally considered the best time to sell your home.

Speaking on the importance of attracting buyers, Chris Heller - Co-Founder of Agent Advice - says: "When listing your home for sale, those that are decorated well are more visually appealing and therefore more likely to stick in buyers' minds. Many buyers will even be willing to pay more for an aesthetically pleasing property as it requires less immediate renovation or redecoration.

"This gives you an advantage in the competitive real estate market, particularly during peak periods like March, April, and May. Staging your rooms in a way that feels inviting and comfortable makes it easier for buyers to imagine themselves living in the property, whether viewing it in person or online. Hence, the decor is really key."

And it turns out that sellers who incorporated pastel colours into their decor after they rose in popularity early last year may want to redecorate, as they're the least appealing colour palette to prospective buyers right now.

Pastel colours - especially pink, baby blue, and lilac - dominated social media over the last year due to things like the Barbie film release and an appreciation for retro hues, but their popularity has clearly waned as we head into the peak 2024 season.

The second design choice likely to turn buyers off your home came out as scalloped furniture, which also saw a rise in demand last year, especially among homeowners who favour a vintage, doll-like or 'mermaid-core' aesthetic.

Following as the third most offputting choice is antique farmhouse decor, which includes things like wall panelling, hardwood flooring, and rustic brass hardware.

Similarly, the fourth least popular decor decision is upcycled furniture, with many fans of a farmhouse aesthetic thrifting and repurposing vintage pieces for their home.

Revamping old furniture proved especially popular on social media in the last year, as creators share their passion

projects, but many buyers may struggle to see the appeal - especially if they prefer a modern or sleek aesthetic.

Rounding out the five design choices that sellers should rectify is incorporating industrial elements, the middle point between modern and farmhouse aesthetics.

However, the use of exposed metal, minimalist features, and bare bricks inspired by industrial spaces like factories may prove offputting to some who see it as 'cold.'

Also among the least desirable decor choices

are Scandinavian elements - characterised by a minimalist approach and blend of textures - followed by botanical wallpaper, vintage decor, gold cabinet hardware, and geometric wallpaper.

The ten most offputting interior decor choices in 2024

- 1 Pastel colors
- 2 Scalloped furniture
- 3 Antique farmhouse decor
- 4 Upcycled furniture
- 5 Industrial decor
- 6 Scandinavian decor
- 7 Botanical wallpaper
- 8 Vintage decor
- 9 Gold cabinet hardware
- 10 Geometric wallpaper

On the other side of the scale, among the most searched-for design choices is an accent wall, which can

change the size, shape, and feel of a room depending on the colour and design elements, which seemingly strikes a chord with buyers. The most popular

choice is pendant lighting, with oversized pendants predicted to be a 2024 trend, while the second top choice came out as minimalist elements like

monochromatic colour palettes, open floor plans, and natural light.

For more info see <https://www.agentadvice.com/>

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