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Issue 248 - East Down BT24 • BT30 • BT31 • BT33

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Attendees at the sod cutting ceremony to mark the start of construction at Dunleath Urban Sports Park.

NEW URBAN SPORTS PARK BUILD UNDERWAY

A sod cutting ceremony has marked the official start of construction work on the Dunleath Urban Sports Park, paving the way for a cutting-edge skatepark and pump track.

The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council project is supported by major funding from the Department for Communities (DfC) with up to £439,032.28 allocated by them towards the project, with the Council contributing an additional £74,527.61.

This combined investment of £513,559.89 will deliver state-of-the-art facilities to Downpatrick, designed to enhance community health and wellbeing while revitalising the local area. The project will be constructed by

civil engineering and construction firm CivCo Ltd. The development will feature an 80-metre pump track (approximated), incorporating a dynamic series of banked turns and undulations, alongside a state-of-the-art 400m² skatepark. The skatepark

will include ramps and grind rails as trick features, offering an exciting and modern space for urban sports enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels.

Continued on page 4



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New Biodiversity Strategy

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has launched a new Biodiversity Strategy for 2024-2030, a comprehensive guide dedicated to protecting and enhancing local habitats and species within the district over the next six years.

The strategy reflects the Council's commitment to safeguarding biodiversity for future generations.

Focusing on five themes including trees and woodland, pollinators, invasive species, education and awareness, the strategy outlines clear, practical steps which the Council will take to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity. The Strategy will ensure the Council's greenspaces will be managed more effectively for the benefit of both wildlife and the local community.

Speaking at the launch, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Pete Byrne said, "Our district is renowned for its stunning landscapes, scenery and unique biodiversity. The Council has a responsibility to protect and conserve

our biodiversity, not just for ourselves, but for future generations. This strategy is a vital step in ensuring that our district continues to thrive, both ecologically and as a place where people love to live and visit."

The Biodiversity Strategy is designed to work in synergy with the aims and objectives of the Council's various other national, regional and local plans including the Council Corporate Plan and Local Climate Adaptation Plan which is currently being drafted.

A copy of the Biodiversity Strategy can be downloaded from the Council's website: <https://www.newrymournedown.org/biodiversity>

For more information on the Biodiversity Strategy and how you can do your part please contact: besustainable@nmandd.org



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Dan Rice Hall Celebration as Historic Clock is Refurbished

The completion of works to restore Dan Rice Hall’s historic Clock Tower in Drumaness has been celebrated in the village.

Newry, Mourne, Down District Council’s refurbishment following an investment of £15,000 means the clock is back up and running, with new clock faces, back light features and a new electrical supply to operate the new electric clock mechanism.

Originally constructed as a canteen for the employees of the linen mill industry in 1850, the clock tower itself would also have been a very familiar site to many mill workers starting and ending their shifts.

In remembrance of the late SDLP Councillor Dan Rice, who spent over two decades serving the community, the facility was later renamed Dan Rice Hall, and it currently serves as a community hub facilitating a variety of activities.

To mark the completion of the refurbishment the Council recently invited relatives of the late Dan Rice along with community representatives, Slieve Croob Councillors and District Electoral Area Forum members to inspect the works.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Chairperson, Cllr Pete Byrne said, “I would like to thank everyone who



devoted their time and energy to campaign for the refurbishment of the tower clocks and I am pleased that the Council was able to fund this project. Dan Rice Hall is a focal point to the Drumaness community

and surrounding areas. It is important to help conserve this historically important building and contribute to such a vital community asset.”

Eibhlín King, daughter of the late Dan Rice, said

she was delighted the Clock Tower was operating again. “Before my brother Donal Rice’s passing, one of his wishes was to have the clock tower operating again as a focal point for the residents of Drumaness,” she said.

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NEXT DATES:

Tuesday 25th March
Tuesday 8th April
Tuesday 13th May

Our sessions are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month!

Housing Executive

Community Advice

ECO VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATED

Live Here Love Here, a people-powered campaign dedicated to improving the local environment and fostering civic pride, has revealed the winners of its 2025 Community Awards.

The event, held at Belfast City Hall recently and hosted by TV presenter Joe Mahon, brought together over 150 guests - including DAERA Minister Andrew Muir, local leaders, environmental advocates and volunteers – to honour the outstanding contributions of voluntary community groups across Northern Ireland working to improve the environment and promote civic pride.

Sponsored by Power NI and supported by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), nine local councils, and the Housing Executive, the awards serve as a vital platform for recognising the power of collective action in tackling community environmental challenges such as dog fouling, littering, biodiversity loss, transformation of neglected spaces, and environmental education.

On the night, 12 awards were presented to celebrate the achievements of local community groups, including the Regional Champions Awards, which honoured volunteers from Live Here Love Here's nine partner council areas. Newcastle-based Unit T, founded in 2013, received Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Regional Champions Award for its work reducing isolation and promoting health and wellbeing through projects like clean-ups, recycling, community lunches, and the Newcastle Community Fridge, which distributes surplus food.

Downpatrick's Crossgar Community Village Greens was also recognised in this category as runners-up for its efforts to improve the local village through planting flowers, installing picnic tables, and securing funding for a riverside project.

Lynda Surgenor, Live Here Love Here Manager, said, "The Community Awards resonate because they celebrate the unsung heroes in our communities who are driving real environmental change through volunteer work. This year, the theme 'Community Connections' made it even more special as we honoured groups that demonstrate the power of collective action. Whether it's transforming vacant land into thriving green spaces or mobilising locals to restore and protect local waterways, these groups are proving that no action is too small to make a difference. We're reminded that, together, we can build a cleaner, greener, and more connected Northern Ireland."

She added, "We also want to thank DAERA, Power NI, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, and our nine council partners for their continued support, which ensures the ongoing success of Live Here Love Here."

For more information on the Live Here Love Here campaign and the Community Awards, visit liveherelovehere.org.



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‘Make it Local’ Campaign to boost small settlements

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is rolling out a new ‘Make it Local’ campaign designed to engage local residents and visitors by showcasing the fantastic variety of goods and services available throughout the district to help foster a thriving, resilient and sustainable community and local economy

The ‘Make it Local’ campaign will build upon the successful completion of environmental improvement and revitalisation schemes under the ‘Small Settlements Regeneration Programme’, funded by the Department for Communities, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Department for Infrastructure and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Launched in early March, the campaign introduces the friendly faces behind some of the district’s independent businesses while carrying the strapline, ‘There’s Lots to Love when you... #ShopLocal’. The message aims to showcase the distinct character, quality and diversity of small businesses across the district and highlight the improvements made to infrastructure and public spaces. Overall, the initiative aims to encourage residents to rediscover and appreciate all that their local towns and villages have to offer.

Featuring a mix of digital, print, social media and promotional PR, the campaign will spotlight businesses across the towns and villages of Annalong, Dundrum, Hilltown, Killyleagh, Meigh, Newtownhamilton, Strangford, Bessbrook, Castlewellan, Saintfield, and Rostrevor.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Pete Byrne, said, “Our new Make it Local initiative is another step forward in our commitment to revitalising our small settlements and fostering strong, vibrant communities. It aligns with the Council’s vision to create vital and viable towns that meet the needs of local citizens and the surrounding areas.

“The recent Environmental Improvement Schemes and revitalisation projects have improved the physical infrastructure of the villages, creating a more vibrant welcoming environment, making these places more attractive for shoppers, visitors and also for new businesses to invest in. By encouraging residents and visitors to shop locally, we can strengthen our communities and ensure that our villages thrive. This not only supports local businesses but also enhances the overall quality of life for our residents districtwide - there really is ‘Lots to Love’.”

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council would like to extend its thanks to the businesses who participated in the ‘Make it Local’ campaign.

For more information on ‘Make it Local’, please visit the Council’s website: www.newrymournedown.org/make-it-local

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Ballykinlar Filling Station, 75 Commons Road, Ballykinlar, BT30 8DQ	Tels Confectionary 30 St Patricks Avenue, Downpatrick, BT30 6DW
Wilsons Annsborough Stores 44 Ballylough Road, Castlewellan, BT31 9NN	Connolly's Vivo Essentials 18 Downpatrick Road, Strangford, BT30 7LZ
Lennons Spar 1 Newcastle Road, Castlewellan, BT31 9DP	Mace 2 Downpatrick Street, Strangford, BT30 7LZ
	Supervalu Crossgar 1 Downpatrick Road, Crossgar, BT30 9EW

Continued from page 1

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons said, “My department has been pleased to provide significant funding for the Dunleath Urban Sports Park. This exciting addition to the sporting landscape of Downpatrick will provide a dynamic new space that supports health, community, and economic growth in the area.”

Chair of Downpatrick Regeneration Working Group (DRWG), Mal McGrady said, “The DRWG is delighted with this significant marker made in relation to one of our identified key projects — the pump track/skate park project at Dunleath Park. This project has been in the planning process for some time now and we are delighted to be able to ‘cut the sod’ in the current financial year. This is one of many ongoing projects that the DRWG have collaborated on with the Department for Communities and Newry, Mourne and Down District along with other Government agencies. On the back of the



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Launch of €8.6million PEACEPLUS Local Action Plan

A total of €8.6million of PEACEPLUS funding has been awarded to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council for their PEACEPLUS Co-Designed Local Authority Action Plan.

Over the next three years the Action Plan, delivered in partnership with South Eastern Regional College, will focus on three pivotal themes: Local Regeneration and Transformation, Thriving and Peaceful Communities, and Celebrating Cultures and Diversity.

The plan was developed through inclusive engagement with the local community and will result in improved, shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.

This project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). The implementation of the Action Plan will be guided by the PEACEPLUS Partnership Board whose membership reflects and represents all interests, areas, communities of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Junior Minister Aisling Reilly said, “The launch of the Newry, Mourne, and Down District Council PEACEPLUS Action Plan programme marks an important step in helping to deliver improved services and facilities for the local community. This initiative



Pictured front row (L-R) Conor McNickle from The Executive Office; Conor Mallon, Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Director, Newry Mourne and Down District Council, Chief Executive of Newry, Marie Ward; Paul Sheridan, Director of Corporate Services, (SEUPB); Chairperson of Council, Cllr Peter Byrne, Nicholas McCrickard, PEACEPLUS Partnership Board Deputy Chair, with Chair, Cllr Terry Andrews; Josephine Kelly, Director of Corporate Services, Linda Sheridan, Assistant Principal Officer in the Department of Rural and Community Development (ROI); and Amanda Smyth Assistant Director, Economy, Regeneration and Tourism Director, Newry Mourne and Down District Council.

represents the culmination of hard work, dedication, and a vision for a shared and thriving future. It also lays the groundwork for a more inclusive, connected, and resilient region for generations to come. I look forward to seeing the positive impact these projects make to everyone living there.”

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson Councillor Pete Byrne, expressed his enthusiasm for the funding and said, “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to strengthen positive relationships within our community.

“This funding will enable us to introduce a variety of exciting initiatives aimed at reconciliation, addressing prejudice, and fostering diversity. It marks a significant investment for our local community and underscores the EU’s continued dedication to peace and reconciliation.”

“Reaching this point has required immense dedication and collaboration between the local community, the voluntary sector, the council, and statutory agencies. The Partnership Board appreciates the significant energy everyone

involved has contributed to this process. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact the co-designed PEACEPLUS Action Plan will have on our council area.”

To keep informed of engagement opportunities and progress please visit www.newrymournedown.org/peaceplus.

If you need information on the wider PEACEPLUS Programme managed by SEUPB (Special European Union’s Programmes Body), please see their website where detailed information is available: <https://seupb.eu/PEACEPLUS>



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DISTRICT RATE INCREASE

At the Council meeting on Monday 3 February 2025, Members of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council struck the rate for the incoming financial year at 3.98%.

The Domestic Rate for 2025/2026 will be 0.4862 pence. For a property valued at £133,000*, this would

lead to an annual increase of £24.74 per year or £2.06 per month. The Non-Domestic

District Rate for 2025/26 is 30.1884 pence. The rates that residents of the district pay are made-up of the District Rate (which is agreed by the Council) and the Regional Rate, to be set by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Pete Byrne said, "The District Rate not only pays for the services the Council is responsible for, it also supports the delivery of projects that will transform our communities to bring important benefits and opportunities within our district. Over the past

two years we have made significant progress towards realising our goals."

"This year the increase in Employer National Insurance contributions, which come into place from 1 April 2025, have been absorbed into the operating costs of the Council for 2025/26. These costs were not expected when forecasting costs last year but have had to be included after the fiscal changes made by the Labour Government in the Budget. Additionally, ongoing year-on-year cuts to the Rates Support Grant have further impacted us. Despite this, we have worked hard to keep the rate increase as low as possible, knowing the financial pressure many of our rate payers are already under.

"The way in which we spend income from Rates is designed to respond to local needs and improve our residents' lives and livelihoods in the long term. The Council has reviewed its services across the district and has agreed to invest additional resources in the Street Cleansing Services, Planning Services and to support the implementation of its sustainability and climate change obligations.

"In relation to sustainability, we have been advised of funding for managing household package waste from the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs. The Council has allocated



the equivalent of 1% of the Rate as expected income from the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (pEPR) scheme. This will be used to invest in services in the district.

"To help tackle the overall cleanliness of our district, the Council has invested in six new state-of-the-art, mechanical street sweeping vehicles. These will be operated by 12 additional street cleansing staff which will work from enhanced street cleansing schedules. Residents can expect a noticeable improvement in their communities, as these sweepers will be able to access housing developments more easily and tackle issues such as dog fouling more efficiently.

"The Council has also

secured funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 25 solar powered, compacting litter bins. These bird-proof bins can hold up to eight times more waste than standard bins and are equipped with smart technology that alerts us when they need to be emptied. These will make a visible impact in public areas, helping with littering and preventing overspilling bins.

"Investment into planning services will allow for the recruitment of additional staff to improve the processing of applications and provide better support to applicants. This will enable further investment across the district, particularly in new build and regeneration projects.

"Improving the health and

wellbeing of our residents remains one of our eight Corporate Objectives. To support this objective, we will continue to invest in our sports facilities. In January we were delighted to officially welcome construction workers and engineers onsite to begin work on Dunleath Urban Sports Park, which will deliver a state-of-the-art skatepark and pump track to Downpatrick.

"In Donard Park, Newcastle, the Council will be moving forward with its exciting upgrade of the current 2G pitches to a 3G synthetic pitch, with the provision of covered seating areas and other improvement works to be completed later in the year. Similar plans are also in place for Jennings Park,

Newry where the grass pitch will be upgraded to a new 3G synthetic pitch to accommodate two soccer pitches and a full sized GAA pitch."

Chairperson, Councillor Pete Byrne concluded, "In the next financial year we will prioritise the delivery of our front line services, businesses and vulnerable people and strengthen relationships with local stakeholders and funders to work smarter and better for our residents. To remain responsive to local needs, the Council will proceed to action its ambitious transformational agenda to improve its resilience, efficiency and delivery so that we can continue to get things done even in the most testing of times."

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Careers Fair Opens Doors for Local Students

Students from across Downpatrick, Newcastle, Castlewellan, Saintfield and Ballynahinch attended a Careers Fair recently in Down Leisure Centre hosted by Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership, in collaboration with Ballynahinch and Lecale Area Learning Communities.

Labour Market Partnerships are funded by the Department for Communities and create targeted employment action plans for Council areas, allowing for collaboration at local and regional level to support people towards and into work.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Deputy Chairperson, Councillor David Lee-Surginor, who attended on behalf of Chairperson Councillor Pete Byrne said, "Following the success of last year's careers fair, Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership was delighted once again to work alongside Lecale and Ballynahinch Area Learning Communities to provide our local fifth and sixth year students with a fantastic opportunity to explore their future career paths – whether that's further education, an apprenticeship or direct entry into the workforce. Being able to engage directly with regional and overseas universities, colleges, local employers and support organisations all in one place, is an invaluable experience for all students here today."

With over 50 exhibitors registered and more than 800 students attending from 11 post primary schools,



participants had the chance to meet and engage with organisations to explore further and higher education courses, employment opportunities and career pathways suitable to their aspirations.

Exhibitors represented included Finnebrogue, NIE, MJM Marine, Walter Watson, First Derivative, Queens University, Ulster University, Liverpool John Moore, PWC, NI Housing Executive, Cyber First, CAFRE, Kainos, Army, Trinity College and National Trust to name a few.

Blackwater Integrated College Principal and Chair of the Lecale Learning Community, Mr Stephen Taylor highlighted the events significance, "This Careers Fair presented a fantastic opportunity for pupils in Years 12 and 13 to explore the wide range of possibilities on offer. Students had access to

some of the top universities from Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland, as well as universities from Scotland and England. Alongside this, students will realise that other routes are available, including courses in regional colleges and Higher-Level Apprenticeships offered through colleges and private providers such as PWC, Thales and NIE. This careers fair is all about exploring possibilities and awakening interest in new routes to travel".

High School Ballynahinch Principal and Vice-Chair of Ballynahinch Learning Community, Mr Paul Marks said, "This event gave pupils first hand insight into their post -16 options, whether that be higher education, apprenticeships, or direct employment. Meeting with employers and education providers in person helps students make

more informed decisions about their next steps. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership for organising and funding this valuable initiative."

Attendees could also avail of one-on-one support and advice on next steps, progressing to further or higher education or finding a job, writing a CV and preparing for interview from local support agencies including the Careers Service, Regional Further Education Colleges SERC and SRC and the Newry, Mourne and Down Labour Market Partnership provided information regarding training available to help people secure jobs. The Go Succeed representatives were also in attendance to offer advice to anyone interested in self-employment as an option or side-line.



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I'm Sarah, the founder of Rowan Tree Art Therapy, based in the Ards and North Down region.

As a qualified and HCPC registered Art Psychotherapist (MSc), I am passionate about using art to support personal growth and emotional well-being. The Rowan tree, symbolising courage, wisdom, and protection in Celtic lore, mirroring the essence of therapy itself—helping individuals navigate life's challenges with support and strength. I am committed to making art therapy accessible to all, working with individuals across different age groups and abilities, including those with physical and cognitive disabilities.



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Armagh County Show 2025: A Celebration of Rural Life

178th show all set for summer!

The beloved Armagh County Agricultural Show is set to return in 2025, promising a delightful day out for families, farmers, and anyone with a love for the countryside. Mark your calendars for: Saturday, June 14th, 2025.

The show will once again be held in the picturesque setting of Gosford Forest Park, near Markethill.

This location provides ample space for the diverse range of attractions and activities that make the Armagh County Show a highlight of the summer calendar.

What to Expect in 2025:

The Armagh County Show is a true celebration of rural life, showcasing the best of agriculture, livestock, and local crafts. Attendees can expect:

- Livestock Competitions: Witness



impressive displays of cattle, sheep, and other animals, with competitions showcasing the region's finest livestock.

• Trade Stands: Explore a wide array of trade stands featuring agricultural equipment, local

produce, crafts, and much more.

• Family Entertainment: Enjoy a variety of family-friendly entertainment, including children's activities, demonstrations, and live performances.

• Local Produce: Savour delicious

local food and drink, highlighting the rich agricultural heritage of the Armagh region.

• The show is a great place to meet with people from the local farming community.

To keep up to date with all the show information see www.armaghshow.com

MOUSE MATTERS

JV Allister encourages us to tolerate mice in our gardens.

I don't know if I have any mice in my garden. I did spot one a couple of years back playing hide and seek with a rather stupid cat, but as they mostly feed at night and are fast-moving, they could be out there in a hedge or the compost area, perhaps eating the food I've scattered for blackbirds and robins.

Of course, I'm talking about the wood mouse, also sometimes called the field mouse, not the house mouse which, as its name suggests, mostly lives in buildings, not the great outdoors.

We have only the two mouse species in Ireland and, along with many other wild creatures they're in decline. It seems likely that house mice now struggle to find suitable accommodation because modern homes are like sealed boxes, and when found they can be subject to the array of poisons available off the shelf in hardware stores.



Wood mice, mainly country dwellers, have similar problems because of more intensive agricultural practices, including hedge removal, plus the extensive use of what they call rodenticides. Although they might thrive in some woodland, they are increasingly scarce in more open farmland which is probably at least part of the reason for the decline

of kestrels, specialist rodent hunters.

So, as with many other wild refugees from farmland, wood mice are drawn to the relative safety of our gardens, particularly those with trees and decent-sized hedgerows, where they will find shelter and food, even if it's mainly for the birds.

They are opportunists, feeding on seeds, nuts, berries plus worms and insects, pretty much

anything that's available. While their life span is short, they do breed prodigiously but are not a threat to our plants or gardens or carry diseases; they're just small creatures living precariously on the edge.

I've got a mix of mini habitats in my suburban garden, and hope I'm sharing it with these small mammals, but the neighbourhood cats are often on the prowl...

JVA

Rowan Tree Art Therapy

Talking about emotions isn't always easy—but what if you didn't have to use words at all?

At Rowan Tree Art Therapy, creativity becomes a powerful tool for healing. Whether you're navigating anxiety, stress, trauma, or simply seeking a new way to express yourself, art therapy offers a unique and accessible path to emotional well-being. Unlike traditional talk therapy, it provides a non-verbal, creative outlet for processing emotions, making it particularly beneficial for children, neurodivergent individuals, and those who find it difficult to articulate their thoughts.

Art therapy allows people to express emotions that may feel overwhelming or difficult to put into words. Through creative mediums, individuals can process feelings, develop coping strategies, and gain new insights into their mental and emotional well-being. Potentially resulting in enhance self-awareness and foster emotional resilience.

Sarah, the founder of Rowan Tree Art Therapy, brings a wealth of experience and a deep passion for the transformative power of art. With a BA (Hons) in Fine Art (2013), a PGCE (2014), and an MSc in Art Psychotherapy (2023), her academic background is extensive. However, it is her personal journey and dedication to making art accessible to all that truly set her practice apart. With nearly a decade of experience teaching art and photography in a secondary school in England, Sarah understands firsthand how creativity can support mental health and personal growth.

Rowan Tree Art Therapy offers a range of services tailored to meet diverse needs:

- Creative Art Workshops – Designed to foster creativity, self-expression, and collaboration in a group setting. These workshops encourage experimentation and can be



adapted to suit individuals or groups.

• Art Therapy – A confidential and supportive space where individuals can explore and express their emotions through art, using creativity as a primary mode of communication.

• Art & Wellbeing Workshops – Focused on mental and emotional wellness, offering participants opportunities for reflection,

self-expression, and the development of coping skills. These can also be tailored to individual needs.

New this April & May: Rowan Tree Art Therapy is launching two new six-week workshops, designed to provide targeted support for different groups. The Adult Well-being Workshop focuses on stress management, self-awareness, and emotional resilience through guided creative exercises. The Children with Neurodiversity Workshop provides a structured, sensory-friendly environment where children can express emotions, develop communication skills, and build self-esteem through art.

Rowan Tree Art Therapy is more than just a service—it is a community built on creativity, compassion, and accessibility. Whether you're looking for personal therapy, a creative outlet, or a way to support a loved one, art therapy can open new paths to understanding and healing.

Email: info@rowantreearttherapy.co.uk

Find us on Facebook & Instagram: @RowanTreeArtTherapy

Website: www.rowantreearttherapy.co.uk

Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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NI WATER VOLUNTEERS HELP AT CROSSKENNAN LANE ANIMAL SANCTUARY

An enthusiastic team of NI Water volunteers recently helped at Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary near Antrim.

The volunteers helped this fantastic local charity in a number of ways including painting new dog kennels, feeding and clearing out the animals and general farm tasks.

The volunteering day is part of NI Water's 'Cares Challenge' project which has been operating successfully for over ten years and is one of the largest corporate volunteering schemes in the province.

To date over 1,700 staff have volunteered in over 120 challenges, equating to more than 12,000 hours of volunteering to help support communities across Northern Ireland. In the latest project, volunteers from across the organisation made a valuable contribution to Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary.

NI Water volunteer Debbie Mitchell commented: "It was a wonderful day, spending time helping out at the sanctuary and getting to know and work with other members of NIW. It was a very therapeutic day and I would definitely visit again and highly recommend."

As part of the programme,



activities are planned for various groups throughout Northern Ireland each year and are set up in partnership with Business in the Community's NI Cares Programme. The programme identifies organisations and charities within the local community who need a helping hand with physical tasks such as gardening and painting.

Rose Kelly, Director of People and Learning, explained: "Our handy helpers have undertaken everything from gardening, painting and maintenance to environmental and fundraising days. It is often the extra support that these groups require to enhance their facilities, improve the lives of their members and operate their centres successfully."

"Volunteering has also proved to be a key part of our health and wellbeing toolkit. Our teams gain so much from the experience, not only by helping the community, but also having the chance to spend time with colleagues from around the business that they might not otherwise have a chance to meet."

Specsavers Downpatrick encourages customers to prioritise UV Protection in sunglasses

As spring approaches, Specsavers Downpatrick is urging customers to protect their eyes from harmful UV rays by investing in sunglasses with built-in UV protection.

While many people are aware of the importance of protecting their skin from UV rays, it's just as crucial to safeguard our eyes. According to Specsavers, prolonged exposure to UV radiation can lead to long-term damage, including cataracts, macular degeneration, and other serious eye conditions.

Jordan Jackson, Director at Specsavers said: "UV protection is not just for sunny days. Even on cloudy or overcast days, UV rays

can still cause harm to your eyes. That's why we encourage our customers to opt for sunglasses with UV protection year-round, not just in the summer months."

Specsavers Downpatrick offers a range of sunglasses with built-in UV protection, including both prescription and non-prescription options. All of the store's lenses come with 100% UV protection, blocking harmful rays from both the sun and artificial

sources, ensuring that people's eyes stay safe in all environments.

Jordan continues: "UV protection is included as standard in all our sunglasses. We want to make it easy for our customers to protect their eyes without having to think about it. With UV protection built into every pair, you can enjoy clear vision and peace of mind."

In addition to UV protection, Specsavers offers a variety of stylish

frames and lenses to suit every taste and budget, making it simple to find the perfect pair for any lifestyle. Specsavers have a range of new ranges including their winter sun frames which have launched this month, and are perfect for a sunny getaway.

To learn more about the benefits of UV protection in eyewear, or to book an appointment at Specsavers Downpatrick, visit: <https://www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/downpatrick>



Planning for later life at home

A survey conducted by Home Instead revealed that many families find discussing care options challenging.

81% of people hesitate to talk about care with their parents, despite 33% expressing concern about their physical health.

Home Instead encourages people to start these conversations early to make the transition into care as smooth and stress-free as possible.

Here are some tips to broach the subject of care with your older loved ones:

1. **Start Early:** If your parents are over 70, begin observing their daily routines and any challenges they face. Casually introducing the idea of care as a way to maintain great quality of life in our 70s, 80s, and beyond. Having the discussion before it becomes an immediate necessity can help make the conversation less awkward later. By addressing concerns early, like vision

issues or difficulties driving, you create a more comfortable environment for discussion when the need for care eventually arises. The support needed first may well be home help or dementia support, rather than for personal care.

2. **Talk It Out:** Foster open dialogue about your observations, focusing on your parents' wishes. It's important that Mum or Dad feels heard and has the opportunity to share their thoughts and preferences in a respectful and productive conversation. Collaborate to find solutions that work for them and use examples of where you are concerned about gaps in their current health and wellbeing. Use a tone you would appreciate if the roles were reversed.

3. Maximise Independence:



Look for solutions that support their autonomy. If they need assistance at home, consider options that allow them to continue engaging in activities they love, like cooking.

4. Attend one of Home Instead's 'Preparing for Later Life at Home'

workshops, which run quarterly either as a webinar or in Saintfield.

If you'd like to sign up for our next workshop, or if you'd appreciate some information or advice, please call 028 9560 9910 or email info@downlislburn.homeinstead.co.uk.

It's all smiles on the Saintfield Road, Belfast with the arrival of Morrison Dental Clinic

The Principal Dentist and practice owner is Dr Richard Morrison who has a passion for all things dentistry - implant and cosmetic dentistry in particular!

Dr Morrison says:

"You can really change someone's life through their smile. Seeing their reaction after showing them their finished result in the mirror is priceless. The change you see in a patient, giving them their smile and confidence, it is not just an aesthetic change but also gives a psychological change which is so rewarding!"

Morrison Dental Clinic is primarily a Denplan practice. The practice ethos is that prevention is better than cure, and that seeing the hygienist every six months or more is the best starting point to maintain a healthy dentition for life. As a Denplan practice, the practice plan includes twice yearly check-ups and hygiene appointments, any x-rays required, and also gives discount off routine treatment. Preventative care, such as routine exams, cleaning, x-rays and oral hygiene instruction can help catch problems early and avoid the need for costly treatment later on.

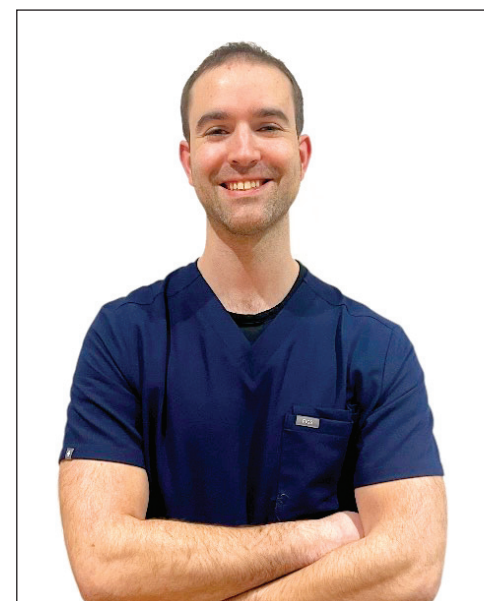
Significant investment

has already been made to ensure that the practice remains at the forefront of technology to improve the patient experience. This includes an intra-oral scanner, which uses 3D photo imaging to scan the mouth, avoiding the need for taking moulds of your teeth. Treatment can then be planned digitally and with greater accuracy than ever, achieve perfectly fitting labwork such as crowns, veneers, bleaching trays etc. Another addition is a recently-installed CBCT scanner, used when there is a need for more information than what traditional 2D x-rays can offer, such as 3D visualisation of jaw bone for optimal planning for implant placement.

Dr Morrison is a member of the Irish Academy of Aesthetic Dentistry and the Association of Dental Implantology, and is always reading articles and attending courses to stay up to date with the latest advancements!

He says:

"I believe that we are



at an exciting time in dentistry, with more and more technological advances which can improve what is possible for our patients. I feel as a dentist in the modern age we must continually learn and improve our practices otherwise we will be left behind!"

The growing team (so far!) consists of five dentists, five nurses,

dental hygienist Claire,
receptionist Shauna,
Yuko (Richard's wife)
who does a lot of the
work behind the scenes!

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Shopmobility Newry: Enhancing Independence and Accessibility in the City Centre

In the heart of Newry, a vital service operates to ensure that individuals with limited mobility can fully participate in the city's vibrant shopping and social scene.

Shopmobility Newry, a dedicated charity, provides essential mobility aids, empowering people to maintain their independence and enjoy all that the city has to offer.

A Helping Hand for Limited Mobility

Recognizing the challenges faced by those with mobility limitations, Shopmobility Newry offers a range of services designed to alleviate these barriers. The charity provides wheelchairs and mobility scooters, enabling individuals to navigate the Buttercrane and Quays shopping centres, as well as the wider city centre, with ease and confidence.

Membership and Usage
Shopmobility Newry operates on a user-friendly

membership system. For a nominal annual fee of just £10, individuals can become members and access the charity's services throughout the year. Alternatively, a £2 per visit option is available for those who prefer occasional use. It is important to note that mobility scooters are exclusively available to registered members.

Convenient Locations and Hours

The primary base of Shopmobility Newry is located within the Buttercrane Shopping Centre, in Unit 54a, Buttercrane Quay, BT35 8HJ. The service operates from Monday to Friday, between 10 am and 5:30 pm. Additionally, a service is also available at the customer service desk

in the Quays Shopping Centre during its regular opening hours.

Contact and Accessibility

Shopmobility Newry is committed to providing accessible and responsive services. For inquiries and assistance, individuals can reach the charity via email at info@shopmobilitynewry.com or by telephone at 028 30256062. For weekend or out-of-hours assistance, the number to call is 028 30263627.

More than Just Shopping

While the name "Shopmobility" suggests a focus on shopping, the charity's mission extends beyond retail therapy. Shopmobility Newry aims to promote social inclusion and enable

individuals to engage in a wide range of activities within the city centre. Whether it's meeting friends for coffee, attending community events, or simply enjoying a stroll through the city, Shopmobility Newry facilitates these experiences.

A Community Asset
Shopmobility Newry stands as a testament to the power of community-driven initiatives. By providing practical support and fostering a sense of belonging, the charity plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for individuals with limited mobility in Newry. Their dedication to accessibility and inclusion makes them an invaluable asset to the community.

Hidden Gems at Home: Tourism Showcase Event

Discover the hidden treasures right on your doorstep at the Hidden Gems at Home Tourism Showcase Event, taking place at the Newry Variety Market on Sunday 23 March 2025, from 1pm to 6pm.



This exciting event is designed to inspire local residents in Newry, Mourne and Down to explore the best of what Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark has to offer, with something for everyone — from thrilling outdoor adventures to relaxing retreats and

delicious local flavours.

Whether you're planning your next staycation at home, looking for a new adventure, or simply curious about the local gems in your area, this event promises a fun-filled day for all ages.

Visitors can explore over 55 local tourism

experiences, ranging from golf and outdoor adventures to unique cultural experiences and artisan foods. This is a chance to discover the hidden gems waiting to be explored in your own district. The event also offers pay-as-you-go taster experiences, allowing

you to try out exciting activities offered by local Tourism businesses. With a wide selection of food and drink stalls, you can indulge in the finest local delicacies and refreshing drinks while enjoying a day of fun activities designed for all ages!



**Shopmobility
Newry**

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*Only registered Shopmobility Newry members can avail of mobility scooters.

Buttercrane Shopping Centre - Mon – Friday | 10am – 5:30pm

Quays Shopping Centre - Service available at customer service desk opening times.

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St Patrick's Day Celebrations for Newry and Downpatrick

Everyone is welcome to this year's St Patrick's Day celebrations in Newry and Downpatrick on Monday 17 March.

As the home of St Patrick, the annual celebration is the cornerstone of Newry, Mourne and Down's cultural calendar. It showcases the best of our local arts, heritage, food and music.

The traditional carnival parades, with street performers, community groups, dancers and pageantry, will once again travel through the centres of Newry and Downpatrick, bringing locals and visitors out on our streets to honour our Patron Saint.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Pete Byrne said, "I am delighted that our traditional St Patrick's Day festivities will return to the heart of Newry and Downpatrick on Monday 17 March. All are welcome to come and celebrate with us and experience the spectacle of our parades, our cultural delights and free family fun activities."

As in previous years, entertainment will be available in multiple locations within the city and town centres between 12pm and 4pm.



Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Deputy Chairperson, Cllr David Lee-Surginor launches the St Patrick's Day celebrations in Downpatrick and Newry with L-R, Peter McConville, Paul Arnold (St Patrick), Daithi McFall (Child), Rosalene McFall and Kevin McFall.

In Newry, families will enjoy the events and attractions happening on Hill Street and McClelland Park, including free face painting and climbing walls. Live music and traditional dance will attract crowds to Marcus Square and Margaret Square, featuring the ever-popular Ceili, quirky music from the Nooks, songs from Gavin Gribben, who is making waves in the country and Irish Music scene, and lively trad music from local band, Gaolta. Meanwhile at Newry and Mourne

Museum, activities ranging from arts and crafts to music and sensory play sessions will be perfect for families with young children.

In Downpatrick, the main stage on St Patrick's Square will host an array of eclectic acts, ranging from the leading lady of country music, Cliona Hagen, to the fantastic visuals of the Celtic Storm Dancers. The craft and food village at the Grove will draw shoppers and food lovers to its laden stalls and live music and traditional dancing on

The Shamrock Express will delight families on its journeys from Downpatrick to Inch Abbey.

St Patrick's Village will be buzzing with street performers and arts and crafts activities for all ages. There will also be a full programme of events in the Down Arts Centre and Down Museum, including opportunities for play for children with additional sensory needs.

Full details on all events this month can be found: www.visitmournemountains.co.uk

Achieving Country Living Chic

Country Living Chic is more than just a decorating style; it's a feeling. It evokes a sense of warmth, comfort, and a connection to nature, even if you live miles from the nearest farm.

To infuse your home with this timeless aesthetic, embrace natural materials. Incorporate wood, such as rustic beams, reclaimed

wood furniture, and woven baskets. Add stone accents like a fireplace surround, flooring, or a stone-topped table. Opt for natural fabrics like cotton, linen, and wool. Use them for cosy throws, textured rugs, and embroidered curtains.

Bring the outdoors in by filling your home with plants, from leafy ferns to flowering blooms. Consider a small herb garden on your windowsill. Incorporate

natural elements like branches, dried flowers, and seashells into your decor. Maximize natural light by keeping windows uncovered and framing beautiful views with curtains or blinds.

Create a cosy atmosphere with a fireplace, if you have one. If not, consider a wood-burning stove or even an electric fireplace. Layer lighting with table lamps, floor lamps, and

soft-glowing candles to create a warm and inviting ambience. Mix and match textures to add depth and interest. Think of sheepskin rugs, chunky knit throws, and velvet cushions.

Incorporate vintage and antique finds. Hunt for unique pieces at flea markets, antique shops, and estate sales. Add character with vintage china, antique mirrors, and old maps. Incorporate treasured family heirlooms to add a personal touch.

Keep it simple and uncluttered. Avoid overcrowding your space. Keep surfaces clean and uncluttered for a relaxed and airy feel. Invest in high-quality pieces that will last for years to come. Embrace imperfections. A few scuffs and scratches can add character to your furniture.

Add personal touches. Display cherished family photos throughout your home. Incorporate souvenirs from your travels to remind you of special memories. Create a cosy reading nook with a comfortable armchair and a collection of your favourite books.

Country Living Chic is all about creating a home that feels both welcoming and stylish. By incorporating these tips, you can transform your space into a haven that reflects your love of nature and all things cosy!

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ABBHEY AND CENTRAL HOTELS CELEBRATE TREMENDOUS SUCCESS HOSTING GAA CONGRESS

Donegal Town witnessed a historic occasion recently as the Abbey & Central Hotels proudly hosted the GAA's Annual Congress alongside World GAA's Congress.

This prestigious event brought together hundreds of delegates from across Ireland and beyond, making it one of the most significant gatherings of GAA representatives in Donegal in recent years. The three-day congress, held from Thursday to Saturday, saw a wide range of motions debated and voted upon, shaping the future of Gaelic Games. Delegates travelled from County Boards in the UK, Continental Europe, North America, and Asia, further reinforcing the global reach and importance of this annual event. This was the first time Donegal had hosted the GAA Congress since 1988, when it was held in Bundoran. Securing the 2025 Annual Congress at a Special Council meeting in Dublin was a moment of pride for the county, and the success of this weekend's event has firmly placed Donegal Town at the heart of the



GAA community. The Abbey and Central Hotels issued a statement on the success of the Congress. General Manager of the Abbey Hotel, John Kelly, expressed immense pride in hosting such a distinguished event: "It has been an honour to welcome the GAA's Annual Congress to Donegal Town. The energy, enthusiasm, and

passion for Gaelic Games were evident throughout the weekend. Our team worked tirelessly to ensure a seamless and enjoyable experience for all delegates, and we are thrilled with the overwhelmingly positive feedback." Breda Haden, General Manager of the Central Hotel, also reflected on the event's success: "Hosting an event of

this scale has been an incredible achievement for both hotels and for Donegal Town as a whole. The teamwork, dedication, and hospitality shown by our staff were second to none. Seeing the town come alive with the spirit of the GAA was truly special, and we are delighted to have played a role in such a memorable occasion." Congress plays a

crucial role in the governance of the GAA, serving as the forum where key decisions are made, rule changes are debated, and the official guide is reviewed. The successful hosting of this event has not only reinforced the Abbey & Central Hotels' capability to stage large-scale conferences but has also provided a significant economic

boost to the town and its surrounding areas. Local businesses, restaurants, and accommodation providers all benefitted from the influx of visitors, highlighting the positive impact such prestigious events bring to the community. The Abbey and Central Hotels extend

their heartfelt thanks to Donegal GAA, Seán Dunnion, and Mary Coughlan for their outstanding dedication and hard work in making this weekend such a success. They also express gratitude to the GAA, the delegates, and the local community for their

support in ensuring this event was a resounding success. Looking ahead, the Abbey and Central Hotels are eager to welcome future gatherings of this scale and continue showcasing Donegal Town as a premier destination for major events.

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JIMMY BUCKLEY
11.30PM - 1.30AM

ADRIAN RYAN
1.30AM

SATURDAY 12TH APRIL 2025

CONOR O'DONNELL
2.30PM - 4.30PM

JOHNNY BRADY
9.15PM - 11.15PM

MICHAEL ENGLISH
11.30PM - 1.30AM

STACEY BREEN
1.30AM

SUNDAY 13TH APRIL 2025

PATRICK FEENEY
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CONTINUED SUPPORT OF NEWRY CHAMBER MUSIC

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Cllr Pete Byrne has welcomed renewal of the Council's partnership with Newry Chamber Music.

Formed by artistic director Joanne Quigley McParland and her brother David Quigley in 2004, Newry Chamber Music aim to present a wide variety of chamber music styles to their audiences. The group presents up to eight main series concerts a year across the district, providing world class

chamber music and arts events. In addition, they provide a year round programme of educational work and concerts in care homes and hospitals. The Council recently approved a £20,000 Service Level Agreement for the group to assist with its programme over the coming year.

Joanne Quigley McParland said support from the Council was vital to continued success of the organisation and would enable Newry Chamber Music to be able to access audiences that they would not be able to reach otherwise. "We are incredibly grateful for the support

of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and we look forward to building on this partnership in the years to come," said Joanne. "The positive impact of the arts on society is well documented. In our work, we see firsthand the immeasurable impact and joy live music brings to people's lives, be that in schools, care homes, community centres or concert halls. We hope that we can continue to count on the Council's support for future performances that bring our community closer together."

Newry Chamber Music formed the Fews Ensemble in 2016, and it is comprised of some of the most highly respected musicians from throughout Europe, offering audiences the opportunity of hearing a wide range of chamber



music featuring a variety of instrumentalists and singers. Newry Chamber Music were also recently

delighted to be the only northern Irish promoter of Music Network's country wide tour. The outstanding Japanese pianist Yukine

Kuroki, fresh from her win at the Dublin International Piano Competition performed at Warrenpoint Town Hall.

Visit: www.newrychambermusic.org/concerts.html or email concerts@newrychambermusic.org

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The County Museum, Dundalk is one of the country's greatest secrets.

Housing a collection of over 80,000 items every aspect of growing up in Louth is lovingly presented over three galleries of permanent exhibition.

Indeed the display artefacts recognize the complicated nature of the Irish historical experience. Artefacts on view include a three-wheeled Heinkel motorcar, King William of Orange's leather jacket from the Battle of the Boyne; Oliver Cromwell's shaving mirror as well as the first ever Olympic medal won by an Irishwoman (Beatrice Hill-Lowe). Most poignantly each and every item in the collection has a story behind it, one which reveals so much not only about the era in which

it was used but also about the item's owner; providing a window into the nature of the owner's life; his or her dreams and aspirations, and indeed, what fate ultimately befell them. These are stories which elevate the artefacts beyond the banal to something more gripping providing an insight into a world long since gone; a life which, in an Irish context, uniquely mixed the agricultural and the industrial, the rural and the urban. The County Museum,



Dundalk is one of the country's best kept secrets but, sometimes, the fun of a secret is the sharing. More information can be had by contacting us at 042 9392999.

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Afternoon Tea at Margaret's Cottage – an extraordinary feast.

Guests who have enjoyed the delicious homemade treats at Margaret's Cottage in Ardglass have often said that their mouth-watering vintage afternoon teas compare very favourably to those laid on by the best hotels in the land.

However, what Ciara at Margaret's Cottage is most proud of, is offering your afternoon tea as a personalised, intimate experience that is just for you and yours.

All kinds of friends and family groups have joined together in Margaret's Cottage, over the years, for dainty hand-cut finger sandwiches and freshly prepared cakes, served with antique silver cutlery, fine bone china and, of course, starched Irish linen napkins.

At Margaret's Cottage, afternoon tea can be served every day of the week, with guests enjoying the private upstairs drawing room for their own party of between two and ten guests. Everything

is baked and freshly prepared for you and Ciara can cater for different diets, whether you are gluten-free, keto or dairy free.

Booking is essential. You can call Ciara to book your afternoon tea in their elegant drawing room, discuss any dietary restrictions and confirm what time you would like to arrive.

Most guests like to arrive between 2pm & 3.30pm.

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FALLOWS WALKING TRAIL IN ROSTREVOR

Fallows Walking Trail is in the breathtaking Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor.

This scenic trail, which meanders through the stunning woodlands of Rostrevor Forest, is set to become a must-visit destination for those looking to experience the natural

beauty of the Mourne, Gullion Strangford Geopark.

The new trail will provide an important resource for the local community to access an outdoor facility which

will help promote social inclusion and benefit the health and wellbeing of people within Newry, Mourne and Down.

The Falls Walking Trail offers a unique and varied outdoor experience for visitors.

Stretching over 16.2 km, the trail showcases some of the most remarkable views from Ballynagelty viewpoint of Carlingford Lough and the surrounding Mourne Mountains, an opportunity to enjoy the Rostrevor Oakwood or to get up close to Cloughmore Stone, a perfect blend of landscape, adventure, and history.

Kilbroney Park offers a wide range of low-level walking opportunities including Fairy Glen and Narnia

Trail providing an important opportunity for local families to enjoy the outdoors whilst availing of other facilities in the Park including Play Park and Café.

The Falls is a Category 4 mountain trail with steeper inclines and rugged terrain, attracting an audience interested in a more challenging walk.

With investment of £1.4million, the Falls Trail was delivered with funding support from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs ("DAERA") through the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme, with funding provided for



Newry, Mourne and Down District Chairperson, Councillor Pete Byrne pictured (L-R) with Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, Chris Moore and Targeting Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), Gerard Treacy.

Phase 1 and 2 of the Falls project.

Additionally, funding was also provided

from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government through the UK Shared

Prosperity Fund for Northern Ireland.

For further information

on the Falls Walking Trail visit visitmournemountains.co.uk

Finding Your spring retreat :What to Look for in a Relaxing Rural Hotel Break!

The winter and early spring months can often feel long and dreary. But with the right escape, at just the right time, you can transform the season with a cosy and rejuvenating experience.

A relaxing hotel break can be the perfect antidote to the winter blues, offering a chance to unwind, recharge, and enjoy some much-needed pampering.

When choosing your winter wonderland, consider the ambience. A crackling fireplace is the epitome of winter cosiness. Look for hotels with inviting fireplaces in guest rooms, lobbies, or communal areas. Opt for hotels with warm and inviting interiors, featuring rich colours, plush textiles, and comfortable furnishings. While winter days may be short, ensure your chosen hotel maximizes natural light. Large windows and skylights can make a big difference.

Indulge in the hotel's wellness facilities. Enjoy

luxurious spa treatments like massages, facials, and body wraps. Escape the cold with a relaxing swim in an indoor pool, perhaps with a jacuzzi or sauna for added relaxation. Maintain your fitness routine with a well-equipped gym or take advantage of fitness classes like yoga or Pilates.

Savour delicious meals at the hotel's restaurant, perhaps enjoying a romantic dinner by candlelight. Look for cosy dining areas with warm lighting and inviting atmospheres. Treat yourself to a traditional afternoon tea, complete with delicate sandwiches, pastries, and a pot of steaming hot tea.

If you're looking for more than just relaxation, choose a hotel near winter sports destinations that appeal, in Northern Ireland we are



fortunate enough to have a wealth of opportunities for activities such as mountain or hill hiking, horse-riding, cycling, surfing, boating, shopping and simply walking. Explore the surrounding area with a scenic winter walk, enjoying the crisp air and picturesque landscapes. Alternatively, enjoy a cosy night in with a good book, a glass of wine, and a roaring fire.

Look for hotels that offer personalized service, going the extra mile to

ensure your stay is truly unforgettable. Many hotels offer special winter packages, including discounts, complimentary upgrades, and festive treats. If you're planning a romantic getaway, look for hotels with intimate settings, such as boutique hotels or charming country inns.

By considering these factors, you can find the perfect hotel break to escape the winter blues and create lasting memories.



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8.9% Property Price Hike in Newry

New research has revealed the UK cities with the most unstable property prices, with Newry and Armagh ranking second and third.

House buying experts at House Buyers for You examined data from HM Land Registry to determine the cities with the largest property price increases from October 2023 to August 2024.

According to the study, Winchester has the most unstable property prices in the UK, experiencing an average yearly percentage increase of 9.20%. In 2023, the average cost of a property in Winchester was £463,068, but this has since skyrocketed to £504,693. The research found that Winchester experienced some of the highest price increases for a semi-detached property in the UK, with a jump from £456,507 in 2023 to £497,390 by August 2024.

Newry is named as the city with the second-most unstable house prices, with an average yearly percentage increase of 8.90%. In October 2023, the average cost of a property in the city was £190,621, but this has since jumped to £202,524 in 2024.

Armagh has the third-most unstable property prices in the UK, with an average yearly percentage increase of 7.60%. In October 2023, the average cost of a property in the Northern Ireland-based city was £159,628, but this has increased to £165,470 by August 2024.

Wolverhampton is in fourth place, with an average yearly property price increase of 7.50%. In October 2023, the average price of a house in Wolverhampton was £203,994, but this jumped to £213,527 over a 10-month span. According to the study, Wolverhampton experienced the highest price increases in the UK for the average cost of a semi-detached house and a flat in the city.

The top 10 UK cities with the most unstable property prices:

Bradford ranks fifth, with an average yearly property price increase of 7.20%. In October 2023, the average cost of a property in the city was £176,102, but this had increased to £187,622 by August 2024. Semi-detached houses were among the most impacted property types in Bradford, increasing from an average cost of £186,851 in 2023 to £200,364 in 2024.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne is in sixth place, with an average yearly property cost increase of 7.10%. In 2023, the average cost of a property in the city was £191,877, but this has risen to £202,936 in 2024. According to the study, Newcastle experienced some of the highest property increases for semi-detached houses in the UK, with an increase of £16,565 between October 2023 and August 2024.

The study found that Edinburgh has the seventh-most unstable house prices in the UK, with an average yearly increase of 6.50%. Back in 2023, the average cost of a property in the city was £319,475, but this had risen to £339,034 by August 2024.

Belfast is in eighth place, experiencing an average yearly property price increase of 6.30%. According to the research, the average cost of a property in the city was £162,515 in October 2023, but this jumped to £168,054 by August 2024.

Lisburn is named as the UK city with the ninth-most unstable property prices, with an average yearly increase of 6%. In October 2023, the average price of a property in the city was £204,932, but this had skyrocketed to £215,464.

Wakefield is in tenth place, with an average yearly price increase of 5.80%. In October 2023, the average price of a property in the city was £196,869, but this had risen to £208,699 by August 2024. The study found that flats were among the most affected property types in Wakefield, with an average increase of £5,200 within a ten-month period.

This information was provided by house buying experts at Housebuyers4u.co.uk



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The cottage garden, with its informal and romantic character, evokes a sense of peace and tranquility.

It's a style that embraces the natural world, celebrating a riot of colours, textures, and scents. To design your own enchanting cottage garden, embrace the natural by avoiding perfectly manicured lawns and straight lines. Opt for curving paths, irregular borders, and flowing planting areas. Let your borders blend into the surrounding landscape, allowing plantings to spill over paths and create a sense of informality. Utilise natural materials like stone, brick, and wood for paths, edging, and garden features. Fill your garden with a profusion of flowers in a variety of colours and heights. Think cottage classics like roses, peonies, delphiniums, and poppies. Include annuals like nasturtiums, petunias, and sunflowers to add bursts of vibrant colour throughout the season. Intersperse herbs and vegetables amongst the flowers for a truly productive and picturesque garden. Create a sense of depth by planting a mix of tall, medium, and low-growing plants to create layers and visual interest. Utilize climbing roses, clematis, and honeysuckle to adorn fences, walls, and arches. Plant low-growing groundcovers like ivy or sweet woodruff beneath taller plants to add texture and suppress weeds.

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Incorporate unique features such as a small pond, a bubbling fountain, or even a simple birdbath to add a touch of magic to your cottage garden. Create shady seating areas and support climbing plants with charming arches and pergolas. Add rustic touches with antique garden tools, birdhouses, and decorative pots. Finally, embrace imperfection. Allow some weeds to flourish, and let nature take its course. Regularly deadhead spent blooms to encourage continuous flowering and prevent self-seeding. Most importantly, enjoy the process. The cottage garden is all about enjoying the journey. Relax, observe your plants, and let your garden evolve over time. By following these tips, you can create a charming cottage garden that is both beautiful and inviting. Remember to let your personality shine through and enjoy the process of creating your own unique piece of horticultural heaven.



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From their headquarters in Saintfield, CES Quarry Products Ltd has grown to become a trusted supplier, serving builders, contractors, and homeowners alike. CES plays an essential role in local construction projects, from small residential builds to large-scale commercial developments.

Expanding their service in the local community, CES launched CES Urban Outlet—a dedicated retail space catering to DIY enthusiasts, professional builders, and home renovators. Conveniently located at 163 Moneyreagh Rd, Castlereagh, Belfast, the CES Urban Outlet brings high-quality construction and landscaping products



closer to local homeowners and trade professionals.

The store offers an extensive range of products, including decorative stone, insulation, cement, and other building materials. Customers can also find top-brand hand tools, garden accessories, and fixtures, ensuring that everything needed for home improvement projects is available in

one convenient location. Whether you’re building a garden patio, painting a tired fence, or tackling a full-scale renovation, CES Urban Outlet provides expert advice alongside quality products.

The store is open Monday to Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and Saturday from 7:30 AM to 2:00 PM. With a strong heritage rooted in reliability and a

commitment to serving the local community, CES Quarry Products Ltd continues to grow, ensuring that homeowners and businesses across Northern Ireland have access to the very best in building materials. Visit CES Urban Outlet today and discover how CES can help bring your construction and home improvement projects to life.

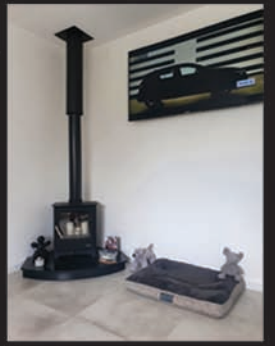
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Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford Wins 'Hotel Wedding Venue of the Year - Leinster' at WeddingSuppliers.ie Awards

The Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford is proud to announce that it has been awarded 'Hotel Wedding Venue of the Year - Leinster' at the prestigious WeddingSuppliers.ie Awards, held on Tuesday, February 4th.

With 28 exceptional venues listed in the category, the hotel is honoured to take home the top prize.

Natalie Haake, Sales and Marketing Manager at the Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the past wedding couples and guests who voted for the hotel and provided valuable reviews and testimonials for the judges. She also extended thanks to the dedicated hotel staff and incredible suppliers who work tirelessly to create magical dream weddings for couples.

"We are absolutely delighted with this award and cannot thank everyone enough for their support.

This recognition is a testament to the passion and commitment of our team, who go above and beyond to create unforgettable wedding experiences," said Haake.

The Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford continues to be a premier choice for couples seeking a breathtaking wedding venue, combining stunning surroundings with exceptional service to craft the perfect wedding day.

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From left to right: Cathal Molloy (WeddingSuppliers.ie), Alanna Murphy (FSHC Wedding Coordinator), Linda Scott (FSHC Wedding Manager), Sara Kennedy (The Aisle).

The Enduring Appeal of Antique and Vintage Furniture

In a world of mass-produced, disposable goods, antique and vintage furniture offer a refreshing alternative.

These pieces, with their rich history and unique character, bring a sense of warmth, authenticity, and sustainability to any home. But their appeal goes beyond mere aesthetics. Let's delve into the numerous benefits of incorporating these timeless

treasures into your living space.

Unlike much of today's mass-produced furniture, antique and vintage pieces were often handcrafted with meticulous attention to detail. They were built to last, using high-quality materials and time-

honoured techniques. This translates to exceptional durability and longevity, ensuring your investment will stand the test of time.

In a world where everyone seems to have the same furniture from big-box stores, antique and vintage pieces offer a chance to

express your individuality. Each piece has its own story and history, making it a unique addition to your home. You're unlikely to find the exact same piece anywhere else, adding a touch of exclusivity to your décor.

Choosing antique and vintage furniture is a sustainable choice that benefits the environment. By repurposing existing pieces, you're reducing the demand for new production, which in turn conserves resources and reduces waste. It's a conscious way to furnish your home while minimizing your environmental footprint.

Antique and vintage furniture encompasses a wide range of styles, from classic to mid-century modern, ensuring there's

something to suit every taste. These pieces have a timeless quality that transcends fleeting trends, adding a touch of elegance and sophistication to any space. They can be seamlessly integrated into various décor styles, from traditional to contemporary, creating a unique and eclectic look.

Antique and vintage furniture carries with it a sense of history and heritage. Each piece has a story to tell, connecting you to the past and adding depth and character to your home. Owning a piece of history can be a truly enriching experience, sparking conversations and adding a unique dimension to your living space.

While not the primary reason to buy antique and vintage furniture, some pieces can appreciate in value over time. As they become rarer and more sought-after, their value can increase, making them a potentially sound investment. However, it's essential to do your research and consult with experts before making any investment decisions.

Contrary to popular belief, antique and vintage furniture can be quite affordable, especially if you're willing to hunt for it. Flea markets, antique shops, and online marketplaces offer a treasure trove of unique finds at reasonable prices. With a little patience and perseverance, you can furnish your home with beautiful, high-quality pieces without breaking the bank.

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RUAS banking on another successful Balmoral Show

Ulster Bank announced as principal sponsor of 2025 Balmoral Show

Ulster Bank and the Royal Ulster Agriculture Society (RUAS) have kickstarted the countdown to the 156th Balmoral Show.

With only a few months to go until the 2025 event, representatives from both organisations met to announce some new attractions for this year's event and to confirm Ulster Bank will remain as principal sponsor of the show – marking a sixteen-year partnership between the two organisations.

Returning to Balmoral Park from 14-17 May, this year's Balmoral Show in partnership with Ulster Bank will once again feature a kids' farm, a mini-Land Rover experience, the return of the Sustainability Village, along with the usual mix of machinery displays, food exhibitions and funfair attractions.

Some new livestock classes have been added to the 2025 programme including a Breeding Heifer class which will recognise excellence in the beef industry and additional qualifiers for the Performing Irish Draught, Connemara Ridden and Working Hunter horse classes, due to their growing popularity and high standard of competitors.

Show organisers are keen to consider the needs of all visitors this year and have introduced a designated wellbeing area for those with additional need and



enhanced the sensory space for younger showgoers.

Group Operations Director at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society, Rhonda Geary, said it is important to RUAS that everyone attending the 2025 Balmoral Show has an enjoyable experience.

"The Balmoral Show in partnership with Ulster Bank attracts over one hundred thousand visitors across the four days and as show organisers, it's our responsibility to ensure that everyone can access and enjoy the event. We have been working with our partners to introduce a new children's sensory area and an enhanced wellbeing area for anyone wishing to find a quiet spot at the Show following a successful pilot in 2024.

"As an agricultural show, food and farming has always be the core of our activity, and this year will be no different. Thanks to the support from our principal partners at Ulster Bank, we have been able to add more exciting attractions to the programme and we are confident that this year's Show will be a fantastic showcase of agriculture in Northern Ireland.

Cormac McKervey, Senior Agriculture Manager, Ulster Bank said he was looking forward to working with the RUAS once again to deliver this year's Balmoral Show.

"2025 marks the sixteenth year of Ulster Bank's title sponsorship of the Balmoral Show, and we are proud of the role we have played in the show's development.

"Ulster Bank's support for this sector extends well beyond the Balmoral Show and year-round, we support farming businesses and

have a range of solutions available to meet their financial needs.

"Balmoral is always a great opportunity to meet with and learn from others across the supply chain and our teams of Relationship Managers will be on the ground throughout the show to engage with farmers about the future of farming and how we can better support the local industry here."

Early bird tickets for this year's event are already available to purchase online and the details of livestock competition entries, show opening hours, and the full programme of events will be available on the Balmoral Show website in the coming weeks.

For more information about how Ulster Bank can support your business needs, visit www.ulsterbank.co.uk/business

FUN PLACES TO VISIT THIS SPRING

County Down is a beautiful region in Northern Ireland that offers a wide range of activities for families.

From exploring historic castles to hiking in the Mourne Mountains, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Here are a few ideas for fun family activities to do in County Down:

Mourne Mountains: The Mourne Mountains are a stunning mountain range that offers a variety of hiking trails for all levels of experience. Families can enjoy a leisurely stroll along the lower slopes or challenge themselves with a more strenuous hike to the summit of Slieve Donard, the highest peak in Northern Ireland.

Castlewellan Forest Park: This beautiful park offers a variety of activities for families, including walking and cycling trails, a lake for boating, and a play park for children. The park also has a visitor centre where you can learn about the local flora and fauna.

Tollymore Forest Park: Another great option for families is Tollymore Forest Park, which is known for its beautiful scenery and its role as a filming location for the popular TV series "Game of Thrones". The park



offers a variety of walking trails, a river walk, and a picnic area.

Strangford Lough: This large sea lough is a great place for families to enjoy a variety of water activities, such as kayaking, canoeing, and paddle-boarding. Families can also take a boat tour of the lough to see the seals and other wildlife that live there.

Exploris Aquarium: This popular aquarium is home to a variety of marine life, including sharks, rays, and seals. Families can learn about the different species that live in the Irish Sea and participate in interactive exhibits.

Down County Museum: This museum tells the story of County Down from prehistoric times to the present day. Families can learn about the history of the region and see artifacts from different periods.

Saint Patrick Centre: This centre tells the story of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Families can learn about his life and his impact on Irish culture.

No matter what your family enjoys, you are sure to find plenty of fun activities to do in County Down. With its beautiful scenery, rich history, and variety of attractions, County Down is the perfect place to create lasting memories with your loved ones.

HERE COMES THE SUN

Why Planning Your Summer Holiday now could be a Game-Changer for your mental health!

The first daffodils are poking their heads through the soil, a gentle warmth is returning to the air, and a sense of possibility hangs in the breeze. It's early spring, and while summer might seem a distant dream, it's the perfect time to start planning your summer holiday. Why? Because the benefits, both for your mental well-being and your wallet are significant.

The Mental Boost: Anticipation and Control

Imagine this: the long winter months are behind you, and you have a sun-drenched getaway to look forward to. Just the act of planning a holiday can provide a significant mental boost. Studies have shown that anticipation is a powerful emotion, and the excitement of envisioning your trip can increase happiness and reduce stress levels.

Having a holiday to look forward to can also provide a sense of control. In our busy lives, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by responsibilities. Planning a holiday allows you to take charge, make choices, and create something positive for yourself and your loved ones. It's a chance to escape the daily grind and focus on relaxation and enjoyment.

Financial Advantages:

Early Bird Gets the Best Deals

Beyond the mental benefits, planning your summer holiday in early spring can also be a smart financial move. Booking flights and accommodation in advance often means securing better deals. Airlines and hotels tend to offer lower prices for early bookings, and you'll have a wider range of options to choose from.

Planning ahead also allows you to budget more effectively. By spreading the cost of your holiday over several months, you can avoid a large financial outlay all at once. This can make your holiday more affordable and reduce any post-trip financial stress.

Tips for Early Holiday Planning

- Set a budget: Determine how much you can afford to spend on your holiday. This will help you narrow down your options and avoid overspending.
- Choose your destination: Consider your interests and preferences. Do you want a relaxing beach holiday, an adventurous hiking trip, or a cultural city break?
- Book early: As mentioned earlier, booking flights and accommodation in advance can save you money.

- Be flexible: If you're flexible with your travel dates, you may be able to find even better deals.
- Planning your summer holiday in early spring is a win-win situation. You'll not only reap the mental benefits of anticipation and control, but you'll also

have a better chance of securing great deals and sticking to your budget. So, as the days get longer and the weather starts to warm up, take some time to dream about your perfect summer getaway. Your mind and your wallet will thank you for it.

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Mazda CX-80 named Best in Class Large SUV by Euro NCAP

The all-new Mazda CX-80 has been named Best in Class Large SUV by Euro NCAP in its latest series of tests.



This prestigious recognition underscores Mazda's commitment to safety and innovation. In 2024, Euro NCAP tested a total of 44 cars, with the Mazda CX-80 emerging as the top performer in the Large SUV category and achieving a close victory over the Audi Q6 e-tron. This recognition is a testament to Mazda's dedication to providing the highest level of safety for its customers. The Mazda CX-80 achieved an outstanding 92% score in Adult Occupancy, with full marks in both the Lateral and Rear Impact tests. It scored an impressive 88% in Child Occupancy, ensuring the highest level of protection for younger passengers.

The vehicle secured an 84% score for Vulnerable Road Users, highlighting Mazda's dedication to pedestrian and cyclist safety. Additionally, it achieved a 79% score in Safety Assist, demonstrating Mazda's commitment to equipping its vehicles with the latest safety technologies. The Mazda CX-80's superior safety performance is complemented by its comfort, convenience, and versatility, making it a standout in the seven-seat SUV segment. Crafted in Japan, this flagship model embodies Mazda's design and engineering excellence. Its exceptional safety ratings reflect Mazda's dedication to customer safety. The five-star

rating is supported by Mazda's Skyactiv Multi-Solution Scalable Architecture, enhancing driving dynamics with a front-engine, rear-wheel-drive layout and rear-biased all-wheel drive. With three rows of seating, the CX-80 is the most spacious vehicle in Mazda's European range, offering comfort, versatility, advanced technology, and Mazda's driving performance. Established in 1996 with the aim of improving vehicle safety, Euro NCAP annually awards the best-scoring cars with the "Best in Class" title, helping consumers choose the safest vehicles for their needs. To determine the 'Best in Class' rating, Euro NCAP calculates a weighted sum of scores in four safety evaluation areas: Adult Occupant, Child Occupant, Pedestrian and Safety Assist. This total is used to compare cars. Cars qualify for 'Best in Class' based on their ratings with standard safety equipment. Arriving in the UK this month, the all-new Mazda CX-80 is the new flagship of the Mazda line-up in

Europe, sitting above the CX-60 in Mazda's award-winning SUV range. Featuring three-row seating it's the most spacious SUV ever offered by Mazda in Europe and with its high-quality cabin, technically advanced drivetrains and elegant design is created to challenge established premium brands in the European market. Based on Mazda's safety philosophy, 'Mazda Proactive Safety', the all-new Mazda CX-80 provides a comfortable driving environment with outstanding visibility. It's comprehensive range of advanced i-Activsense driver assistance systems – including Cruising & Traffic Support (CTS) with new Unresponsive Driver Support; Smart Brake Support with new Head-on collision mitigation; and Emergency Lane Keeping with new Head-on traffic avoidance assist – ensure active safety at the highest level, cementing the model's five-star Euro NCAP safety rating and Best in Class Large SUV achievement.

ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN NETS GIANT WINTER SIGN-UP

The Stena Line Belfast Giants have backed a road safety community engagement campaign to reduce road deaths as winter gets under way.

The Giants are the latest high profile sporting organisation to sign up to the Share the Road to Zero campaign, led by their Captain Mark Cooper. Ulster Rugby, the Irish Football Association, the Northern Ireland Football League and Ulster GAA also backed the campaign this year. Sadly, so far in 2024, 60 people have died due to road traffic collisions. Mark Cooper has now registered more than 180 appearances for the Giants since arriving in Belfast from Canada for the 2021/22 season.

He was appointed captain ahead of the 2023/24 season, during which he led the club to its successful Champions Hockey League campaign and the Elite League Playoff Final.

Speaking ahead of their game against Coventry Blaze on Wednesday evening, Mark said: "The SSE Arena sits between six and 8,000 people so we will have a bunch of families and people driving to the game.

"Leaving extra early and making sure you give yourself enough time is ideal to keep you and your family safe.

"Without question, road safety is of the utmost importance for everyone, so I'm pleased that we can lend our support to such a vital cause and the Belfast Giants are proud to be supporting the all-important



Infrastructure Minister John O'Dowd welcomes The Belfast Giants signing up to the Department's Share the Road to Zero campaign at the SSE Arena as the winter gets under way. Included with the Minister (from left) are Robert Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer, The Odyssey Trust; Mark Cooper, Captain, Belfast Giants; Paul McMahon, Chief Operating Officer, The Odyssey Trust; and Steve Thornton, Group Head of Hockey and Commercial, The Odyssey Trust.

Share the Road to Zero initiative."

Minister John O'Dowd said: "We are delighted to have The Belfast Giants sign up to our Share the Road to Zero Campaign and to encourage their fans who travel to games to take care and responsibility on the roads.

"The winter is on top of us and the roads can be treacherous with snow, frost and heavy rainfall and every action you take as a road user ensures you arrive home safely and your loved ones arrive home safely.

"One of the best ways to ensure safety on our roads and fulfil our long-term goal of eliminating death

and serious injury by 2050, is by changing road user behaviour.

"We all have a personal responsibility to behave in a way that keeps ourselves and others safe and my Department's Share the Road to Zero campaign reminds us of that. The sad reality is that if we do not change our own attitudes when we are using the roads, our death toll will continue to increase.

"We can all potentially save a life if we RoadWise Up. Pay attention, slow down, wear your seat belt, don't use your mobile phone while driving and never, ever drink or take drugs and drive."

Steve Thornton, Group Head of Commercial and Hockey at The Odyssey Trust, commented: "Undoubtedly, it's incredibly sad to hear that the number of people who have lost their lives on Northern Ireland's roads has risen.

"By signing up to the Share the Road to Zero campaign, we hope that the Belfast Giants can play a role in reminding people to be responsible on the roads at all times."

Pledging to 'Share the Road to Zero' can be done online via www.sharetheroadtozero.com as an individual or as an organisation.

Double success for the MG HS

The new MG HS SUV has achieved a double win at the 2025 What Car? Car of the Year Awards.

The MG HS PHEV was judged 'Plug-in Hybrid of the Year' by the What Car? team whilst the petrol HS SE was crowned 'Best Family SUV for Value'.

Continuing MG's reputation for offering customers outstanding value in the SUV marketplace, the petrol HS SE 1.5T, recognised as the 'Best Family SUV for Value', is available from just £24,995.

David Allison, Head of Product and Planning at MG Motor UK, commented:

"The new MG HS models were designed to raise the bar even higher with more equipment and functionality, distinctive MG styling setting them apart from other SUVs, as well as a choice of advanced petrol or plug-in hybrid powertrains. Two awards from the What Car? experts are a great

endorsement for our best-selling MG, and we're confident that this accolade will attract even more new customers to our brand, as well as impressing existing owners looking for an upgrade.

The Plug-in Hybrid version offers a real alternative for families who love their SUVs but are put off by high running costs. A range of 75 miles due to the high-capacity battery means most daily commutes can easily be covered by one charge, and for longer journeys, the added security of an efficient petrol engine and large fuel tank makes it a compelling choice."

MG HS SUV models secured 30,207 sales in 2024 making this MG the 8th best-selling car in the UK. MG was also ranked 10th in terms of UK vehicle



registrations, a first for the brand.

The new generation of the HS range offers customers the best possible overall value in the SUV marketplace. The petrol HS SE 1.5T is available

from just £24,995 with the range-topping HS Trophy PHEV priced from £33,995. And, like all MGs, there is a generous 7-year/80,000-mile manufacturer's warranty supported by a 160 strong dealer network.

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HOW MUCH DOES A NEW KITCHEN COST?

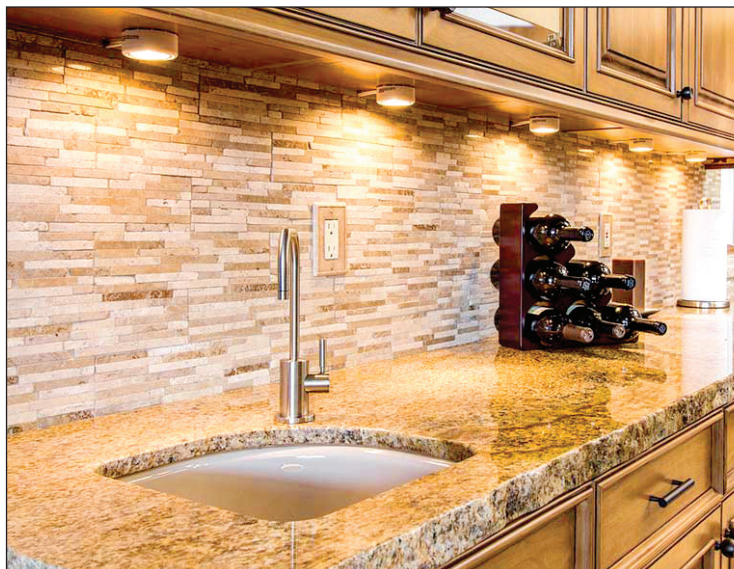
It's no surprise that a new kitchen is one of the most popular home improvement jobs. Here, we'll break down the typical new kitchen cost to help you budget.

This cost guide was written in partnership with our professional estimators here at Checkatrade. Our estimators are Chartered Members (MRICS) of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Members of the Chartered Institute of Building (MCIQB).

Before you start tearing out your current kitchen and ordering your new one, it's essential to consider how much a new kitchen could cost you. Knowing the rough new kitchen costs allows you to budget sensibly for your new kitchen design and fittings.

The cost of a new kitchen. On the one hand, a very small budget kitchen could cost under £7,000. On the other hand, a large, bespoke kitchen could cost up to £100,000.

The cost of a new kitchen can vary hugely depending on a number of factors, including: It's size; The brand of appliances you choose; The quality of the fixtures and fittings; The scope of the project (eg. are you also updating your kitchen floor and lighting?); These costs include the labour involved in removing your existing kitchen and installing your new



one. They also include new flooring, plumbing, decorating and a few key appliances such as a built-in cooker, hob and hood.

Of course, this is a huge price range. So, it's important to be really clear on the scope of your project and how much you have to spend before you start your kitchen revamp. How much does it cost to install a new kitchen? It's estimated that the UK average someone pays for their new kitchen to be fitted is around £3,500 (not including the cost of the kitchen itself).

New kitchen items
Low cost (small kitchen)
High cost (large kitchen)
Average cost Units
£1,500 £10,000 £3,000
Worktops £100 £5,000
£1,000 Appliances £450
£5,200 £2,000 Kitchen
installation £2,200 £4,600
£3,000 Plumbing £200
£600 £300 Electrics £300
£1,000 £500 Flooring
£500 £2,000 £750 Total
cost £5,250 £28,400
£10,550 Last updated:
August 2024.

Our costs are ballpark averages so the cost of your new kitchen will differ to these based on

several factors, including location. The low estimates here are based on a small kitchen with one wall of eight budget units, a laminate worktop, cooker, hob and hood (all budget brands). The high estimates are based on a large kitchen with 20 premium units plus an island, quartz worktop, cooker, hob, hood, fridge/freezer, dishwasher and microwave (all premium brands). As a rough guide, you could expect to pay in the region of £2,200 to have a small kitchen installed, or £4,600 to

have a large kitchen installed. However, just like the cost of the kitchen itself, installation costs will vary hugely depending on the size of your kitchen, its spec and the scope of the project.

Some kitchen companies will include installation when they provide you with a new kitchen. Other times, you'll need to find a kitchen fitter yourself. Don't forget, as well as a kitchen fitter, you'll need the expertise

of other tradespeople to complete the job too. This usually includes a plumber, electrician, Gas Safe registered engineer, plasterer and painter and decorator.

They will also have the knowledge to help you choose the right layout for your needs and ensure that you remember everything that must be considered. We have a kitchen fitting cost calculator that could help you consider what you want in your kitchen

and the cost to have it. Plus, check out our kitchen design cost guide for kitchen island, kitchen tile, and kitchen extension

costs.

<https://www.checkatrade.com/blog/cost-guides/new-kitchen-cost/>

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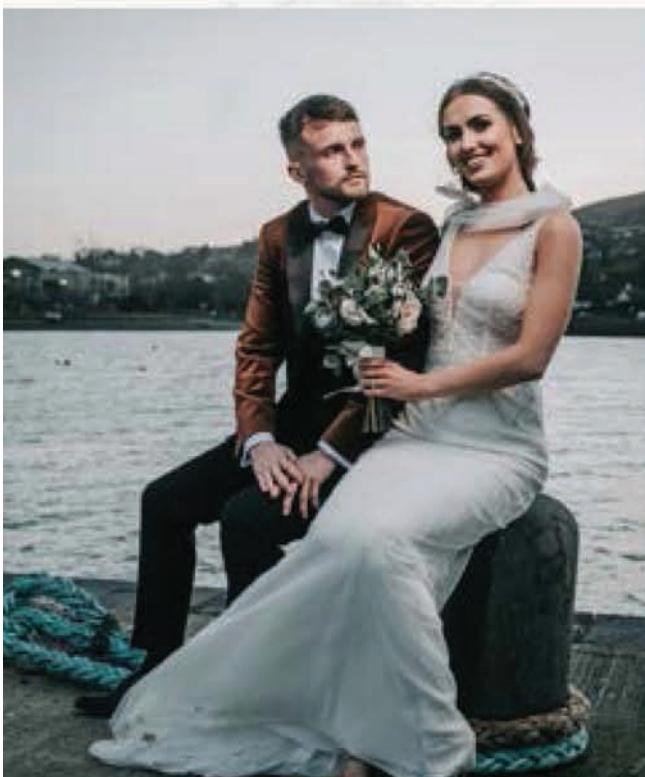
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