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Northern Ireland's High Street Heroes 2025 Crowned at Game of Thrones Studio: Retail NI, in partnership with National Lottery operator Allwyn, SSE Airtricity and Gig Grafters, is delighted to announce the winners of the High Street Heroes 2025 Awards. The celebration event took place on Thursday 21 August at the Game of Thrones Studio, Banbridge, where finalists came together to honour this year's champions of Northern Ireland's independent retail sector

LISBURN BUSINESSES MAKE AN IMPACT AT HIGH STREET HEROES 2025 AWARDS

The celebration event took place recently at the Game of Thrones Studio, Banbridge, where finalists came together to honour this year's champions of Northern Ireland's independent retail sector.

Local winners were Best Coffee Shop – Expressoo!, Lisburn – sponsored by Thompson's Tea ;! Best Forecourt – EUROSPAR Moundview, Dromore – sponsored by Euronet; Best Homeware Retailer – Rosie's Emporium, Lisburn – sponsored by

GM Marketing ; Overall Independent Retailer – Greens of Lisburn – sponsored by PRM Group and Independent Retail Employee of the Year – Richard Kyle, Greens of Lisburn – sponsored by SSE Airtricity. Unlike many awards decided behind closed

doors, High Street Heroes is driven entirely by public votes, with thousands of local people having their say to recognise the businesses that make their high streets truly special. Coleraine has been named "High Street of the Year." Greens of

Lisburn has won the "Overall Independent Retailer" award for 2025 and Richard Kyle of Greens of Lisburn has been named "Independent Retail Employee of the Year."

Continued on page 4

Eikon Exhibition Centre Venue for NI Running show

The Eikon Exhibition Centre in Lisburn has been confirmed as the venue for the NI Running Show, taking place on 7th & 8th February 2026.

The NI Running Show, created by passionate runners and organisers, promises an immersive two-day experience for athletes of all abilities. Whether you are a seasoned marathon runner, a trail enthusiast, or a beginner taking your first steps, the event has something for everyone. Billed as "a ground-breaking new live event... the first of its type on the island of Ireland," the show is set to be a landmark occasion for the running community.

Attendees can look forward to:

- Inspirational talks and workshops delivered by expert coaches and speakers.
- The latest running gear, nutrition, and wellness products from leading brands and exhibitors.
- Opportunities to connect with fellow runners, discover upcoming events, and celebrate the sport together.

The event also carries

strong community and philanthropic support. Air Ambulance Northern Ireland has been named as the official charity partner, and several iconic sporting figures are backing the event, including Olympic gold medallist Lady Mary Peters, four-time Paralympic gold medallist Dr. Michael McKillop MBE, and renowned mountain runner Jonny Steede.

Get Involved

- Runners and families: Early Bird Tickets are now on sale!

- Brands and sponsors: Sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are available — contact Event Director Oonagh Cattigan at oonagh@nirunningshow.com.

The NI Running Show at the Eikon Exhibition Centre is set to become a defining moment for the running community in Ireland — an event not to be missed.

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Charity calls on women to host fundraising events this October

Action Cancer, Northern Ireland's leading local cancer charity, has launched its Breast Friends campaign ahead of October which marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The Breast Friends campaign seeks to highlight the importance of breast screening, raise awareness of early detection, and celebrate the power of friendship and community in the fight against breast cancer.

The campaign encourages women across Lisburn & Castlereagh to get together this October and hold a fundraiser in support of Action Cancer's unique breast screening service, for well women aged 40-49 and over 70 (outside of NHS screening age range).

With one in ten women in Northern Ireland expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, early detection through screening remains the most effective way to save lives.

Action Cancer delivers screening to 7,500 women every year. Each screening is free to the woman but costs the charity £120 to deliver each appointment. Screening takes place at Action Cancer House and on board the Big Bus mobile unit (supported by SuperValu and Centra). Fundraising generated from the Breast Friends campaign will help fund appointments for local women in your



community.

The new Breast Friends campaign highlights the importance of early detection while celebrating the power of friendship and community. Women are encouraged to book screenings together and remind their loved ones to do the same. They can also support the service by hosting fundraising events such as coffee mornings, pamper days, paint-and-sip nights or girls' nights in at home, salons, or gyms.

Jacqueline Rooney, a 47-year-old mum of two, Artist and Action Cancer Ambassador, added:

"I believe Action Cancer saved my life through early

breast cancer detection and I am sharing my own personal cancer story to spread awareness. As the face of the Breast Friends campaign, I will be using my platform as an Artist and Content Creator on social media to encourage as many women as possible to get behind this wonderful charity and host a pink event this October. This could be a paint-and-sip event, coffee morning or Girls' Night In. Take time out of your busy schedule and use this as a great excuse to get the girls together for an overdue catch-up. Through your Breast Friends event, funds raised could make all the difference in saving the life

of a local woman in your community."

As a special way to support the campaign, Olivia's Haven (with stores in Belfast and Coleraine, and online) has created a bespoke pink Breast Friends wax halo melt, priced at £8 will be available during the month October.

Every purchase will directly fund Action Cancer's life-saving breast screening service, making it a perfect gift for yourself or a loved one while supporting local women.

To take on a Breast Friends Fundraiser, contact Lisa McClenaghan for a fundraising pack at E.breastfriends@actioncancer.org or call 028 9080 3361.

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SPEED MOTION FILMS ACCELERATE GROWTH PLANS

A Lisburn-based video production company has plans to expand after receiving funding from the government backed business support service Go Succeed.

Speed Motion Films is accelerating its growth ambitions with investment in its in-house studio and drone equipment using money secured through the Go Succeed grant.

It means the business, set up by Damien Gallagher over a decade ago, can increase capacity and the number of projects it is working on over the coming months as demand for its services continues to increase.

The company which produces social media content for brands and businesses as well as television programmes, features, and adverts for broadcasters including the BBC, CBS and ESPN, also makes high-end video productions for clients such as Belfast Harbour, The National Trust and a range of Northern Ireland councils.

"We have invested heavily in our studio over the past two years, so we can now carry out

significantly more work in-house, with a space for commercial video and photography shoots, TV interviews and podcasts, having already been used by major broadcasters including BBC and Bloomberg," Damien said.

"The Go Succeed grant has allowed us to invest in a new drone and enhance our studio, adding new lighting equipment and black out blinds which dramatically improves the space, quality and effectiveness of our work."

With a background in graphic and web design, Damien caught the video bug 20 years ago making highlight videos for his basketball team at university.

He said: "Making videos for the basketball team and uploading them to YouTube is where it started. Soon after I went on to be the Senior Videographer and Editor at Chain Reaction Cycles before setting up



Speed Motion Films in 2013.

"When we first started out, it was just myself and my business partner. We decided to produce a TV show on a professional mountain bike rider which took us to filming locations all over the world and developed into a seven-part TV series that was broadcast in 128 million screens across the world and that is where Speed Motion Films began."

"We've come a long way

in those 12 years, with a full production studio and offering a range of video services using specialist cameras and drones as we fulfil our client's needs."

Go Succeed services are delivered completely free of charge via each of Northern Ireland's 11 councils and offer support for entrepreneurs just starting out, as well as established businesses looking to grow.

Go Succeed (www.go-succeed.com) is funded

by the UK Government. The service supports entrepreneurs, new starts and existing businesses with easy-to-access advice and support including mentoring, peer networks, access to grant funding and a business plan, at every stage of their growth journey. Participants also have exclusive access to the Go Succeed Members Area which provides business templates, bitesize business tutorials, and more.

Continued from page 1

2025 Winners

• Best Butcher – T Knox & Sons, Portadown – sponsored by KITCHTECH
• Best Coffee Shop – Expressoo!,

Lisburn – sponsored by Thompson's Tea

• Best Convenience Store – Greenes, MyDaily, Lurgan – sponsored by Bobby's Foods

• Best Deli/Bakery – Vivo Oaklands Park, Carrickfergus – sponsored by

GigGrafter

• Best Fashion Retailer – The Winsome Lady, Ballymoney – sponsored by Titanic Quarter

• Best Forecourt – EUROSPAR Moundview, Dromore – sponsored by Euronet

• Best Generalist Retailer – MS Mobiles, Ballymoney – sponsored by O'Reilly's Wholesale

• Best Healthcare Retailer – The Real Health Store, Coleraine – sponsored by Drayne's Dairy Farm

• Best Homeware Retailer – Rosie's Emporium, Lisburn – sponsored by GM Marketing

• Best Off Licence – Bin 34, Castlewellan – sponsored by Molson Coors

• Overall Independent Retailer – Greens of Lisburn – sponsored by PRM Group

• Independent Retail Employee of the Year

– Richard Kyle, Greens of Lisburn – sponsored by SSE Airtricity

• High Street of the Year – Coleraine – sponsored by National Lottery operator Allwyn

The High Street Heroes campaign is a celebration of the businesses that sit at the heart of communities across Northern Ireland. Unlike traditional awards programmes, High Street Heroes is driven entirely by public votes. There are no judging panels, with local people choosing their favourites across thirteen categories.

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Local Proclaimer Walked another 500 plus Miles for NI Cancer Charity

Leading local charity, Cancer Focus NI, recently urged local people to ‘Step with Stewart this Summer’ as Lisburn man, Stewart Barbour, took on a mammoth 560-mile trek around the top 50 settlements in Ulster.

The familiar face in teal and the iconic rucksack, who recently went viral on TikTok, set off on the 26th of July from Wallace Park in Lisburn before spending four weeks walking through towns from Bangor to Newcastle, and Enniskillen to Derry/Londonderry.

Stewart, the charity’s proud ambassador, reflected on his latest challenge, saying:

“Having already walked 135 miles from Belfast to Donegal, 400 miles from Mizzen Head to Malin Head, and last year the 520 mile perimeter of Northern Ireland

I thought, what next? It had to be a greater distance to be a challenge and that’s when I thought of walking through the 50 largest towns in Northern Ireland.”

Going above and beyond in everything he does, Stewart’s challenge will also include climbing Slieve Donard and a few extra hills that will equate to a combined elevation gain of more than 29,035 feet, the equivalent of climbing to the summit of Everest from sea



level! “That normally takes at least six weeks, I hoped to do it in four.” he jokes.

His catch phrase is ‘The walking is just an excuse for the talking’ so he can continue to spread the word about the great work of Cancer Focus Northern

Ireland and the vital services they provide for local people in Northern Ireland on their cancer journey, including counselling, family support, support groups, specialist bra fitting and patient driving service. Every penny raised stays

in Northern Ireland to support local people on their cancer journey.

JustGiving Page: [justgiving.com/stewart-barbour-cfni](https://www.justgiving.com/stewart-barbour-cfni)

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McDonald's teams up with Hillsborough Boys FC to tackle litter in Sprucefield

Players from Hillsborough Boys FC recently joined with the McDonald's Sprucefield restaurant for a litter clean-up around the local area.

The event formed part of a McDonald's campaign aimed at tackling litter in parks, on paths and along roadsides in towns and cities across Northern Ireland.

Now in its fifth year, the '30 Parks in 30 Days' campaign saw McDonald's employees undertake more than 30 local litter clean-ups in parks and nature areas throughout the 30 days of June. Led by the eight local franchisees across McDonald's estate of 35 restaurants in Northern Ireland, they were supported by a range of local community groups, elected representatives and football clubs – including Hillsborough Boys FC.

John McCollum, Franchisee of the McDonald's Sprucefield restaurant, commented: "Our annual '30 Parks in 30 Days' campaign reinforces McDonald's strong commitment to tackling litter right across the UK and Ireland.

"Like our customers and stakeholders, we are always deeply disappointed to see people acting irresponsibly when it comes to littering. We want to play a leading



(L-R): McDonald's employees Lynsey Allan and Leo McBrien were joined by players Oscar Kelso and Matthew Gracey from Hillsborough Boys FC.

role in sparking a change in behaviour towards what can only be described as a scourge on our environment.

"Across the UK and Ireland, our employees walk over 5,000 miles every week picking up all waste – our packaging and that of other retailers – by the sides of roads, in parks and on paths. This is further enhanced through proactive partnerships with local

community groups, such as Hillsborough Boys FC, to keep our areas clean and litter free by carrying out regular litter picks."

Susan Jackson from Hillsborough Boys FC welcomed the opportunity to partner with McDonald's to tackling litter in Sprucefield.

"Hillsborough Boys were delighted to be a part of the McDonald's community litter pick up. Our members

really enjoyed themselves and showed a good understanding. It ended up as a challenge to see who could pick up the most litter! We now hope to see members involved, passing on the message during training and match days that everyone should be encouraged to be picking up litter when they see it. The club is always keen to help assist within the local community."

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Owner Ciaran Canney

said "Podiatrists are the experts in foot and lower limb problems. We can deal with the vast majority of issues, no matter how embarrassing or painful. Podiatrists should always be your first stop for foot pain - just make sure the clinic you choose has qualified, HCPC registered clinicians. Because we are an

independent clinic, you don't have to wait months for an appointment. Most patients are seen within days, not months. That means you can start your recovery right away and get back to doing what you love sooner — whether that's walking the dog, running with the kids, or simply moving without pain again".



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Do you see a change in deciduous trees?

As we enter the autumn season, our deciduous trees begin the annual, much-loved time of changing leaf colour and fall.

Why and how that happens deepens our understanding of trees, providing insights into how they live and function. The reasons for leaf fall are relatively simple: leaves on deciduous trees are not frost-hardy and would be damaged and die in winter if the trees didn't have a mechanism to allow them to drop; in a sense, they die at a time of the tree's choosing, rather than be killed. Also, if trees didn't shed their leaves in autumn, they would be in greater danger from seasonal storms. And the mechanism for leaf fall is also relatively simple: shorter days trigger hormones that start a process which results in the gradual weakening of a special layer of cells at the base of the leaf, allowing it

to drop. But where do the colours come from? The amazing fact is that colour pigments are already there, in the leaves, but we can't see them until autumn, because they are hidden by the green of chlorophyll. As most of us know, chlorophyll is the chemical which enables plants to use the sun's energy to convert carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates...the food that trees need to live and grow...and as the days shorten and trees prepare for dormancy, a bit like hibernation, they no longer need that food. However, nature wastes nothing, and as the trees break down and reabsorb chlorophyll, and try to absorb final sugars, the yellow and orange of carotenoids are revealed (these are the pigments



which also give carrots their colour), followed, at least in some trees, by red and even purple, signs of sugars trapped in the leaves. Weather also plays a part. Low temperatures destroy chlorophyll, so frosty nights produce yellow leaves. Conversely, periods of warmer dry weather promote red pigments, although these are also weakened by frosts, so we see fewer red leaves in cold seasons. And the browns? These are the colours of the cell walls when the leaf is completely dried out and ready to fall. The good news, of course, is that deciduous trees have already prepared the buds for next year's leaves before autumn, so the natural cycle goes on, and on, and on... JVA

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Ireland's most iconic landmarks, the Winter Warmer offers a little bit of everything. Let the coast call you back this winter. To book, call us on 028 2073 1210 or visit our website at www.thecausewayhotel.com

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TWINS' PARENTS RETURN TO NEONATAL UNIT

Sarah and Sarah Cook-McDowell from Hillsborough, whose twins Aria and Angelo were born 13 months ago and spent time in the Neonatal Unit at the Ulster Hospital, have generously donated two portable breast pumps to the Unit during Breastfeeding Awareness Week.

Marking one year of their breastfeeding journey, the couple's portable breast pump donation will help make life easier for mums expressing milk for their babies. The pumps are lightweight, rechargeable and can be worn discreetly under clothing, allowing mums to move around freely while expressing. This extra flexibility can be especially helpful for those travelling long distances to and from the hospital or for mothers balancing the demands of expressing with caring for other children. Sarah explained, "We were originally in the Royal Victoria Hospital for two weeks before the twins were transferred to the Ulster Hospital. I had started to pump from 28 weeks and for us, it was a long, tough

breastfeeding journey. We were travelling 45 minutes each way from the hospital to the house, so getting the right pump for me was a big thing. Once I got the right pump, it made a huge difference. So we decided to purchase two portable pumps for the Unit to make things easier for mums who may have long journeys and need to express milk." Sarah also offered advice for other mums, "Breast-feeding can be tough, so do not hold in your feelings. I used to keep a notepad or make notes on my phone at night if I was thinking about things, then ask Cathy Flinn, the Neonatal Breastfeeding Lead, the next morning. "The support we received in the Unit was incredible. I have been a Neonatal

Nurse for 10 years and I have never seen a team so amazing. We could not have got through the experience without Cathy, who was always at the end of the phone or there to help us." Sarah added, "As a partner, there is very little you can do to help directly, other than listen to their concerns, support and encourage them. It is the little things that make a huge difference and we hope these pumps will help other mums out there." South Eastern Trust Neonatal Breastfeeding Lead, Cathy Flinn, expressed her thanks and said, "Having these pumps will make a real difference to mums, allowing them to move around while expressing their milk. These pumps can be carried around, making



the process much easier, especially for mums going on longer journeys. "We generally ask mums to pump eight to ten times a day, including overnight, so being able to do this more comfortably is a real benefit. "The donation of the portable pumps will help support mums to breastfeed at what can be an overwhelming and emotional time."

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Get ready to be amazed as Crumlin Integrated College proudly presents Matilda the Musical – a heartwarming and high-energy production that promises to be one of the highlights of the school year!

Taking place from 3rd to 5th December 2025, this unforgettable show will light up the stage with music, magic, and the incredible talents of our pupils. Based on the beloved story by Roald Dahl, Matilda the Musical is a celebration of courage, imagination, and standing up for what's right – all brought to life by a passionate and dedicated cast of students. With toe-tapping songs, brilliant choreography, and captivating performances, audiences of all ages will be swept away by this joyful and inspiring show. This is more than just a school play – it's a full-scale production that showcases the creativity, hard work, and spirit of our entire school community. Whether you're a family member, a friend, a local resident, or a lover of live theatre, you're warmly invited to come along and support our young performers as they bring Matilda's magical world to life. Join us for an



evening of laughter, music, and pure entertainment. Matilda the Musical at Crumlin Integrated College is a must-see event – so mark your calendars for 3rd–5th December 2025 and prepare to be thoroughly enchanted! Tickets will go fast, so don't miss your chance to be part of this incredible celebration of youth and talent.

Hay Fever in the Autumn Season: A Surprising Allergy Challenge

When most people think of hay fever, springtime often comes to mind—blossoming trees, blooming flowers, and clouds of pollen.

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But for many allergy sufferers, autumn brings its own set of challenges. Hay fever in the autumn season is real, and it's often triggered by a different culprit: weed pollen and mould spores. Unlike spring and summer, when tree and grass pollen dominate, autumn allergies are typically caused by ragweed, mugwort, and other late-blooming weeds. These plants release pollen into the air from late August through October, especially in dry, windy conditions. In the UK, weed pollen levels can remain high well into September and October, making autumn a difficult time for those sensitive to these allergens. Another major trigger during autumn is mould. As leaves fall and decompose, damp conditions create the perfect environment for mould growth. Spores from outdoor moulds can become airborne and easily inhaled, leading to symptoms similar to pollen allergies—sneezing, itchy eyes, runny nose, and congestion. Indoor moulds can also flourish in poorly ventilated homes, especially as people start to close windows and turn on heating systems. Managing hay fever in autumn requires a slightly different approach. Here are a few tips:

- Keep windows closed during high pollen days and use air purifiers indoors.
- Clear fallen leaves from gardens and gutters to reduce mould buildup.
- Change clothes and shower after spending time outdoors to remove pollen and spores.
- Use antihistamines or nasal sprays as recommended by your doctor.

Though autumn hay fever is less talked about, it can be just as disruptive as its spring counterpart. By understanding the seasonal triggers and taking proactive steps, you can enjoy the crisp air and golden leaves without the sniffles.

Meet Lisburn's fabulous Slimming World Consultants Linda and Christine

Linda McKay has returned to her role as a slimming world consultant in her original Saturday group in Lisburn at Graham Gardens 8am +9.30am from last July and reopened the Hillsborough Wednesday morning group in the Presbyterian church at 9.30am in January.

"The last few years have had different challenges for many people and the general consensus among everyone is that it is time to start prioritising ourselves, our health and nutrition, that's where group plays a vital role in support, community, fun and motivation!" says Linda. Christine Young has been a member of Slimming World for 13 years and a Consultant for the last 7 years. Christine has her groups in Mt Zion, Tuesday 5.30pm. Lisburn City Elim Church Wednesday 5.30pm & 7.30pm. Also Thursday 9.30am. Trinity Methodist Thursday 5.30pm & 7.30pm. Also Friday 9.30am. Having lost 11 stone Christine knows only too well the burden of carrying excess weight. She also knew changes needed to be made. Christine says "I cannot emphasise enough the importance of having



Christine left, Linda right. also get exclusive access to the slimming world member website, app and barcode scanner. "And our support" says Linda and Christine. Contact: Linda: 07568476044 and Christine: 07981 745742

Make it your business to fundraise for Action Cancer's Breast Screening Service

This October, Action Cancer is calling on businesses of all types and sizes across Northern Ireland to take part in the 10th anniversary of its flagship fundraising campaign – Paint the Town Pink – during Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The campaign aims to raise vital funds for Action Cancer's unique, free breast screening service – the only one of its kind available in the UK and Ireland. Every £120 raised will fund one potentially life-saving breast screening appointment for well women aged 40–49 and 70+, groups not covered by the NHS screening programme. Businesses are encouraged to "go pink" and host fundraising events throughout October, from coffee mornings and bake sales to dress-down days and pink-themed pub quizzes. Action Cancer will provide participating businesses with a fundraising pack including pink bunting, balloons, collection boxes and creative fundraising ideas. As the charity receives no regular government funding, it relies heavily on support from the local community and business sector to continue delivering this vital service. Senior Radiographer Helen Bryce said: "Action Cancer aims to provide at least 7,500 breast screenings for asymptomatic ladies aged 40–49 and 70+. On average, we detect six cancers per 1,000 screenings. This free service is not available anywhere else in the UK or Ireland, so we are appealing to businesses across the region to get involved. "When it comes to breast cancer, early detection

saves lives, and our 3D state-of-the-art technology can detect cancers as small as a grain of salt. It is so easy to get involved with Paint the Town Pink. Simply sign up via the Action Cancer website to receive your fundraising pack, raise a minimum of £120 to fund one screening appointment, and have fun while supporting a life-saving cause." Now in its 10th year, the 2025 campaign is shaping up to be the biggest yet, proudly supported by two leading Northern Ireland businesses. Launched in Banbridge in 2015, Paint the Town Pink was inspired by the pink-themed Giro d'Italia in 2014. It has since grown to become a major annual campaign across Northern Ireland, raising over £375,000 to date, and is proudly endorsed by Action Cancer Patron Gloria Hunniford OBE. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Northern Ireland, accounting for 30% of all female cancer diagnoses. On average, 1,513 women are diagnosed and 310 die from the disease each year. Action Cancer has been at the heart of cancer prevention, detection and support in Northern Ireland for over 50 years. Its services are unique and free to the user but cost the charity £4 million annually to deliver. These include an early detection breast screening clinic, therapeutic support for people living with a cancer diagnosis (and for those supporting a loved one) and a range of health improvement programmes. Services are available at Action Cancer House in Belfast, at 13 regional locations, and onboard the Big Bus (supported by SuperValu and Centra) which visits over 200 locations each year. If you or your workplace would like to take part in Paint the Town Pink, please contact Mark Irwin-Watson in the fundraising team on 07580 133752 or email ptt@actioncancer.org

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DISCOVER THE CHARMS OF MOIRA: A GUIDE TO LOCAL DELIGHTS

Nestled in the heart of Northern Ireland, the picturesque village of Moira offer a delightful mix of natural beauty, rich history, and family-friendly attractions.

Whether you're a local looking for a new adventure or a visitor exploring the region, there's something to captivate everyone.

Immerse Yourself in Nature and History

- Moira Demesne: A true gem of the village, Moira Demesne is a beautiful park spanning over 40 acres. Originally laid out in the 17th century with exotic plants from Jamaica, it was one of the foremost botanical gardens of its time. Today, it provides a peaceful escape with lovely walking paths, picnic areas, and a modern children's play park and outdoor gym. It's a perfect spot for a leisurely stroll or an afternoon with the family.
- Lough Neagh Discovery Centre & Oxford Island: For a truly immersive natural experience, head to the Lough Neagh Discovery Centre on Oxford Island. This National Nature Reserve offers miles of walking paths, birdwatching hides, and a chance to learn about the diverse wildlife and unique ecosystem of Lough Neagh, the largest freshwater lake in the British Isles.

Family Fun and



Unique Experiences

- Tannaghmore Gardens and Animal Farm: A fantastic day out for families, Tannaghmore offers charming gardens and a farm with a variety of rare breeds of livestock. It's a wonderful opportunity for children to interact with animals and enjoy the peaceful

surroundings.

- Ulster Aviation Society: History and aviation enthusiasts will be fascinated by the Ulster Aviation Society. This

charitable society of volunteers works to preserve and exhibit Northern Ireland's rich aviation heritage, with a collection of aircraft and related artifacts.

Indulge in Local Flavours

Moira is a village renowned for its excellent food scene. After a day of exploring, you'll be spoiled for choice with a variety of restaurants and cafes.

- The Four Trees Moira: Formerly a historic pub, this gastro pub offers a warm and inviting atmosphere with a menu of delicious, locally sourced food.
- Pretty Marys Bar & Restaurant: Located in the heart of the village, Pretty Marys prides itself on its fresh, local ingredients and a wide selection of drinks.
- Masala Hut: For a taste of something different, Masala Hut provides a sophisticated Indian dining experience, known for its authentic flavours and charming service.
- Wine & Brine: A critically acclaimed restaurant, Wine & Brine is a must-visit for food lovers, known for its creative and exceptional modern cuisine.

Moira and the wider Craigavon area truly offer a complete package for a memorable day out or a relaxing getaway!

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Mrs Patterson's homemade wheaten (gf)(ve)(v)

Larchfield Estate Salt and Chilli Pheasant

Korean vegetable remoulade, mango purée (gf)

Chinese Glazed Chicken Skewer

Toasted garlic flat bread, pickled cucumber, nut dukkah (gf)

Peppered Salmon & Local Caught Mackerel Pâté

Toasted butter brioche, beetroot, pear & horseradish (gf)

Mexican Style Mixed Bean Taco

Pico de Gallo, tequila guacamole (gf)(ve)(v)

MAINS

County Antrim Glazed Turkey & Belfast Ham

Sage & onion stuffing, Carnreagh Cottage Farm potatoes & vegetables, chipolatas, pan gravy, homemade cranberry compote (gf)

8oz Prime Irish Ribeye Steak

Watercress & pickled shallot, tobacco onions, peppercorn sauce, triple cooked chunky chips (E10 supplement) (gf)

Pan Fried Glenarm Salmon

Roasted baby potatoes, buttered greens, shellfish & orange saffron cream (gf)

Crispy Peking Half Duck

Sriracha pomme purée, teriyaki style bok choy, lime, ginger & lemon grass glaze

8hrs Slow Cooked Pork Belly

Celeriac pancetta & smoked cheddar, potato gratin, fricassee of cabbage, peas & pearl onion, compressed apple jus (gf)

Sweet Potato & Charred Baby Leek Risotto

Crumbled feta, sage oil, rose peppercorn (gf)(v)(ve)

Breaded Chicken Escalope

Tomato soprano sauce, parmesan, tender stem broccoli, rosemary & garlic parmentier potatoes

DESSERTS

Mrs Patterson's Homemade Christmas Pudding

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Moira Primary School



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We currently have 8 fully qualified instructors with over 60 years experience

between them. There are three classes running at any one time so we work hard to get families with a variety of abilities fitted into either parallel or consecutive lessons.

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Lessons last 30 minutes, have a maximum of 6 pupils per class, are pre-booked in 10 week

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Anyone wishing to book

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a shopping trip. There are also a great range of hotels just minutes from Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station.

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"People love the fact that it's so hassle-free compared to flying, no airport transfers and with

no extra charge for luggage it is a massive help with keeping the cost of a break down," said Mr Hannon.

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Moira Primary School's Year of Accolades

Moira Primary School is celebrating a remarkable year, having earned multiple prestigious awards that highlight its commitment to educational excellence and pupil well-being.

The school was recently crowned Primary School of the Year (County Armagh) at the Europa Hotel in Belfast. The judges praised the school's "innovative teaching methods, inclusive environment, and unwavering focus on pupil well-being," noting that the "staff's collective effort and genuine care for each and every child shone through." This accolade is a testament to the school's holistic approach to education, which prioritizes the personal and social development of its pupils.

In addition to this award, Moira Primary School has been recognized nationally for its use of technology. The school was awarded the prestigious NaaceMark for Excellence in ICT, a UK-wide recognition that celebrates the school's success in integrating Information and Communications Technology into all aspects of learning and teaching. This award reinforces the school's forward-thinking vision to prepare students for a technologically advanced world.

Moira Primary School's dedication to high standards was also acknowledged in the ETI Inspection Report (November 2024) which highlighted the school as sector-leading in multiple areas. Inspectors praised its innovative leadership, high-quality teaching and exemplary support for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum is

engaging and skills-rich, promoting creativity and critical thinking. The nursery provision is calm, inclusive and imaginative and digital learning is seamlessly embedded across subjects. The school's practices are considered to be outstanding and are recommended for wider

Not just for Winter ...the importance of Wool

Wool is a highly valued material in the modern fashion industry, celebrated for its versatility, sustainability, and unique properties.

Its importance stems from a combination of natural benefits and a growing consumer demand for eco-friendly and high-quality textiles.

Natural Properties and Versatility

Wool's inherent qualities make it a standout fibre. It's a natural insulator, trapping air to keep the wearer warm in cold weather while also being breathable, allowing moisture to wick away and providing comfort in warmer conditions. This makes it ideal for everything from heavy winter coats and knitwear to lightweight suits and activewear. Wool is also naturally water-repellent, a property that adds to its practicality.

Its versatility is evident in the wide range of textures and finishes it can achieve. It can be spun into fine yarns for luxurious merino wool fabrics used in high-end fashion or processed into thicker, more rustic textures for durable outerwear and home furnishings. The fiber is also naturally elastic, meaning it resists wrinkling and maintains its shape, a key feature for tailored clothing.

Sustainability and Ethical Appeal

In an era of increasing environmental awareness, wool's sustainability is a major selling point. As a natural, renewable resource, it is biodegradable and breaks down without contributing to landfill waste, unlike synthetic fibers like polyester and acrylic. Sheep grow new fleeces annually, making wool a sustainable alternative to petroleum-based materials.

The modern fashion industry is also facing pressure to adopt more ethical and transparent practices. Many brands are now highlighting their use of ethically sourced wool, often working with farms that adhere to strict animal welfare standards. This focus on traceability and responsible production resonates with consumers who want to make conscious purchasing decisions.

Innovation in Wool

Technological advancements have further enhanced wool's appeal. Innovations in fabric treatment and spinning have led to the creation of machine-washable wool, making it more convenient for everyday use. Performance wool, often blended with other fibers, is now a staple in the activewear market due to its moisture-wicking and odor-resistant properties. This has expanded its use beyond traditional outdoor wear and formalwear.

Furthermore, designers are continually experimenting with wool, creating new textures, patterns, and forms. From futuristic felted wool designs to intricate needlework, the fiber's creative potential is being explored in exciting new ways, solidifying its place not just as a traditional textile but as a cutting-edge material.

In conclusion, wool's blend of natural benefits, sustainability, and adaptability ensures its enduring relevance. It's not just a traditional fiber; it's a modern, versatile, and environmentally responsible choice that continues to shape the future of fashion.

Mini Moira Play Café and Hub: Building a Business is child's play for couple!

Balancing five children 6 & Under with nightshift lorry driving might sound like a recipe for chaos, but for husband-and-wife team David and Keira, it became the spark that created something special: Mini Moira Play Café and Hub.

As the family celebrates their first year in business, the café has quickly grown into a warm, welcoming space where families can come together, children can explore enriching play, and parents can finally catch their breath.

Mini Moira is more than just a play café. With breakfasts, tasty lunches, speciality coffee, matcha, and sumptuous bakes sourced from local makers, it's a place where community and comfort blend seamlessly. Parents can enjoy a hot drink while little ones play, or strike up a conversation with someone who soon feels like a friend.

The hub has also become known for its unique, one-of-a-kind events designed to bring people together. From toddler play sessions to creative workshops and parent support groups, every detail reflects the team's belief that it really does take a village to raise a child.

For adults, the thriving True crime club (Hot Coffees & Cold Cases) is about to mark its own first anniversary, proving that Mini Moira is just as much for grown-ups as it is for children.

Looking ahead, excitement is building for the launch of their on-site, old-fashioned sweet shop. With rows of jarred sweets, ice cream, and indulgent desserts, it promises yet another reason to visit this much-loved local gem.





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A Stargazer’s Guide to Northern Ireland’s Celestial Shows

As the nights draw in and the crisp autumn air settles over Northern Ireland, the cosmos offers a spectacular array of celestial events.

Away from city lights, our dark skies become a canvas for meteor showers, planetary alignments, and shimmering aurorae. Grab a warm drink, look up, and prepare to be amazed!

The Draconids Meteor Shower (Early October)

Kicking off the autumn astronomical calendar is the Draconids Meteor Shower, usually peaking around October 8th. This shower is unique because it’s best viewed in the early evening, shortly after dusk, rather than in the pre-dawn hours like many other showers. While often a modest display, the Draconids can occasionally surprise with bursts of activity. Keep an eye towards the constellation Draco the Dragon in the northern sky.

Orionids Meteor Shower (Late October)

Following close behind are the Orionids, active throughout October but peaking around October 21st-22nd. These swift and bright meteors are fragments of Halley’s Comet and are famous for leaving glowing trains. To spot them, locate the constellation Orion (which gives the shower its name) rising in the eastern sky after midnight. The later you stay up, the better your chances of seeing these cosmic fireworks.

Planetary Parade: Jupiter and Saturn Shine Bright (All Autumn)

Throughout autumn, the gas giants Jupiter and Saturn will be prominent fixtures in the night sky.

Jupiter, the largest planet in our solar system, will be exceptionally bright and easily visible to the naked eye, appearing like a brilliant, steady star. Through binoculars, you might even glimpse its four largest moons.

Saturn, with its iconic rings, will also be visible, though appearing less bright than Jupiter. While you’ll need a telescope to resolve its rings, even binoculars can hint at its elongated shape. These planetary giants will be observable in the southern sky during the evening hours for much of the season.

Taurids Meteor Shower (November)

November brings the Taurids Meteor Shower, active throughout the month with two peaks: the South Taurids around November 5th and the North Taurids around November 12th. The Taurids are known for being slow-moving but occasionally very bright meteors, sometimes called “fireballs.” They radiate from the constellation Taurus the Bull, which rises in the eastern sky.

Leonids Meteor Shower (Mid-November)

One of the most anticipated meteor showers,



the Leonids, peaks around November 17th-18th. These meteors are famous for their historical “storms,” though most years offer a more modest but still impressive display. The Leonids are fragments of the comet Tempel-Tuttle and are known for their speed and bright trails. Look towards the constellation Leo the Lion, which rises in the late evening.

Geminids Meteor Shower (Early December)

Often considered one of the best meteor showers of the year, the Geminids peak around December 13th-14th. Unlike most showers which originate from comets, the Geminids come from an asteroid, 3200 Phaethon. They produce numerous, bright, and multi-coloured meteors. This shower is best

viewed after midnight, with meteors appearing to radiate from the constellation Gemini the Twins, visible high in the southern sky.

The Northern Lights: Aurora Borealis (Potential Sightings)

While not a guaranteed event, autumn and winter can offer increased chances of seeing the Aurora Borealis from Northern Ireland, especially in areas with low light pollution such as the Antrim Coast or parts of County Fermanagh. Solar activity can cause geomagnetic storms, leading to these ethereal green and pink lights dancing across the northern horizon. Keep an eye on space weather forecasts from sites like the Met Office Space Weather Operations Centre for aurora alerts.



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EMBRACING OUTDOOR WORKOUTS IN COOLER WEATHER

As the days get shorter and the air turns crisp, it's easy to retreat indoors and let your fitness routine hibernate for the winter.

But autumn is a fantastic season for outdoor exercise. The cooler temperatures can make high-intensity workouts more comfortable, and the beautiful scenery—think vibrant changing leaves and golden sunlight—provides a refreshing backdrop that can boost your mood and motivation. The Benefits of Exercising Outdoors in



Autumn Working out in the autumn air offers unique advantages. The cooler climate helps your body regulate its temperature more efficiently, which can improve endurance and prevent overheating during intense sessions. A brisk autumn walk or run can feel invigorating, and the natural light exposure can help combat seasonal mood changes. The changing landscape also provides a visual feast that makes your workout feel less like a chore and more like an enjoyable experience.

Tips for Staying Safe and Comfortable

To make the most of your outdoor autumn workouts, a little preparation goes a long way.

- Dress in Layers: This is the golden rule of cold-weather exercise. Start with a moisture-wicking base layer to draw sweat away from your skin, a middle layer for insulation (like a fleece or wool), and a wind-resistant or waterproof outer layer. As you warm up, you can shed layers.
- Protect Your Extremities: Your hands, feet, and ears are most susceptible to the cold. Wear gloves or mittens, thermal socks, and a hat or ear warmers.
- Stay Hydrated: Just because it's cooler doesn't mean you don't need to drink water. You can still become dehydrated, so carry a water bottle with you.
- Choose the Right Footwear: As the ground may be wet or covered in leaves, opt for shoes with good traction. If you're running, consider trail shoes for better grip.
- Mind the Daylight: With earlier sunsets, it's crucial to be visible. Wear bright or reflective clothing, and consider a headlamp if you'll be out around dusk or dawn.
- Inspiring Autumn Workout Ideas

Don't be limited to your usual routine. Autumn is the perfect time to try something new.

- Trail Running or Hiking: Take to local trails and immerse yourself in the changing colours. The varied terrain will challenge different muscle groups and keep things interesting.
- Outdoor Yoga: Find a secluded spot in a park and practice your yoga flow surrounded by nature. The serene environment can enhance your sense of calm.
- Raking Leaves (A Fun Challenge): Turn a chore into a workout! Raking leaves is great for your core, arms, and shoulders.

For an extra cardio boost, jump into the piles you create with your family or friends.

- Bodyweight Circuits: Use a park bench for incline push-ups or step-ups, a tree for support during lunges, or find an open field for sprints. The world is your gym!

By embracing the beauty and challenges of the season, you can make autumn a time of fitness growth and renewed appreciation for the great outdoors.



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TIDE BATHROOMS: ELEVATING THE EVERYDAY

Tide Bathrooms, a company based in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, specializes in creating elegant and functional bathroom spaces.

With a focus on bespoke design and quality craftsmanship, they aim to transform your daily routine by delivering spaces that feel as good as they look.

The company offers a comprehensive service from concept to completion, ensuring a smooth process for their clients. This includes an initial planning and design phase, a “rip-out and makeover” stage to prepare the space, and an inclusive installation. They pride themselves on clear communication and transparency, keeping clients fully informed every step of the way.

Services and Specializations

Tide Bathrooms provides a range of services, including:

Bespoke Bathroom Renovations: They combine timeless designs with expert craftsmanship to create personalized spaces that reflect the client’s style and lifestyle.

Wet Rooms: The company is skilled in crafting wet rooms that blend minimalist design

with practical luxury, offering a modern and easy-to-maintain solution.

Virtual Design: For added convenience, Tide Bathrooms offers a virtual design service where they can create a tailored refurbishment plan from photos provided by the client, without the need for a home visit.

A Reputation Built on Trust

Tide Bathrooms has built a reputation based on trust and ability, with a commitment to customer satisfaction. According to a review on Interiors & Build, one customer “couldn’t recommend David and his team highly enough!” The review highlights their professionalism and friendliness, noting that David helped the customer choose exactly what they had envisioned for their downstairs wet room. This positive feedback reinforces the company’s “Tide Way” of working, which is guided by detail, fitted with quality, and delivered with care.



Tide Bathrooms also offers a satisfaction guarantee, with all products carrying comprehensive manufacturer guarantees and their fitting and installation work

guaranteed for life. This commitment to enduring quality and customer care positions them as a trusted partner for anyone looking to create their dream bathroom.



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£3.2 million to support nature recovery projects

DAERA Minister Andrew Muir has committed over £3.2 million to support nature recovery projects through his department's Environment Fund.

The Nature Recovery Challenge Fund was launched earlier this year as a competitive programme, offering grants starting at £50,000 to support environmental projects in the key areas of Nature Recovery Networks, Species Recovery Networks and 30x30 Projects.

Nine projects are being funded through £1.4 million grants in this financial year, totaling over £3.2 million up to 2027/28. A

further two projects will shortly be awarded funding totaling £323,000 in 2025/26 rising to a total of £382,000 up to 2027/28.

Successful projects are as follows:

- Journey to 30x30 – Belfast Hills Partnership
- Crumlin River Green Corridor – Belfast Hills Partnership
- CLMS Habitat Machinery – RSPB Northern Ireland
- Faughan Valley Wood-

lands Nature Recovery, Woodland Trust Estate – Woodlands Trust NI

- Habitat Improvements for Protected Species at Montagh Moss and Portmore Lough

- Roots to Recovery, Cultivating Woodland Resilience – National Trust

- FODC Oak Woodland Restoration for Nature Recovery – Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

- Belfast is Making Space For Nature, Nature Recov-

ery Network – Belfast City Council

- Electrosensory Lab for Adaptive Species Management in the Ocean (ELASMO) – Queen's University Belfast

- Carr Island – RSPB Northern Ireland (Tranche 2)

- Bio-secure Ports: Setting the standard for Small Harbour Protection – Causeway Coast and Glens Council (Tranche 2)

Minister Muir said: "I am

delighted to be able to announce almost £3.6 million for nature recovery projects across Northern Ireland. Urgent action is needed to halt and reverse biodiversity decline and these projects will give a much-needed boost to our nature from hills to woodlands and from rivers to loughs.

"This investment in nature recovery will also assist in delivery of key environmental priorities as set out in the Environmen-

tal Improvement Plan. It was extremely encouraging to receive so many applications from organisations carrying out vital work to deliver nature recovery.

"My department will be supporting 11 projects that will help restore ecosystems and enhance biodiversity, promote species recovery and contribute to the global movement to protect 30% of land and ocean areas for nature by 2030."

Toby takes the reins at Keeway Equestrian

Keeway Equestrian has carved a niche within the equestrian world providing high-quality arena surfaces as well as innovative equine bedding and horse fencing solutions.

Following a long career in Civil Engineering and a lifetime in an Equestrian driven family Tim McKee

took a leap of faith in the Equestrian world! Keeway Equestrian has provided all surfacing for Gransha Equestrian Centre since 2019 and Tim has also been developing knowledge and

offering a range of products to fit the Irish Equestrian Market. Now under the new management of Tim's nephew Toby Fynn – the envelope continues to be pushed sourcing

and offering innovative solutions for the equestrian!

Keeway Equestrian focuses entirely on the needs of horse and rider, prioritising safety and performance. At the heart of their offerings are their specialised arena surfaces, designed to provide optimal footing for a variety of equestrian disciplines. Whether it's an indoor or outdoor arena, Keeway Equestrian offers arena fibres engineered to ensure consistent performance regardless of weather conditions, minimizing the risk of injury and maximizing horse comfort.

Beyond arena surfaces, Keeway Equestrian demonstrates a strong commitment to safety

and sustainability. Their Equisafe fencing solutions provide secure and reliable boundaries, while their Ecoflax bedding offers a sustainable and healthy environment for horses. This dedication to comprehensive equestrian solutions extends to other essential yard equipment, such as horse wash bays, demonstrating their understanding of the diverse needs of equestrian facilities.

Keeway Equestrian works closely with a range of equestrian establishments across Ireland, including riding schools, livery yards, and stud farms. Their collaborative approach and dedication to providing top-tier products and

services have solidified their reputation as a trusted partner within the equestrian community.

Keeway Equestrian's product line reflects their commitment to quality and innovation. Their arena fibre solutions cater to the diverse needs of riders and horses, while their Ecoflax bedding provides a sustainable and comfortable alternative. Furthermore, their Equisafe fencing prioritises the safety of horses and riders alike. To explore their full range of products and services, you can visit their website, which offers detailed information and contact details.

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THE RISE OF THE ELECTRIC SUV

The trend towards electric SUVs continues unabated, and this autumn will introduce several significant new players to the segment.

BMW iX3 (Neue Klasse): BMW's next-generation iX3 is one of the most anticipated EVs of the year. Based on the brand's "Neue Klasse" design language, it promises enhanced battery technology, cutting-edge infotainment, and a fresh aesthetic. This new iX3 aims to build on the success of the current model, providing an exciting electric option for those who favor the popular X3 SUV.

Range Rover EV: For those seeking luxury and zero-emission driving, the fully electric Range Rover is finally set to arrive. This model is expected to maintain the brand's reputation for opulence and refinement, while

offering a powerful and smooth electric powertrain. It will be a direct competitor to high-end EVs like the Tesla Model X and the Mercedes-Benz EQS SUV.

Kia EV5: Following the success of the EV6 and EV9, Kia is expanding its electric lineup with the EV5. This mid-sized SUV is expected to be a practical and stylish family car, competing with models like the Tesla Model Y and Skoda Enyaq.

With a focus on sustainable materials and advanced technology, the EV5 is set to be a strong contender in the competitive family SUV market.

Hyundai Ioniq 9: Hyundai is expanding its Ioniq family with the Ioniq 9,



a large seven-seat SUV. This futuristic model is expected to offer a generous range and all the advanced features that have

made the Ioniq lineup so popular. The push for more accessible electric cars is gaining momentum, and

several new models are poised to make EV ownership more attainable. Skoda Epiq: Skoda's new small

electric SUV, the Epiq, is designed to be a budget-friendly option for urban drivers. Sharing parts with the upcoming

Volkswagen ID.2 and Cupra Raval, it promises over 248 miles of range and a price tag that will appeal to a wide range of buyers. The Epiq's distinct styling and practical interior are set to make it a standout in the affordable EV market.

Fiat Grande Panda: Reviving the iconic Panda nameplate, the new Fiat Grande Panda is a versatile and efficient city car. It will be available in both hybrid and electric versions, catering to a diverse set of needs. With its retro charm and accessible price point, the Grande Panda is an excellent choice for eco-conscious city dwellers.

Renault Twingo: The Twingo is making

a comeback as an affordable electric city car. Targeting a price point under £20,000, it aims to fill a crucial gap in the market for budget-friendly EVs. With its compact size and cheerful design, it's set to be a popular option for those seeking a fun and efficient car for daily urban use.

This autumn's new car lineup in the UK showcases a clear direction for the industry: a rapid shift towards electrification across all segments, from family-friendly SUVs to high-performance supercars. With a diverse range of models set to arrive, there's something for every type of driver looking to get behind the wheel of a brand-new car.

Winter Tyres in the UK: Are They Worth It?

As winter sets in, many UK motorists begin to question whether investing in winter tyres is worthwhile.

Unlike standard tyres, winter tyres are designed with a softer rubber compound and deeper tread patterns, allowing them to grip the road more effectively in cold, icy, or snowy conditions. They remain flexible even when temperatures drop below 7°C, improving braking distances and overall handling.

In countries such as Germany, Austria, and Sweden, winter tyres are a legal requirement during colder months. However, in the UK, where winters are often less severe, there is no law mandating their use. This has led to a mixed approach among drivers. In areas prone to snow and ice, particularly rural and northern regions, winter tyres can provide an extra layer of safety and peace of mind. Meanwhile, drivers in milder southern areas may see them as an unnecessary



expense.

Cost is a key consideration. A full set of winter tyres can be expensive, and some drivers choose to invest in all-season tyres as a compromise.

These offer improved performance year-round without the hassle of changing tyres twice annually.

While not essential for everyone, winter tyres

can make a significant difference for those who travel frequently in challenging conditions. They not only enhance safety but can also reduce the likelihood of accidents and costly repairs. For many UK motorists, the decision ultimately comes down to balancing budget, driving habits, and regional weather conditions.

EVs in the Cold: A Guide to Winter Performance and Range

As the days get shorter and the temperatures plummet, a common question arises for electric vehicle (EV) owners and prospective buyers:

How do EVs perform in the cold? The answer is nuanced, but with a bit of knowledge and preparation, an EV can be a reliable and even advantageous choice for winter driving.

The Science Behind the Winter Drop

The primary challenge for EVs in winter is the lithium-ion battery. These batteries are an intricate system of chemical reactions, and like many chemical processes, they are sensitive to temperature. The optimal operating temperature for an EV battery is typically around 21.5°C. When the mercury drops, the chemistry slows down.

Reduced Range: In cold weather, the electrolyte fluid inside the battery becomes more viscous, which hinders the movement of lithium ions. This means the battery's ability to store and release energy is less efficient, leading to a noticeable reduction in range. Studies and real-world data suggest that a drop of 15-20% is common, though this can be more significant in extreme cold.

- Slower Charging:** Just as discharging is less efficient, charging also slows down. A cold battery has higher internal resistance, so it can't accept the same rate of charge as a warm one. This is why you might notice that a fast-charging session takes longer in winter, as the car's thermal management system must first use energy to warm the battery to an optimal charging temperature.

Winter-Proofing Your EV: Practical Tips

Driving an EV in winter doesn't have to be a struggle. With these simple tips, you can maximize your car's efficiency and stay safe.

- Pre-Condition While Plugged In:** This is perhaps the most important tip. Most modern EVs have a pre-conditioning feature that allows you to warm the cabin and the battery while the car is still plugged into the charger. This uses energy from the grid, not the battery, ensuring you start your journey with a warm battery at its peak efficiency.

- Use Heated Seats and**

Steering Wheel: If your car has them, use these features instead of blasting the cabin heater. They are much more energy-efficient and directly warm the occupant, conserving battery power.

- Charge Smartly:** Don't let your battery level drop too low in cold weather. Keeping it topped up, especially above 20%, allows the car's thermal management system to maintain a healthy temperature for the battery. It's also best to charge immediately after a drive

while the battery is still warm.

- Drive Smoothly:** Just like with any car, smooth acceleration and gentle braking are key to safety and efficiency in winter. For EVs, this is even more critical as it helps conserve battery power and can make the most of regenerative braking, which recovers energy during deceleration.

- Park Indoors:** If you have access to a garage, park your car inside. This simple action can help keep the battery from reaching

extreme low temperatures overnight, improving its performance and reducing the energy needed to warm it up in the morning.

In conclusion, while electric vehicles do face a unique set of challenges in cold weather, they are by no means unsuitable for winter. With an understanding of how the cold affects their performance and by implementing a few proactive habits, EV drivers can navigate the winter months with confidence and efficiency.

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The Hidden Dangers of Winter: A Guide to Preventing Mould, Carbon Monoxide, and Fire Hazards

Winter brings a desire for warmth and cosiness, but this season also ushers in a set of often-overlooked household dangers.

As we seal up our homes to keep the cold out, we can inadvertently create

conditions ripe for mould growth, carbon monoxide poisoning, and house fires.

Being aware of these risks and taking preventative steps can keep your family safe all season long.

Mould: The Silent, Spore-Producing Invader

Mould thrives in damp, humid environments, and while we often associate it with summer, winter can be a prime time for it to flourish. When cold air hits warm, moist indoor surfaces—like windows, walls, and pipes—it creates condensation. This moisture is a perfect breeding ground

for mould. Poor ventilation from closed windows exacerbates the problem, trapping humid air inside.

Prevention is key:

Improve Ventilation: Regularly open windows for a few minutes to air out rooms, even when it's cold. Use exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens.

Manage Humidity: Use a dehumidifier in basements or other damp areas. Maintain indoor humidity levels between 30% and 50%.

Check for Leaks: Inspect pipes, roofs, and window seals for leaks that can introduce moisture.

Clean and Dry: Promptly clean up any spills or condensation and use mold-killing cleaners on surfaces where mold has been found.

Carbon Monoxide: The Invisible Killer

Known as "the invisible killer," carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless gas produced by the incomplete burning of fuel. In winter, the risk increases as we use furnaces, fireplaces, gas stoves, and generators more frequently. Blocked chimneys or faulty appliances can cause CO to build up to dangerous levels indoors, leading to flu-like symptoms that can quickly escalate to unconsciousness or death.

How to stay safe:

Install CO Detectors: Place CO detectors on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Test them monthly and replace them every five to seven years.

Maintain Appliances: Have a professional inspect and service your furnace, water heater, and other fuel-burning appliances annually.

Clear Vents: Ensure all vents and flues for fireplaces, furnaces, and dryers are clear of snow and debris.

Never Use Appliances



Improperly: Never use a gas oven for heating or a generator inside your home or garage.

Fires: The Most Common Winter Hazard

Winter is the peak season for home fires, with cooking, heating, and holiday decorations being the primary culprits. Clogged chimneys, improperly maintained heating systems, and electrical issues from overloaded outlets are significant risks. A single

spark or a flammable item placed too close to a heat source can lead to a devastating fire.

Fire safety tips:

Inspect Heating Systems: Have your fireplace and chimney professionally cleaned and inspected before the heating season begins. Ensure all heating sources are in good working order.

Give Space Heaters Space: Keep space heaters at least three feet away from anything flammable,

including curtains, furniture, and blankets. Never leave a space heater unattended.

Mind the Kitchen: Stay in the kitchen while cooking and never leave a stovetop or oven unattended.

Check Smoke Alarms: Test all smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries at least once a year.

Don't Overload Outlets: Use surge protectors instead of overloading outlets with multiple plugs, and inspect cords for frays or damage.

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PRACTICAL WAYS TO PREVENT HEAT LOSS FROM YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

Staying warm and keeping energy bills down during the winter is a major concern for many homeowners.

A significant amount of a home's heat is lost through various weak points, making it harder and more expensive to maintain a comfortable temperature. Fortunately, there are several practical and affordable ways to prevent heat loss.

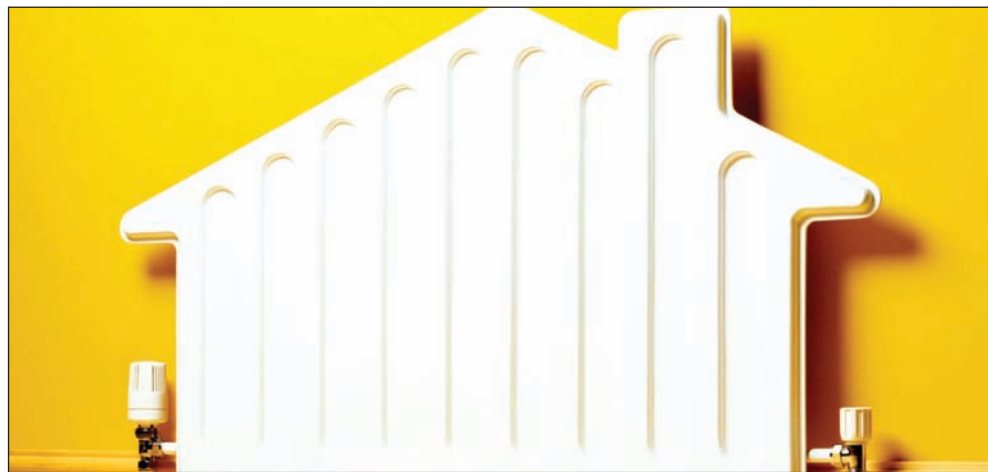
Sealing Drafts and Gaps

One of the most effective and cheapest ways to prevent heat loss is to tackle drafts. Air leaks can account for a significant portion of your home's heat loss.

Windows and Doors:

Inspect the seals around all your windows and doors. You can use a lit incense stick or a thin piece of paper to check for drafts. If the smoke wavers or the paper flutters, you have a leak. Use weatherstripping to seal gaps around doors and windows. For larger gaps or cracks in the window frame, caulk is an excellent sealant.

Mail Slots and Pet Doors: These can be major sources of drafts. Consider installing a brush seal on



mail slots or insulating your pet door with a cover when not in use.

Electrical Outlets: Gaps around electrical outlets and switch plates on exterior walls can be surprisingly drafty. You can easily install foam gaskets behind the plates to seal these leaks.

Insulating Key Areas Insulation is critical for keeping heat inside your home. While

a professional may be needed for major insulation projects, there are smaller, DIY-friendly options.

Attic and Loft: A properly insulated attic can save you a lot of money on heating. Heat rises, so a significant amount of heat escapes through an uninsulated or poorly insulated attic. You can add more layers of insulation, like rolls

of fiberglass batting or blown-in cellulose, to increase the R-value (a measure of thermal resistance).

Pipes and Water Heaters: Insulating your hot water pipes and water heater can reduce heat loss, meaning your boiler doesn't have to work as hard to heat the water. You can buy pre-slit foam pipe insulation and simply wrap your pipes.

Installing thermal or insulated curtains is a simple and effective solution. These curtains have a special lining that acts as an extra layer of insulation, trapping heat inside and blocking cold air from the outside.

Window Film: You can apply a DIY window insulation film kit to your windows. This clear plastic film creates an insulating air pocket between the film and the glass, similar to double-glazing, and can significantly reduce heat loss.

Mindful Heating Habits

Simple changes in how you use your heating system can also make a big difference.

Radiator Reflectors: Place radiator reflectors (panels of foil-backed

foam) behind radiators on external walls. This reflects heat that would otherwise be lost into the wall back into the room.

Close Off Unused Rooms: Don't waste energy heating rooms you aren't using. Close doors to spare bedrooms, studies,

or other unused spaces and turn off the radiator.

By implementing these practical and often low-cost measures, you can create a warmer, more comfortable home this winter while also seeing a noticeable reduction in your heating bills.

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