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Among those present on the rollcall at the re-opening of Hilden School were: Councillor Tim Mitchell, Chair of the Council's Communities & Wellbeing Committee; Margaret Hanthorne and Ann Ferguson, both former pupils and co-authors of Hilden: The Story of a School and its Community; Dr Sally Montgomery, Northern Ireland Committee Member for The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Adrian Bird, Director of the Resurgam Trust.

HILDEN SCHOOL REOPENS DOORS AGAIN

One of Lisburn's most loved buildings, Hilden School, was officially reopened by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council recently following a £2 million restoration project in partnership with the Resurgam Trust and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Originally opened in 1912 to serve the children of Hilden Mill workers, the school closed in 2008. The B1-listed site has now been sensitively restored to provide high-quality

childcare services through Little Weavers Daycare. The Tea Room at Hilden Mill also forms part of the refurbishment and will open to the public on Monday 22nd September. Collectively

both businesses will employ 20 staff.

A permanent heritage exhibition celebrating the history of the Hilden area is also included within the building.

The £2m project was

delivered by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, in partnership with the Resurgam Trust.

**Continued on
page 4**

Lisburn school participates in phone-free pilot

Friends' School, Lisburn is one of 9 schools participating in a new phone-free pilot scheme, which will involve more than 8,000 young people across Northern Ireland.

The phone-free pilot, launched recently by Education Minister Paul Girvan, will run until March 2026. It will explore the potential benefits of restricting mobile phone use during the school day, with a focus on supporting student wellbeing and improving concentration in the classroom.

Paul Givan said: "There is growing unease about the amount of time young people spend on smartphones, and research increasingly points to a link between excessive use and declining mental health among adolescents.

"In response, I committed to piloting a phone-free solution that would prevent pupils from

using their devices during the school day—helping them to fully engage with learning, social interaction, and all aspects of school life."

King's College London has been appointed to carry-out an external evaluation of the phone-free pilot. The research will provide the evidence to inform future decisions.

A report about the evaluation of the phone free pilot is due to be published in June 2026.

Five of the nine schools went live with the pilot from September. The four remaining schools, Hazelwood IC, Larne HS, Markethill HS and St Joseph's Boys' are planning to start in the coming weeks.

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PLANNING APPROVAL GRANTED FOR £75 MILLION ENERGY STORAGE PROJECT

Planning approval has been granted for a major long-duration battery energy storage facility at Moneybroom Road, Lisburn.

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The project, which will involve a private investment estimated at £75 million and will play a vital role in supporting Northern Ireland's transition to a low-carbon energy system. Battery energy storage is seen as critical infrastructure for a resilient electricity supply by storing energy. This makes it easier to use renewable sources like wind and solar.

The major planning application was processed by the council's Planning Service and is a strong example of the council's proactive and professional approach to facilitating investment in the area. The planning application was managed by Les Ross Planning. Les Ross, lead consultant on the project said:

"Securing planning permission for this major energy storage facility reflects the strength of the proposal and the constructive engagement with the council's Planning Service. "Their clear communication and timely decision-making were key to progressing this important infrastructure project, which will contribute meaningfully to energy resilience and regional investment.

"When developed, the Moneybroom Road facility will help balance electricity supply and demand, enable greater use of renewable energy on the grid and enhance the resilience of Northern Ireland's energy infrastructure.

"During the construction phase it will create employment and contracting opportunities for local people and businesses. From an investor's perspective



it shows Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is very much open for business in how it approaches this complex and major application." Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council remains committed to supporting innovative, sustainable developments that deliver long-term benefits for the local economy and community.

Continued from page 1

Funding included contributions of £878,446 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Resurgam Trust secured an additional £180,000 from the Community Ownership Fund, and £30,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation towards the fit-out of both new Social Enterprises. In addition, the Resurgam Trust has made a financial contribution of £60,000 towards start-up and running costs.

Councillor Tim Mitchell, Chair of the Council's Communities & Wellbeing Committee, unveiled a commemorative plaque and noted Hilden School historians Margaret Hanthorne and Ann Ferguson, both former pupils and co-authors of Hilden: The Story of a School and its Community.

Speaking at the event, Councillor Tim Mitchell said: "The reopening of Hilden School represents a proud moment for the local community and for the Council. This building is steeped in history and local memory, and its restoration is a powerful example of how we can preserve the past while creating opportunity for the future. Whether through childcare, heritage, or community enterprise, this space will once again serve the people of Hilden — as it was always intended.

"The Council is delighted to be working in partnership with the

Resurgam Trust and The National Lottery Heritage Fund to restore this important community asset, breathing new life into a cherished landmark for generations to come."

To mark the reopening, the Resurgam Trust is hosting two community open days — taking place in the afternoon of Friday 19th September and Saturday 20th September, 11am-2pm allowing residents and visitors to explore the restored building, learn more about its history, and enjoy light refreshments in the Tea Room.

The facility will be further enhanced through a partnership with Lisburn Museum, which has developed an exhibition and will deliver an annual programme of cultural and heritage events and train local heritage volunteers. The museum's Hilden School community engagement programme began six years ago with many local people participating in the development of what can be seen here today.

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Flag raised in honour of those who served

Emergency Services Day (Tuesday 9 September) was marked by an official flag-raising event in Lisburn to honour those who work for the emergency services and the NHS.

The Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, Alderman Amanda Grehan, speaking at Lagan Valley Island said: “We commemorate Emergency Services Day with immense gratitude. It is an opportunity for us to take time to reflect and show our support for the heroic people working in our emergency services – and the many volunteers who help deliver this vital work. They all help to keep us safe and provide vital assistance in times of need.

“In our area we have over 149,100 residents who are supported by these teams. Their quick actions have saved the lives of many and they continue to show remarkable resilience and compassion. To have the Air Ambulance, headquartered in Lisburn, is significant for our city as it provides pre-hospital critical care to people



right across Northern Ireland and the border counties.

“As Mayor, I offer a heart-felt ‘thank you’ on behalf of all our residents to the amazing emergency services personnel in both our area and right across the UK. Over 2 million people work and volunteer in our NHS and emergency services under unprecedented pressure to keep the country safe.”

As part of the event, a two-minute period of silence was observed to remember over 7,500 members of the emergency services who have been killed in the line of duty over the last 200 years.

Emergency Services Day - also known as 999 Day - promotes the work of the emergency services which operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week and educates the public about how to use them responsibly. There are six main branches of the emergency services: police; fire and rescue; ambulance; NHS; maritime (Coastguard and Lifeboats); and search and rescue (mountain, lowland, mine and cave).

To commemorate this special day, flags were raised across Northern Ireland on Tuesday 9 September at government, emergency services and local authority buildings.



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Young drivers in Lisburn & across NI are facing higher car insurance costs than almost anywhere else in the UK, according to new data.

In a dramatic turnaround, while NI boasted the most competitive car insurance prices for young drivers at the start of this year, the region is now the most expensive outside London.

Research by car insurance experts at CompareNI.com revealed drivers aged 17-24 here are forking out £1,318 on their annual premiums – around 18 per cent more than the national average for that age group.

The latest quarterly data shows that while insurance premiums for young drivers in NI have dropped by £92, that decline has not kept pace with Great Britain – where prices have plummeted by as much as £354.

On a local council level, young drivers in Belfast face the steepest prices at £1,622, with Derry City & Strabane close behind at £1,529 and Lisburn & Castlereagh taking third spot at £1,369.

At the other end of the scale, the cheapest district council area for car insurance

is Causeway Coast & Glens (£1,186), followed by Ards & North Down (£1,203) and Mid & East Antrim (£1,204).

While premiums fell across the board in all parts of the UK, NI saw one of the smallest decreases, with overall prices across all age groups dropping by 6% to £557 on average – pushing the region up to 6th place in the league table for most expensive car insurance.

In comparison, Londoners saw prices slashed by 13%, while those in the West Midlands saved 11% on their premiums.

South West England takes the title as cheapest region in the UK with premiums at £473, followed by Wales (£496) and Scotland (£506).

Five tips to help young drivers save on insurance:

- Choose the right car

Smaller cars, with less powerful engines are usually cheaper to insure as they are often less expensive to buy plus parts and repairs normally cost less.

- Consider a black box policy



A black box policy, also called telematics insurance, allows an insurer to monitor a person's driving behaviour and offer cheaper premiums if they can show they are safe behind the wheel.

- Avoid modifications
- Tinted windows, neon lights, bigger exhausts and other modifications that change the performance or appearance of a car are likely to increase insurance premiums – some modifications can even void insurance policies altogether if not declared.
- Park up somewhere safe

Where possible, parking in a private driveway, garage or carport overnight rather than on the street can be a great way to reduce premiums, with motorists able to make savings of around £140.

- Keep an eye on renewal date

Normally 15-24 days before a policy is due for renewal is when the prices are most competitive, as drivers could save between 33-45% during this period.**

Young drivers are typically hit hardest by car insurance costs because, statistically, they are involved in more accidents. This is particularly true in Northern Ireland, where drivers aged 16-24 accounted for over two-fifths (41%) of all speed-related casualties.*

While the average insurance cost for young drivers in NI has fallen by over £400 since the end of last year to £1,318, it is still £200 more than the UK average, which is now £1,116 for 17-24-year-old drivers.

CompareNI.com gives drivers of all ages the tools to find better quality car insurance at competitive prices. -

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Good Relations Week 2025 marked locally

Local groups and organisations across the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area put together an exciting programme of community and cultural events for Good Relations Week 2025.

This year's theme, 'Connect,' recognised that the foundation of a better community is built on People, Planet and Prosperity - all connected by the goal of Peace. The programme of events ran in October as part of a region-wide programme co-ordinated by the Community Relations Council and supported by The Executive Office under the Together: Building a United Community strategy.

Throughout the week, audiences enjoyed workshops, lectures, panel discussions, podcasts, storytelling, digital content, exhibitions, and more. These events highlighted how communities are working together to break down barriers, celebrate diversity, and create opportunities for a more inclusive society. The events also highlighted positive efforts to address challenges such as sectarianism, racism, gender inequality, health



and wellbeing, poverty, and education.

Mitchell, Chair of Communities and Wellbeing at Lisburn Council said: "Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council was proud to once again support Good Relations Week. Our council is passionate about celebrating diversity, fostering inclusivity, and building a brighter shared future. It is inspiring to see so many local groups coming together with such energy to highlight the good relations work happening all year round.

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No School Parking Awareness Campaign

Road safety is a priority for all but especially around schools. Through partnership working Lisburn & Castlereagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) and PSNI are focused on this priority.

Together they have launched a 'No School Parking' awareness campaign across the district.

Harmony Hill Primary School recently received 'No Parking' signs as part of this initiative. These signs will improve road safety outside school gates during busy drop-off and pick-up times by encouraging better parking practices among parents and guardians.

Brightly coloured, child-friendly signs serve as a visible reminder for drivers to think twice before stopping in unsafe or obstructive places near school entrances. Schools can be allocated signage from the partnership on a first-come, first-served basis.

Councillor Alan Martin, Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP Chairman said: "We know the area outside schools can become dangerously congested at drop-off and pick up times. This is why the PCSP continues to work closely with schools and the PSNI to



help address concerns.

These signs are a simple but effective way to remind all road users of the importance of safe parking. I would urge all parents and carers to be mindful of how their parking choices can impact the safety of children."

Hilary Johnston, Principal of Harmony Hill Primary School said: "Our pupils' safety is at the heart of everything we do. With the help

of these new signs, we hope to reduce dangerous parking and raise awareness among drivers.

It's a small step that could make a big difference to the safety and wellbeing of our children. As a school, we are so proud of how the children have campaigned for this with great maturity, even succeeding in having their concerns raised in the Northern Ireland Assembly."

Lisburn & Castlereagh PCSP in partnership with the PSNI and local schools, encourage every road user to exercise road sense, especially now schools are back in session. School days bring increased traffic: cars, buses, cyclists, and hurried parents all converge near school gates. It's more important than ever for drivers to slow down, pay attention, and park responsibly.



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AUTUMN SALES OF WORK BY MARGEY & BJOURSON AT KILLEAVY CASTLE NEWRY & HASLEM LISBURN

Acclaimed Portrush based artists Adrian Margey and Evana Bjourson are set to captivate art lovers this autumn with two exciting exhibitions.

On Saturday 15th (11am – 8pm) and Sunday 16th November (11am – 6pm), the husband-and-wife duo will host a joint exhibition and sale of work at the stunning Killeavy Castle Estate near Newry. This special event offers a unique opportunity to experience the distinctive styles of both artists, side by side in the atmospheric setting of the Castle's Garden Lounge. Margey's bold and expressive depictions of the Irish landscape and

iconic local landmarks will complement Bjourson's evocative figurative work, mountain and wave studies. Visitors will also have the chance to meet the artists in person throughout the weekend and discuss potential commissions. Speaking ahead of the show, Margey said, "Killeavy Castle offers a magical backdrop to share our latest collections. We're excited to welcome visitors into this beautiful setting to connect with our work.



Husband and wife artists Adrian Margey & Evana Bjourson photographed ahead of their Autumn Exhibitions in Newry and Lisburn

Depictions of the Ring of Gullion, the Mourmes, Flagstaff, Carlingford Lough, Warrenpoint and Rostrevor will all feature." Next, Margey will present a solo Festive Exhibition at Haslem Hotel's Plaza Suite, located on Lisburn Square on Saturday 5th (11am – 7pm) and Sunday 6th

December (11am – 6pm). This show will feature depictions of the North Coast, Mourmes and Belfast in the main. It promises to be an ideal source for those seeking a meaningful Christmas gift or a standout addition to their collection. Both exhibitions are free to attend, with original

paintings and limited edition prints available for purchase. Art enthusiasts and collectors alike are encouraged to attend these unmissable events. For further information visit adrianmargey.com and evanabjoursonart.com or telephone the Portrush studio on 07841593762.

Methody Prep Open Day

On Tuesday 2nd December 2025, from 10am to 12pm, Methodist College Belfast Preparatory Department—affectionately known as Methody Prep—will open its doors to prospective pupils and their families for a special Open Day event.



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the opportunity to explore classrooms alive with creativity, meet dedicated staff, and witness firsthand the vibrant learning culture that defines Methody Prep. The Open Day also provides a chance to engage with current pupils, whose enthusiasm and pride in their school speak volumes. Parents will gain insight into pastoral care, extracurricular opportunities, and the

values that underpin Methody Prep's approach to education. Whether you're considering a place for your child or simply curious about what makes Methody Prep unique, this event promises a warm welcome and a wealth of information and insight into the life changing opportunities on offer. Mark your calendar—Methody Prep Open Day is not to be missed.

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The future for modern day Raptors

Wildlife, from tiny insects to elephants, have evolved over thousands, indeed millions of years, and yet even in the last 50 or 60 years the lives and prospects of two of our native birds of prey have changed.

One is a hawk, the other from the group of birds that kill other vertebrates. Hawks and falcons are for food, sometimes

referred to as raptors (from the Latin rapio, meaning to seize or take by force) but hawks, such as the common buzzard, have broad wings and rounded tails, and are strong gliders, while falcons, such as the kestrel, have narrow, pointed wings and slender bodies, and are faster and more agile.

Buzzards became effectively extinct in Ireland more than 100 years ago, mainly through persecution and poisoning by gamekeepers, but since the 1950's, and later legal protection, have re-established themselves by flying over from Scotland and are now commonly seen soaring on thermal currents in the sky or sitting on telegraph poles along

rural roads. Conversely, kestrels, once commonly seen hovering throughout our countryside and alongside motorways, are in serious trouble. I'm not a scientist, merely an observer of nature, but it seems likely that habitat change and how birds feed might explain how one raptor can prosper and another decline. Common buzzards, which nest in woodland, are raptor generalists. While they will kill small mammals, including rabbits, and birds, they are also scavengers, feeding on carrion, and can even be seen eating earthworms on ploughed fields. On the other hand, kestrels are birds of open countryside, mainly living



off small rodents and large insects, both of which are also in decline, along with the vast sea of hedgerow...and habitat... removal over the past few decades, and the growth in the use of poisons (rodenticides). Maybe legal protections emerged just in time to

save buzzards, but radical changes in agriculture seem to be imperilling kestrels. Or possibly it's a case of the generalist, the creature best able to adapt to a rapidly changing environment that will prosper, while specialists struggle. Time will tell... JVA

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Making Tax Digital for Income Tax Self Assessment

GMcG Chartered Accountants is helping its clients prepare for the latest step in HMRC's broader commitment to modernising and digitising the UK tax system, namely Making Tax Digital for Income Tax Self Assessment (MTD ITSA).

MTD ITSA will be introduced from 6 April 2026 and will apply to sole traders and landlords with annual business and/or property income over £50,000. This threshold will fall to earnings over £30,000 from April 2027.

GMcG Director Stephen Houston explains: "The key aim of this latest development, as cited by HMRC, is to bring long term benefits to businesses in terms of accuracy, efficiency and compliance, but it will also bring a significant change in how small businesses and landlords manage their tax affairs and reporting."

For those who will be affected, the new HMRC development will involve new reporting requirements related to the keeping of digital records, submitting quarterly updates to HMRC and the submission of a final declaration (Tax Return) by 31 January following tax year end.

Stephen Houston adds: "Early preparation is key to ensuring a smooth transition for when the system goes live in April 2026. GMcG recommends an initial review of resources, processes and current software provision's readiness for MTD.

GMcG can offer advice and assistance in all areas of preparation to ensure any transition to MTD will be as seamless as possible.

We also offer a range of services from the provision of an MTD software package along with appropriate training to enable business owners to complete the reporting requirements, through to a full bookkeeping and filing service where we will prepare and submit the quarterly updates."

For more information on how GMcG can help your business contact any of our team on 028 9260 7355 or visit gmcgca.com

NI Childcare Subsidy Scheme – more childcare providers than ever helping parents reduce their childcare costs

While we are still waiting for the draft Early Learning and Childcare Strategy to be published, by the Education Minister Paul Givan in the coming weeks, it is positive to see that the expansion of the Northern Ireland Childcare Support Scheme (NICSS) is progressing.

Employers For Childcare

Many more childcare providers are signing up to the scheme, allowing the parents whose children attend those facilities to benefit from valuable savings on the cost of registered childcare.

As the cost of childcare remains a significant outlay for many households and is often a barrier for parents wanting to work, or to work more hours, it is vital that as many parents as possible are able access the is vital support towards childcare costs.

Often it is the registered childcare provider who is the first point of contact for parents to ask about financial support towards their costs, so don't be afraid to ask. Support towards childcare costs is available for eligible parents with an income of up to £100,000 per parent. So most working parents in Northern Ireland are eligible to some form of support, either through NICSS, Tax-Free Childcare or Universal Credit.

Changes to the NICSS since its inception

Originally launched in September 2024, the NI Childcare Subsidy Scheme gave eligible parents of children under Primary School age a 15% discount on their childcare cost. The maximum saving per child at that time was £167 per month or £2,000 per year.

From April 2025 the savings per child were increased to a maximum of £184 per month, or £2,208 per year.

From September 2025 the scheme was expanded to also include children of Primary School age, i.e. children aged 11 and under, attending nursery, primary, or special schools.

Number of childcare providers

This expansion of the scheme to include Primary School age children has meant that many childcare providers who were previously unable to offer this valuable support have now signed up to the scheme.

A recent NI Assembly Question response tells us that there are 1,924 providers of various types registered for the scheme. These include 18 Primary Schools, 109 Out of School groups, 141 Playgroups, 312 Daycare providers and the rest made up of Approved Home Childcarers and Childminders.

Further information

If you would like further information on help with childcare costs or wish to find out more about what financial support you may be entitled to, contact our Family Benefits Advice Service for free, impartial and confidential advice.

Contact us by emailing fbas@employersforchildcare.org – we are here to help.



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For more information on GMcG services that could help your business, please contact Stephen Houston or Arleen Rodgers on 028 9260 7355 or visit gmcgca.com

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LYONS LAUNCHES £1M OLYMPIC LEGACY FUND

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has launched Northern Ireland's first Olympic Legacy Fund.

The £1million capital investment will modernise facilities at local clubs and community groups as part of a lasting legacy in honour of our athletes at the Paris Olympics.

Minister Lyons said: "Last year we all cheered on our athletes as they took home a record-breaking medal haul. It was a privilege to host a homecoming reception at the SSE Arena, a chance not only to pay tribute to our medallists, but also to recognise the incredible dedication of all our Olympians, Paralympians, coaches and support staff.

"During this celebration event, I was delighted to announce the Olympic Medallist Fund. Through this initiative £100,000 was invested in projects at six grassroots clubs across Northern Ireland, chosen by our medal winners to help inspire the next generation of athletes.

"To reaffirm my continued commitment to build on the successes at Paris 2024 and ensure a lasting legacy, I have secured funding of an additional £1million. This funding will mark the success of local athletes by creating new opportunities for people of all ages and



Communities Minister Gordon Lyons pictured with Olympic Champion Daniel Wiffen and Richard Archibald, Interim CEO of Sport NI at the launch of the Olympic Legacy Fund.

abilities to take part in sport in their local area.

"The Olympic Legacy Fund will modernise facilities and provide essential equipment so that everyone can enjoy all types of sports, at all levels."

The Fund is seeking to maximise the support and involvement of local communities through a crowdfunding model, delivered by Sport NI and Crowdfunder UK.

The Minister added:

"The Fund's delivery partners will support and encourage clubs to engage with their local communities to develop ideas and proposals together, fostering a sense of ownership and pride."

Organisations can apply for grants from £1,000 up to £50,000 with 65% provided as a grant and the remaining 35% expected to be raised through community crowdfunding.

Richard Archibald, Interim CEO of Sport NI, said: "The Paris 2024 Olympics were an inspiration as athletes from Northern Ireland achieved their best ever performance at an Olympic Games.

"These performances have encouraged people of all ages to get involved in a wide variety of sports, not just Olympic or Paralympic sports. We want everyone to find the sport or activity that suits them and to make the most of the physical and mental

benefits of participating in physical activity.

"We are delighted to work alongside the Department for Communities to provide this funding to the sports sector, to break down the barriers that stop people from participating in sport and increase the number of opportunities to engage in physical activity."

You can apply for the Olympic Legacy Fund at <https://www.sportni.net/olympic-legacy-fund/>.



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Santa Returns to Dundonald International Ice Bowl for a Season of Festive Fun!

Bookings are now open for a magical Christmas 2025 with a sleigh-load of seasonal activities for the whole family.

The countdown begins with the popular Breakfast or Supper with Santa! Children can enjoy a festive treat and book a seat at Santa's table for a hearty breakfast or supper. Each child can then enjoy a special visit with Santa in his grotto for an unforgettable Christmas experience. After visiting Santa, the excitement continues for every child with an activity of their choice, including ice skating, tenpin bowling or Indiana Land.

A new ASD Friendly Breakfast with Santa has also been introduced to the programme to provide a calm, sensory friendly Christmas experience where every child can feel the magic their way.

Breakfast with Santa will take place on Saturday 13th, Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st December with the

ASD Friendly Breakfast session on Sunday 14th December. Supper with Santa will run on Friday 12th December. Pre-booking is essential.

The winter wonderland experience continues with Santa on the ice during public afternoon sessions on Saturday 13th and 20th December! The whole family can enjoy a yuletide skate and visit Santa on his famous red sleigh for the ultimate Christmas memory. Glide along to a melody of festive hits with DJ entertainment and skating aids to help little elves take their first steps on the ice. Pre-booking is advisable and opens 7 days in advance.

Get ready to jingle all the way with a festive host of Christmas discos in Indiana Land. Choose from an ASD Silent Disco on 19th December for children aged



14 years and under who are on the autism spectrum. Every child will receive their own wireless headset so they can select their favourite sing-along songs to enjoy the disco at their own pace.

Rudolph's Rockin Christmas Disco returns to Indiana Land on Tuesday 23rd December. Children aged 11 years and under can dance the night away with an evening of non-stop festive music and prize giveaways. Toddlers can also book into the Terrific

Tots Christmas Disco on 19th December for a cracker morning of giggles and wiggles!

Family and friends can grab their favourite Christmas PJs and book into the highly popular tenpin bowling Christmas Eve Pyjama Party. Sessions run from 2.00pm – 5.00pm on 24th December with festive DJ entertainment and sing along tunes to get everyone in the Christmas spirit.

For more information and to book, visit www.theicebowl.com

Moira Dental Care 35 years on the Main Street

As you travel up the Main Street in Moira, you can't help but admire the 18th century buildings which have been carefully restored and conserved.

Standing tall amongst them is 77 Main Street, which houses Moira Dental Care.

Established in 1988, Moira Dental Care started out with a single dentist working out of his basement surgery. Over the last 35 years, they have loyally served the community of Moira and surrounding areas. They are proud to even have patients who lived in the house at one stage of their lifetime.

When Marilyn Todd took the helm of the business in 1999 as a young dentist, her dream to expand the clinic took wings. Over the years she and her husband have carefully handpicked a team of skilled dental care professionals. Today, Moira Dental Care boasts four modern surgeries with a clinical team comprised of six dentists and a dental hygienist. The team provide a diverse range of treatments ranging from



routine dentistry to cosmetic treatments like dental implants, orthodontics and facial aesthetics.

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welcoming practice to join for your dental care, then you don't need to look any further. Call their friendly reception team today to see where your smile journey takes you.

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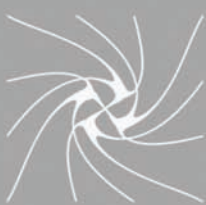
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The Winning Way: Master Leo Maguire and the Taekwon-Do Northern Ireland Legacy

Taekwon-Do Northern Ireland, under the esteemed leadership of Master Leo Maguire, is a prominent force in the martial arts community, shaping the lives of children and adults across the province.

Master Maguire, a VI Degree Black Belt and President of the International Taekwon-Do Federation Northern Ireland (ITF N.I.), has established a network of schools dedicated to fostering confidence, discipline, and self-defense. His distinguished career as a national coach has led the Northern Ireland team to numerous medal victories at both national and international competitions.

The Taekwon-Do Northern Ireland schools offer a comprehensive program tailored to all

ages, beginning with the "Little Tiger Cubs" for children aged 3 to 5. This "Learn Through Play" program introduces basic martial arts skills through a fun mixture of games and fitness drills, helping children develop improved balance, coordination, and respect.

For slightly older children, the "Active Tigers" class (ages 5 to 8) allows students to develop their Taekwon-Do skills at a more relaxed pace. The core "Tae-Kwon Do" program, for students aged 9 to

adult, is designed to be safe, practical, and fun. It focuses on the fundamental tenets of the art, including self-defense and self-discipline, while building confidence and physical fitness.

The organization's commitment to excellence was recently highlighted when Lisburn hosted the prestigious 2024 ITF Taekwon-Do Championships at the National Badminton Centre. The historic one-day event brought together Grandmasters, Masters, instructors, and

competitors of all ages for a spectacular display of skill and spirit. Master Maguire, as President of Taekwon-Do Northern Ireland, was instrumental in bringing the event to the region.

With a wide range of classes available across Northern Ireland, anyone interested in experiencing the benefits of Taekwon-Do can easily get involved. To find a full list of classes and begin your journey, visit the official website at www.taekwondo-ni.co.uk or contact Leo Maguire directly at 07891 191494.

Lisburn's Naomi Orr School Of Dance Shines Bright!

The Naomi Orr School Of Dance (NOSOD), a leading dance company in Lisburn, has once again proven its top-tier success. Celebrating 12 years in business, the school is achieving an impressive level of success.

At the recent Dancer of the Year Championships - no fewer than three of the dancers have achieved Dancer of the Year Champion of Champions! Chloe Nixon Won - ADULT DANCER OF THE YEAR LYRICAL LEVEL 1; Nevaeh Hedges won - ADULT DANCER OF THE YEAR LYRICAL LEVEL 2 and Megan Mateer won - SENIOR DANCER OF THE YEAR JAZZ LEVEL 2.

Earlier in October NOSOD also shone brightly at The Dance Awards Northern Ireland, held on at the Culoden Hotel.

The event, which saw over 1,000 nominations, celebrated the vibrant dance industry here. For the second consecutive year, NOSOD secured two prestigious titles: CHOREOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR and TOP PERFORMING DANCE SCHOOL IN LYRICAL 2025.

This remarkable achievement follows a year of unprecedented success. In 2024, the school won "Best County Antrim Dance School" and

"Top performing lyrical school" at the inaugural NI Dance Awards. Owner and sole competitive choreographer Naomi Orr is thrilled with the continued recognition.

"I am completely over the moon to be recognised once again at these prestigious awards," says Naomi Orr. "I am so proud of our dancers who just want to excel."

A Year of World-Class Wins

The recent accolades build on global victories this summer. At the World Lyrical Dance Federation World Championships in August, NOSOD won multiple world titles. Before that, the school competed at the elite Global Open World Championships in Birmingham, where the acro team routine took 1st place and the over-18 acro duo/trio won 2nd. Dancers also took home nine medals in the top 12, showcasing the school's incredibly high standard.

Naomi Orr School of Dance caters to all abilities, from age one to adult. They offer a huge range of classes: lyrical, ballet, tap, hip hop,



jazz, acro, modern, and more. Dancers can compete, take professional exams, or simply enjoy making new friendships. Naomi singlehandedly teaches and choreographs all routines, ably assisted by her mother, Mandy.

NOSOD is currently accepting new students—no experience is necessary. Access to Classes is fully

flexible – you can join at any time!

Get in touch today:

• Email: naomiorrschoolofdance2013@hotmail.com
• Studio: Lisburn Enterprise Centre unit 413 BT28 2BP
• Website: <https://naomiorrschoolofdance.godaddy.com/>

Deck the Halls... and the Hedges! Inspiring Ideas for Your Display

When it comes to Christmas lights, the possibilities are as endless as Santa's list! Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

Classic White Elegance: For a sophisticated and timeless look, stick to warm white lights. Drape them along rooflines, window frames, and around trees and shrubs for a soft, inviting glow.

Festive Colour Pop: Embrace the traditional Christmas colours with red and green lights, or go for a playful multi-coloured display. These work wonderfully on evergreen trees and bushes, and can add a cheerful touch to your porch.

Themed Displays: Have a favourite Christmas story or character? Why not create a themed display? Think

twinkling reindeer pulling a sleigh, a glowing nativity scene, or even an army of illuminated snowmen!

Pathways and Borders: Guide visitors to your door with illuminated pathways. Stake lights, net lights over low bushes, or even strings of lights woven through garden borders can create a welcoming and magical entrance.

Window Wonders: Don't forget your windows! Suction cup lights, window silhouette decorations (like stars, candles, or Santa), and even simple strings of lights draped inside can add to the outdoor magic.

Architectural Highlights:

Draw attention to your home's best features. Wrap lights around pillars, outline gables, or drape them over prominent architectural details to create a stunning visual impact.

Inflatable Fun: For a truly impactful and often humorous display, consider inflatable decorations. These larger-than-life characters and scenes are sure to bring a smile to passers-by.

The Nitty-Gritty: Electrical Practicalities and Safety First

Safety should always be your top priority when installing outdoor Christmas lights. Here's what to keep in mind:

Outdoor-Rated Lights: Always, always use lights specifically designed for outdoor use. These are built to withstand the elements and are clearly marked as such.

Extension Cords: Just like your lights, any extension cords used outdoors must be outdoor-rated. Ensure they are in good condition, without any frayed wires or exposed connections.

So, whether you're planning a minimalist glow or a full-blown festive extravaganza, remember to have fun, stay safe, and perhaps even spread some extra cheer by supporting a good cause. Happy decorating!

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- AUGUST 2025: World Lyrical Dance Federation World Championships Naomi Orr School of dance (NOSOD) won multiple world titles!
- JULY 2025: Global Open World Championships dance 1st place WINNER in their Acro team routine & 2nd in the over 18 year Acro duet/trio.

Two 4th places in acro solos at the elite Global Open World Championships dance in Birmingham.

9 medals awarded in the top 12.

Each dancer scored over 90 to qualify for the event!

• THE DANCE AWARDS NORTHERN IRELAND 2025 CHOREOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR & TOP PERFORMING DANCE SCHOOL IN LYRICAL 2025

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Naomi singlehandedly teaches and choreographs all routines herself, ably assisted by her right-hand woman (and mum) Mandy.

OCTOBER 2025: Attended Dancer of the Year where 3 dancers achieved Dancer of the Year Champion of Champions!

**REGISTER NOW
JOIN ANYTIME!**

(No long term commitment required!)

Naomi Orr School Of Dance is now accepting new students to their many dance classes they have to offer. No experience is needed to join with both girls and boys suitable to the classes.

Get In Touch today and join Northern Irelands leading Dance company.

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BELFAST CHRISTMAS MARKET 2025

Get ready to step into a winter wonderland as the Belfast Christmas Market returns to the iconic City Hall grounds in 2025!

A cherished tradition, this market transforms the heart of the city into a festive spectacle, offering a truly enchanting experience for locals and visitors alike.

When is it Happening?

The Belfast Christmas Market generally runs from mid-November right up until December 22nd or 23rd. This allows ample time to soak up the festive atmosphere, whether you're looking for unique gifts, delicious treats, or simply a dose of Christmas cheer.

What to Expect: A Feast for the Senses

Prepare yourself for an immersive sensory experience that embodies the spirit of Christmas:

- A Global Culinary Journey: One of the market's biggest

draws is its incredible array of food and drink. Expect to find traditional German bratwurst, towering Yorkshire pudding wraps, French crepes, Dutch pancakes, and Spanish churros. For those with a sweet tooth, there's an abundance of fudge, chocolates, and festive pastries. And of course, no Christmas market experience is complete without a warming mug of glühwein or a pint of local craft beer.

- Unique Artisan Crafts and Gifts: Beyond the food, the market is a treasure trove of unique gifts and handcrafted goods from across Europe and beyond. Browse stalls offering bespoke jewellery, intricate wooden carvings, personalised ornaments, festive homeware, and

luxurious clothing. It's the perfect place to find that special, one-of-a-kind present that you won't find on the high street.

- Festive Ambiance and Entertainment: The City Hall grounds are beautifully adorned with twinkling lights, festive decorations, and a towering Christmas tree, creating a truly magical backdrop. Live music, carol singers, and occasional street performers often add to the vibrant atmosphere, filling the air with the sounds of the season.

- Family-Friendly Fun: The market caters to all ages. Children will delight in the sweet treats, vibrant stalls, and the general buzz.

Keep an eye out for Santa's Grotto – a popular



attraction where little ones can meet Father Christmas and share their wish lists.

Making the Most of Your Visit

To ensure you have the most magical experience at the

Belfast Christmas Market 2025, here are some top tips:

1. Go Early or Late (on weekdays): The market can get incredibly busy, especially on weekend evenings. If you prefer

a more relaxed stroll, consider visiting on a weekday morning or early afternoon. The market generally opens around 10:00 am or 11:00 am.

2. Dress for the Weather: Belfast

winters can be chilly and damp. Wrap up warm with layers, a waterproof coat, hat, gloves, and comfortable shoes, as you'll be doing a lot of walking.

3. Bring Cash (and Card): While many vendors accept card payments, having some cash on hand can be useful for smaller purchases or if a particular stall only takes cash.

4. Plan Your Food Stops: With so many tempting options, it's easy to get overwhelmed. Take a walk around first to scope out what takes your fancy, then strategically plan your culinary journey.

Don't forget to grab a festive drink to warm you up!

5. Embrace the Atmosphere: Don't just rush through. Take your time to soak in the sights, sounds,

and smells. Enjoy the festive buzz, listen to the music, and simply revel in the Christmas spirit.

6. Explore the City Hall: While you're there, take a moment to admire Belfast City Hall itself. Its stunning architecture provides a magnificent backdrop to the market.

7. Combine with Other Activities: The market is conveniently located in the city centre, making it easy to combine your visit with some Christmas shopping in Belfast's many stores or a visit to other local attractions.

The Belfast Christmas Market 2025 promises to be another unforgettable celebration of the festive season. Mark your calendars, gather your loved ones, and prepare to be enchanted by this truly magical experience!

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Looking for a special treat for someone

special? Eden Beauty is having a Black Friday Sale at the end of November with huge reductions on vouchers.

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Preparing Your Garden for Winter

As the vibrant colours of autumn fade, a gardener's work isn't done.

The final months of the year are a crucial time for preparing your garden to survive the cold and lay the groundwork for a spectacular spring. By taking a few key steps now—from thoughtful cleanup to strategic protection—you can ensure your plants emerge healthy and strong when warmer weather returns.

The Great Fall Cleanup
Think of this as putting your garden to bed. A thorough cleanup now can prevent a host of problems later, from pests to diseases.

Remove Dead Material: Pull up spent annuals and any plants that showed signs of disease during the growing season. Composting healthy plant material is a great idea, but be sure to dispose of diseased foliage to prevent it from overwintering and reinfesting your garden next year.

Tackle the Weeds: Weeds may seem to die off in the cold, but their seeds can survive and sprout with a vengeance in the spring. Clear out as many weeds as possible, making sure to remove the roots.

Rake and Rake Again: A thick blanket of fallen leaves on your lawn can suffocate the grass and lead to fungal diseases. Rake up leaves and use them to make a valuable garden amendment called leaf mold, or shred them with your mower and add them to your compost pile or garden beds.

Don't Be Too Tidy: While some cleanup is essential,

leaving a few spent plant stalks or seed heads provides shelter and food for beneficial insects and birds. This is a great way to support local wildlife through the colder months.

Protect Your Plants and Soil

The harsh combination of freezing temperatures, wind, and dry air can be lethal to vulnerable plants. Here's how to provide a protective blanket.

Mulch Your Beds: After the first hard frost, apply a generous 2- to 4-inch layer of organic mulch—such as shredded leaves, straw, or wood chips—around the base of perennials and shrubs. This acts as an insulating blanket, protecting roots from freezing and thawing cycles that can heave plants out of the ground. Be sure to keep mulch a few inches away from plant stems to prevent rot.

Protect Tender Plants: For plants that are not fully hardy in your climate, consider wrapping them. Use burlap or a breathable horticultural fleece to create a protective shield against windburn and ice. For container plants, move them to a sheltered spot, like against a warm wall, or bring them into a shed or garage for the winter. Grouping pots together can also provide mutual insulation.

Water Wisely: Give evergreen trees and shrubs a deep watering just before the ground freezes. This helps



prevent "winter burn" from dry, cold winds by ensuring their roots have a sufficient water supply.

Mind Your Tools and Hoses: Don't let your tools rust or your hoses burst. Clean and sharpen all your gardening tools and apply a coat of oil. Drain all water from hoses, irrigation systems, and outdoor faucets before storing them in a dry place.

Plan for a Flourishing Spring

Fall is not just about putting the garden to sleep; it's also about getting a jump start on next year's growth.

Plant Spring Bulbs: Now is the ideal time to plant spring-flowering bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and crocuses. Get them in the ground while the soil is still workable, following the packaging instructions for depth and spacing.

Amend the Soil: After clearing out your vegetable garden beds, spread a layer of compost or manure over

the soil. The winter months will allow it to break down and enrich the soil with vital nutrients, giving your spring plantings a head start.

Divide and Conquer: If you have overgrown perennials like hostas, daylilies, or irises, fall is a great time to dig them up and divide them. This rejuvenates the plants and gives you new ones to spread to other areas of your garden or share with friends.

Draw a Map: Take a few moments to assess your garden. Note what thrived this year and what didn't. This is the perfect opportunity to sketch out new garden layouts, plan for new plantings, or decide where to add new features next year.

By investing a little time and effort in the fall, you're not just preparing your garden for winter; you're setting the stage for a healthier, more vibrant, and more beautiful garden in the spring.

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Beating the Winter Blues: A Guide to Managing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

As the days grow shorter and the world outside turns gray, many of us feel a natural dip in energy and mood. For some, however, this seasonal shift triggers a more significant and debilitating condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD).

Often dubbed the "winter blues" on a more severe scale, SAD is a type of depression that recurs with the changing seasons, typically starting in late fall or early winter and lifting during spring and summer.

While the exact causes aren't fully understood, SAD is believed to be linked to the reduced exposure to sunlight, which can disrupt your body's internal clock, lower serotonin levels (a brain chemical that affects mood), and alter melatonin levels (a hormone that plays a role in sleep and mood).

If you find your mood consistently plummeting with the onset of winter, you're not alone. The good news is that there are effective strategies to help manage SAD and navigate the colder months with greater well-being.

Shining a Light: Light Therapy
One of the most recog-

nized and effective treatments for SAD is light therapy, also known as phototherapy.

How it Works: Light therapy involves daily exposure to a special light box that emits a bright, full-spectrum light, mimicking natural outdoor light. This light is significantly brighter than regular indoor lighting and helps to reset your circadian rhythm and influence brain chemicals linked to mood.

Usage: Typically, you sit a few feet from the light box for about 20-60 minutes each morning, soon after waking up. It's important to use a light box specifically designed for SAD (at least 10,000 lux) and to consult with a doctor or therapist for guidance on duration and timing. Avoid looking directly into the light.

Move Your Mood:
Exercise
Physical activity is a

powerful antidote to low mood and has been shown to be as effective as antidepressants for some individuals with mild to moderate depression.

Boost Endorphins: Exercise releases endorphins, natural mood boosters that can alleviate feelings of sadness and lethargy.

Increase Energy: Regular movement can combat the fatigue often associated with SAD.

Improve Sleep: Physical activity can also lead to better sleep quality, which is crucial for overall mental well-being.

Outdoor Advantage: If possible, try to exercise outdoors, especially during brighter daylight hours. Even on cloudy days, outdoor light exposure can be beneficial. A brisk walk, a winter hike, or even shovelling snow can make a difference.

Indoor Alternatives:
When outdoor activity isn't

feasible, indoor exercises like yoga, dancing, swimming, or gym workouts are excellent alternatives.

Nourish Your Mind: Diet
While no specific "SAD diet" exists, prioritizing nutrient-dense foods can significantly support your overall mental health and energy levels.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Found in fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines), flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts, Omega-3s are vital for brain health and may help regulate mood.

Vitamin D-Rich Foods: Since sunlight exposure is limited, incorporate foods like fortified milk and cereals, fatty fish, and egg yolks. A Vitamin D supplement might also be beneficial, but consult your doctor first.

Complex Carbohydrates: Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables provide a steady release of energy and can boost serotonin levels with-

out the crash associated with simple sugars.

Limit Processed Foods and Sugar: These can lead to energy spikes and crashes, exacerbating feelings of fatigue and low mood.

Stay Hydrated: Dehydration can impact mood and energy, so ensure you're drinking enough water throughout the day.

Probiotics: A healthy gut microbiome is increasingly linked to brain health. Include fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and kimchi in your diet.

Additional Strategies for Well-being

Maintain a Schedule: Stick to a regular sleep-wake cycle, even on weekends, to help regulate your circadian rhythm.

Social Connection: Combat isolation by making an effort to stay connected with friends and family. Plan regular get-togethers or virtual chats.

Engage in Hobbies:

Keep up with activities you enjoy, or try new ones. Engaging your mind can be a powerful distraction from negative thoughts.

Spend Time Outdoors: Even a short walk or sitting near a window can help you absorb some natural light.

Consider Professional Help: If your SAD symptoms are severe or persistent, don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional. Therapy (like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) and medication can be very effective in managing SAD.

Winter can be a challenging time for many, but with proactive strategies, you can minimize the impact of SAD and find ways to thrive even when the days are short and cold. By integrating light therapy, regular exercise, a nourishing diet, and mindful lifestyle choices, you can build resilience and look forward to the brighter days ahead.

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as having the best retail therapy in the UK outside of London. Consistently voted 'top of the shops', the city is Scotland's premier shopping destination.

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drops visitors right in the heart of Glasgow's 'Style Mile'. The simple flat fare allows passengers to pick and mix dates and times of travel to suit and with no luggage charges

it makes a perfect travel option for a shopping trip. There are also a great range of hotels just minutes from Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station.

Company director Aodh

Hannon says people seem to really love the convenience of the service as we take you right into the heart of the city centre.

"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.

The service can be booked online at www.hannoncoach.com up to 1 hour before departure or by phone using the very friendly telephone booking service.

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COUNTING DOWN TO JOY: 10 WAYS TO GET INTO THE FESTIVE MOOD

The Christmas season is about anticipation, warmth, and a little bit of magic.

As the days tick closer to December 25th, it's the perfect time to trade the stress of the everyday for the spirit of the holidays.

If you need a spark to ignite your festive cheer, here are 10 essential activities to help you embrace the joy and make your countdown to Christmas truly memorable.

1. Curate the Perfect Holiday Soundtrack

Nothing shifts your mood faster than music. Start your countdown by creating a Christmas playlist that blends the classics, modern hits, and maybe a few sentimental favorites. Whether it's carols while you clean or upbeat tunes during a commute, let the sounds of the season become the backdrop to your month.

2. Dive Into Decoration Day

Make a dedicated day or weekend to deck the halls. Pull out the boxes of ornaments, untangle the lights, and fill your home with festive cheer. The act of decorating, especially with loved ones, is a tradition that instantly boosts the festive feeling. Don't forget to light some holiday-scented candles or use diffusers for an extra sensory layer!

3. Host a Cozy Christmas Movie Marathon

Grab a big blanket, a

thermos of hot chocolate (extra marshmallows are mandatory), and settle in for a night of festive films. From the nostalgic classics to modern holiday comedies, a movie marathon is a low-effort, high-reward way to bask in the Christmas spirit.

4. Bake Your Way to Bliss

The aromas of Christmas are just as important as the sights and sounds. Baking holiday treats—gingerbread cookies, sugar cookies, or mince pies—will fill your home with a welcoming, festive scent. Plus, you get to enjoy the delicious results (and maybe leave some for Santa).

5. Plan a Random Act of Kindness

Embody the true spirit of giving. Dedicate some time during your countdown to a random act of Christmas kindness. This could be donating a toy, volunteering at a local charity, shoveling a neighbor's driveway, or simply leaving a generous tip for a service worker. Giving back is one of the most heartwarming parts of the season.

6. Get Lost in the Lights

Bundle up, grab a hot drink, and take a drive or a walk through your local neighborhood to



admire the Christmas lights.

There's something undeniably magical about seeing houses transformed into sparkling winter wonderlands. Many towns also host special lighting displays or festivals—make it an annual outing!

7. Send Out Holiday Cards

Take an hour to sit down and write personalized Christmas cards. While digital messages are easy, a handwritten card arriving in the mail is a truly special gesture. It gives you a moment to reflect on the important people in your life and spread a little extra cheer.

8. Set Up a Festive Reading Nook

The darker, colder days are perfect for curling up with a good book. Create a cozy corner with twinkly lights, a soft cushion, and a stack of Christmas-themed stories

or novels. Slowing down and savoring a holiday story can be a much-needed break from the seasonal hustle.

9. Create a Christmas Countdown Tradition

Start a simple daily tradition, like opening an Advent calendar (chocolate, toy, or even a scratch-off activity calendar). The small, daily moment of anticipation helps build excitement and makes the countdown feel more intentional.

10. Indulge in Some Holiday Crafting

Get creative and make a few homemade decorations or gifts. This could be anything from simple paper snowflakes to salt dough ornaments or a DIY wreath. Crafting engages your hands and mind in a fun, festive way, and the resulting decorations will carry a special, personal meaning.

The countdown to

Christmas is your opportunity to press pause on the ordinary and enjoy the extraordinary joy the season brings. Pick a few items from this list, light a fire, and let the festive mood take over!

What's the first festive activity you're planning to check off your list?

LEARN TO SWIM

Oatlands Pool is a state of the art purpose built facility located on Artfinny Road between Hillsborough and Moira BT26 6DZ, providing swimming lessons for children and adults.

The pool dimensions are 16m x 8m and runs at a constant water temperature of 31degrees.

With UV water treatment this allows us to dramatically reduce the chlorine level in the water.

There is plenty of free on-site parking and the changing facilities include 14 changing cubicles, 2 family changing rooms and a disabled wet-room. An air-conditioned viewing gallery with tables and chairs, tea and coffee facilities are available for parents to relax in while watching their children's lesson or completing homework with other children. Free Wifi is also available.

We currently have 10 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 and ages fitted into either parallel or consecutive lessons.

As a child centred learning facility we are constantly updating and renewing our equipment so there are lots of visual aids to enhance the sensory aspect of the baby and preschool classes.

Following the STA, International Learn to Swim programme assessments are carried out twice a year, badges and certificates are awarded in January and June.

Lessons last 30 minutes, have a

maximum of 6 pupils per class and pre-booked in term blocks. They currently run Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 2.30-9pm, Wednesday & Friday 2.30-7.30pm and Saturday & Sunday 8.30am-3pm.

Baby/toddler and pre-school lessons have a maximum of 8 pupils per class and have the whole pool to themselves.

These classes run Monday & Tuesday 10am-12pm and Wednesday & Friday 10am-2pm.

Anyone wishing to book lessons should go to www.oatlandspool.co.uk or contact us by email oatlandspool@outlook.com; phone or text 07548706525 or through our Facebook page 'Oatlands Pool'.



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GIVAN WELCOMES START OF PHONE- FREE SCHOOL PILOT

Education Minister Paul Givan has recently welcomed the beginning of a new phone-free pilot scheme in schools, which will involve more than 8,000 young people across Northern Ireland.



Pictured at St Ronan's College (L-R) are pupils Abigail, Dylan, Dylan, Jamie and Lucy with Principal Mrs Fiona Kane and Education Minister Paul Givan.

The phone-free pilot will run in nine schools until March 2026. It will explore the potential benefits of restricting mobile phone use during the school day, with a focus on supporting student wellbeing and improving concentration in the classroom.

During a visit to St Ronan's College, Lurgan, one of the schools taking part in the pilot programme, Paul Givan said: "Since becoming Education Minister, I've taken time to carefully review the evidence and listen to the concerns of parents, teachers and school leaders about mobile phone use in schools. There is growing unease about the amount of time young people spend on smartphones, and research increasingly points to a link between excessive use and declining mental health among adolescents.

"In response, I committed to piloting a phone-free solution that would prevent pupils from using their devices during the school day—helping them to fully engage with learning, social interaction, and all aspects of school life."

The Minister continued: "Countries around the world are taking action to reduce phone use in schools. While some schools here in Northern Ireland have already introduced their own policies, I believe we need a consistent, evidence-based approach. This pilot will help us understand what works best and how we can support schools to make changes that benefit pupils—boosting wellbeing, focus and academic achievement."

Following a procurement process, Odyssey Education was appointed in June 2025

to supply the lockable mobile phone pouches for the pilot and provide associated training, guidance and support for the school pilot project.

Explaining how the pilot scheme will operate, Paul Givan said: "Pupils involved in the pilot scheme will place their phones in a pocket-sized fabric pouch with a magnetic latch that is sealed at the beginning of the school day and opened using a special unlocking base. This will ensure pupils cannot use their phones during the school day and will allow us to evaluate the impacts of reduced usage.

"I want to provide reassurance that flexibility will be provided for those students who need access to their smartphone during the school day, for reasons of health, disability or other needs."

To help to understand the impact of the study, King's College London has been appointed to carry-out an external evaluation of the phone-free pilot. The research will provide independent and objective insights into the pilot's effectiveness and outcomes, and the research findings will provide the evidence to inform future decisions.

Paul Givan concluded: "This is a pilot initiative, and every aspect of using lockable pouches during the school day will be independently evaluated by King's College London. Their research will help us understand the real impact of reduced phone use in schools. I encourage everyone involved—students, staff, and parents—to share their experiences openly and honestly over the coming months. I look forward to

the valuable insights this review will bring, which will help shape future policy decisions."

A report about the evaluation of the phone free pilot is due to be published in June 2026.

Five of the nine schools will go live with the pilot from September. The four remaining schools, Hazelwood IC, Larne HS, Markethill HS and St Joseph's Boys' are planning to start in the coming weeks. The nine schools

participating in the pilot are:

- Glenlola Collegiate, Bangor
- Friends' School, Lisburn
- Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast
- St Genevieve's High School, Belfast
- St Joseph's Boys', Londonderry
- St Fanchea's College, Enniskillen
- Larne High School
- Markethill High School
- St Ronan's College, Lurgan

Dermot Kennedy latest world-class artist to shine at Waterfront Hall & Ulster Hall

Belfast is cementing its reputation as a city of music, comedy and culture, with a stellar line-up of world-class artists lighting up the Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall.

From local legends Snow Patrol to international icons such as Bob Dylan and Van Morrison to contemporary stars including Dermot Kennedy, Jade, and Riley Green, the venues have played host to some of the biggest names in music this year, with sold-out shows drawing audiences from across the region, the UK and far beyond.

The impact of this influx of global talent goes well beyond the stage. With fans travelling from across the world, including as far afield as Australia and America for Van Morrison's recent 80th birthday celebrations the venues are providing a significant boost to Belfast's hospitality, retail and tourism sectors. Restaurants, hotels, and local businesses all benefit as the city welcomes thousands of concertgoers eager to experience both the performances and the vibrancy of Belfast itself.

Pete McKeivitt, Head of Entertainment at



Waterfront Hall & Ulster Hall, said: "It's an incredibly exciting time for Belfast. To have legendary figures like Bob Dylan and Van Morrison alongside chart-topping artists such as Dermot Kennedy shows just how strong our city's appeal has become as a live music destination."

"These sold-out shows don't just deliver

unforgettable nights of entertainment; they bring real economic value, filling hotels, restaurants, and supporting local businesses. The fact that we had visitors from America and Australia coming to celebrate Van Morrison's 80th with us underlines the global reach of Belfast as a cultural city. We're proud that the

Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall continue to play a central role in that story."

As Belfast continues to welcome world-class artists and sold-out shows, the Waterfront Hall and Ulster Hall stand as pillars of the city's cultural life, stages where global talent meets local passion, and where Belfast shines brightly on the world stage.

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**Integrated Advice
Partnership Launches to
Support Lisburn and
Castlereagh Communities**

A new collaborative initiative, the Integrated Advice Partnership, has officially launched in Lisburn and Castlereagh, led by Community Advice Lisburn and Castlereagh (formerly Citizen's Advice Bureau). This innovative partnership brings together a diverse range of local organisations to offer coordinated, community-based advice and support services to those most in need.

The project includes key partners across Lisburn and Castlereagh such as the Simon Community NI, Atlas Women's Centre, Lisburn Social Supermarket, Resurgam Trust, Ballybeen Women's Centre, Ballybeen Improvement Group, and Housing Rights. Together, they aim to improve access to services relating to advice on benefits, housing, debt, budgeting and general wellbeing which is delivered through trusted local organisations.

At the heart of the Integrated Advice Partnership is a shared vision: to increase awareness of, and access to, free regulated debt advice services. By working collaboratively, Community Advice Lisburn and Castlereagh offers comprehensive, person-centred financial advice that is tailored to the specific needs of individuals.

"This partnership is holistic; it supports improvements in financial health, well-being, and empowerment for individuals accessing the programme," said Carol McCabe, Manager for Community Advice Lisburn and Castlereagh. "Very often financial challenges can have a negative impact on mental health. World Mental Health Day which takes place on the 10th October 2025 aims to raise awareness of positive mental well-being. We're proud to be working alongside such a committed group of partners in addressing debt through financial health and mental well-being initiatives to meet the growing needs in our area."

With the cost-of-living crisis continuing to impact communities across Northern Ireland as well as the onset of colder days looming, this partnership offers a timely and much-needed response, building a stronger and more integrated network for everyone in Lisburn and Castlereagh.

For more information or to access support, contact Community Advice Lisburn and Castlereagh based at Bridge Community Centre, 50 Railway Street, Lisburn, BT28 1XN.
E: calc@calcni.com T: 028 9266 2251

DACIA SPRING: STRONGER PERFORMANCE, SAME GREAT EVERYDAY RANGE

Dacia is delivering on all the promises made for Spring, its first all-electric model, with a series of updates that include two, new, more powerful motors that offer stronger performance, without sacrificing everyday drivability or range.

A promise to make zero-emission* mobility more affordable. Since its launch in 2021, Spring has sold more than 179,000 units in Europe (up to June 2025). In 2025, Spring performed strongly with over 17,000 vehicles sold, securing second place in the European market for electric vehicles sold in the retail channel (segments A, B, B-SUV). These results reflect the success of a car that is still the most affordable on the all-electric market, tailored to the real needs of customers.

A promise to make this all-electric model even more appealing with substantial improvements every year. Although not coming to the UK initially,

Spring benefited from substantial improvements every year. These included the new Dacia identity in 2022, new more efficient 65 hp powertrain in 2023, and a major upgrade in 2024 including a fully renewed design and a more digital experience.

A promise met once again today. Spring takes a major step forwards with an enhanced driving experience, more fun, greater safety and increased versatility for everyday use.

An all-rounded compact car, Spring gained a number of upgrades in 2024 to optimise performance, including: electric power steering settings retuned for increased precision and feedback, new 15-inch wheels and a new

steering wheel for better grip.

Today, Spring is taking this process to new levels with structural changes contributing to a fully renewed and enhanced driving experience.

The chassis houses a new battery in its reinforced central section. These changes make the structure stiffer and optimise weight distribution between front and rear to improve the overall balance of the vehicle.

Braking is safer thanks to more powerful assistance. The 15-inch wheels also contribute to improving the Spring's road handling.

Spring also gains an anti-roll bar for the first time, standard on all versions. The car's stability in corners



is thus improved and further enhanced by the adoption of new settings for the shock absorbers and suspension springs.

*Zero CO2 tailpipe emissions, excluding wear parts, in compliance with the WLTP certification cycle

In addition, Spring has undergone various aerodynamic improvements.

A NEW POWERTRAIN RANGE FOR EVEN MORE ENJOYABLE STRESS-FREE DRIVING

Two new motors, 70

hp/52 kW and 100 hp/75 kW, replace the previous 45 hp/33 kW and 65 hp/48 kW units. These offer more power and torque between 50 and 75 mph (up to +20%). This means that Spring can travel with ease in less urban areas and fit

naturally into motorway traffic for a more comfortable driving experience.

These new powertrains work with a new 24.3 kWh battery, which uses Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) technology for the first time in the Renault Group and offers optimised thermal safety, longevity and cost.

In keeping with the Dacia philosophy, Spring is still the lightest four-seater electric car on the market, weighing in at around one tonne, even with its many optimised features. Its light weight contributes to delivering a range that matches customers' real-world usage. Indeed, customers travel approximately 21 miles per day in four trips at an average speed of 21 mph. Hence, with a range of 140 miles

(WLTP combined cycle), Spring can easily cover a full working week with a single charge.

Charging is optimised with a new 40 kW DC onboard charger, compared with 30 kW previously. Available on the Extreme trim level, it charges the battery from 20% to 80% in just 29 minutes. A 7 kW AC charger is still standard on all Spring models which, combined with the new battery, allows for faster charging from 20% to 100%: 3 hours 20 minutes instead of 4 hours on a 7kW wall box, and 10 hours 11 minutes on a domestic socket.

The new 70 hp powertrain is available with the Expression trim, while the new 100 hp powertrain is available with Extreme.

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Have a close encounter with All-New Nissan LEAF and MICRA

Motorists across the UK are invited for a close encounter with Nissan's latest 100% electric models at their local dealership.

An ambitious tour of more than 130 Nissan showrooms across the UK – called 'Electric Encounters Live' and featuring the All-New Nissan LEAF and MICRA – kicks off next Monday, 6th October, and will run until

Saturday, 31st January 2026.

The exclusive preview events will feature dramatic reveals of both models and presentations from product experts. Guests will be able to sit inside both cars, so they can experience first-hand the smart technology of the new third-generation LEAF and the audacious style of the sixth-generation MICRA.

In addition, there will be exciting pop-up

experiences, goodie bag giveaways and prizes (terms and conditions apply), plus complimentary refreshments and a range of other immersive, fun activities.

Since its debut in 2010, the Nissan LEAF has sold close to 700,000 units worldwide, earning its place in history as the world's first mass-market electric vehicle. Now, Nissan is ushering in a new chapter for this

nameplate, re-designed and re-engineered to meet the needs of modern EV customers, while remaining true to its innovative roots.

As Nissan's most aerodynamic production car to date, the All-New LEAF has a substantially increased maximum range of up to 375 miles on a single charge for a no-compromise driving experience. It also offers enhanced charging speeds and a suite of technologies to make driving easier and EV ownership more rewarding, including Google Built-In, which gives access to Google Maps without a phone, plus app and game downloads from Google Play.

Meanwhile, the All-New Nissan MICRA returns as a fully connected, pure EV. Combining an assertive personality with zero-emission

mobility, the car stays true to its guiding principles as a stylish and unpretentious car, characteristics that have underpinned its popularity across five generations and more than 40 years. Like the LEAF, the stylish MICRA – which was designed in Paddington, London – also offers the latest safety technology and Google Built-In.

Together, the cars signal the next major step in Nissan's bold product offensive in Europe, where it will introduce four new fully electric models by 2027.

Fiona Mackay, Nissan GB Marketing Director, said: "We're incredibly excited to present the All-New Nissan LEAF and MICRA to customers through our Electric Encounters Live tour. Both cars look simply fantastic and are packed with the

latest smart technology to make driving simpler, safer and more fun.

"With two brilliant new 100% electric models to show off, this double launch represents a hugely exciting new stage of Nissan's activity in the UK. We're incredibly proud of both cars and Electric Encounters Live is bigger and better than any previous Nissan dealer tour, so we can't wait to show people what they could be driving in 2026."

Customers interested in attending Electric Encounters Live at their local Nissan dealership can sign up now at <https://nissanelctricencounters.com>.

Alternatively, they can contact their local Nissan dealer to find out more and book themselves onto one of two sessions available on any given day: 4pm-5.30pm or 6.30pm-8pm.

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NEW C5 AIRCROSS PLUG-IN HYBRID

New C5 Aircross Plug-In Hybrid is now open for orders, with prices starting from £38,855 OTR MRRP.

The plug-in hybrid powertrain joins the hybrid and electric powertrains already available for customer orders. New C5 Aircross represents Citroën's boldest step yet in the mid-sized SUV segment, offering outstanding comfort, on-board space, and value for money.

Welcoming a new and bold chapter in Citroën design, New C5 Aircross range features a more assertive and aerodynamic look that enhances performance and road presence. At the front, Citroën's striking new three-point LED light signature is set within a strong horizontal structure that widens the stance, while a redesigned grille and streamlined bumper elements optimise airflow and visual impact. New C5 Aircross delivers exceptional practicality without compromising on style. A generous 2.78m wheelbase contributes to a spacious interior feel, particularly in the second

row, where passengers enjoy improved leg and headroom. The boot capacity is among the best in its class, from 651 litres (565 dm3 VDA) with the seats up to 1,985 litres (1,668 dm3 VDA) with the rear bench folded, offering the flexibility of a true family SUV. Thoughtful design touches like a wide-opening boot, split-folding rear seats, and a flat load area make loading and everyday practicality effortlessly simple.

New C5 Aircross Plug-In Hybrid features rechargeable hybrid technology, combining two energy sources: a 150hp turbocharged four-cylinder petrol engine and a 125hp electric motor that powers the front wheels. Depending on driving conditions and selected modes, the engine and motor operate independently or together. In Electric mode, the vehicle runs exclusively on electric power, making it ideal for city driving and low-emission zones. In Hybrid mode, the system



intelligently switches between electric and petrol power or uses both based on performance needs. When operating together, the petrol engine and electric motor generate a peak power output of 195hp.

The plug-in hybrid system features a 21kWh battery – nearly double that of the previous generation – enabling the car to drive solely on electric propulsion for up to 53 miles (WLTP EAER Combined). Equipped with a 7.4kW single-phase onboard charger, the battery can be fully recharged in just 2

hours and 55 minutes using a 7.4kW AC charger.

The plug-in hybrid powertrain is being launched exclusively on the MAX trim. As standard, the MAX trim comes equipped with a 360-degree camera, an extended head-up display, heated front seats and steering wheel, hands-free electric tailgate, and Drive Assist Pack 2.0 with semi-autonomous features.

At the heart of the cabin is a new 13-inch 'waterfall' HD touchscreen, uniquely mounted in a vertical cascade that flows from the dashboard into the centre

console. This floating display has both fully customisable and fixed sections for quick and easy access to essential functions at all times.

Along with the plug-in hybrid powertrain, New C5 Aircross is available with an electric and hybrid powertrain, offering greater choice for customers. New C5 Aircross Hybrid and e-C5 Aircross are already open for orders, with prices starting from £30,495 OTR MRRP for the hybrid and £32,565 for the electric, including the Electric Car Grant.

Toyota GR Yaris powers to News UK's Hot Hatch of the Year title

Five years on from its arrival, the Toyota GR Yaris continues to set the bar for high-performance hatchbacks, winning the Hot Hatch of the Year title in the 2025 News UK Motor Awards.



The award is one of 17 significant honours the model has collected in the UK during its lifetime, sealing its status as one of Toyota's most accomplished, successful and critically acclaimed sports cars. And while the road-going model has been enjoying its plaudits, the World Rally Championship model which directly inspired it has proved its all-conquering quality with three successive World Rally Championship manufacturer titles for Toyota Gazoo Racing

and two driver's titles for Kalle Rovanperä. Announcing the award at News UK's London headquarters last night, Rob Gill, Motors Editor at The Sun, said: "The rally-bred GR Yaris is already the darling of performance car fans, this Aero Performance version dials everything up to 11. Manually adjustable rear wing. Upright manual handbrake. Yes, please. I can't stop smiling even thinking about it." The presentation came in the same week Toyota announced the UK sales

launch of a new GR Yaris version, the GR Yaris Aero Performance. This introduces a package

of extra aerodynamic features, developed by Toyota Gazoo Racing to give the car even better

handling performance, with input from their professional race and rally drivers.



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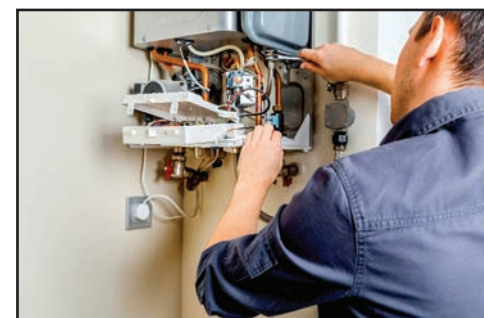
Reasonable Notice: Most heating engineers recommend booking your

service during the late summer or early autumn (August to October). This allows you to avoid the inevitable rush of emergency call-outs that begin as soon as temperatures drop (typically from November onwards).

The Winter Rush: During peak winter months, a plumber or heating engineer's schedule fills up rapidly, often dominated by emergency repairs for broken-down systems. While you might need only a few days' notice

in summer, in winter, you could be looking at a wait of a week or more for a non-urgent service. For an annual service, aim to give your chosen professional at least 2-4 weeks' notice in the lead-up to winter.

Boiler servicing is a



routine cost of home ownership, and the price can vary based on your location, the type of boiler, and the engineer. Based on current estimates, the average cost for a one-off annual boiler service in the UK is typically:

£80-£100 for a gas boiler and £90-£140 for an oil boiler. Crucially, never allow an unqualified person to service your boiler. Always ask to see the engineer's official ID card (Gas Safe or OFTEC) before work begins.

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SMART HEAT: MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY WITH PROGRAMMABLE AND SMART THERMOSTATS

As the days get shorter and the cold starts to kick on, your home's heating system becomes your biggest energy drain.

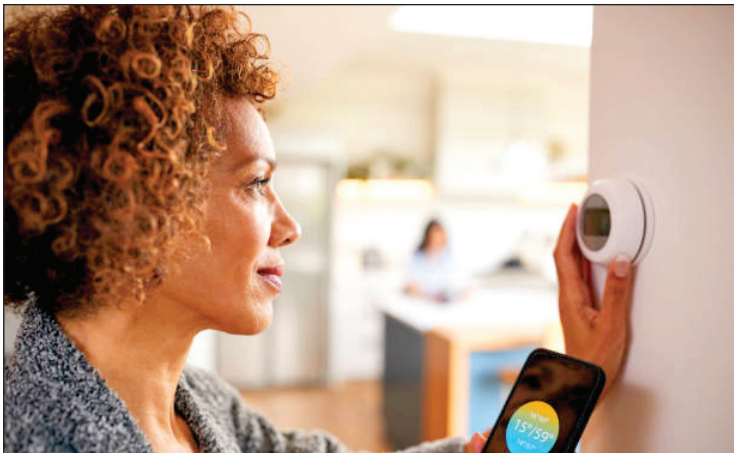
One of the simplest and most effective ways to lower your winter utility bills while boosting comfort isn't an expensive replacement—it's upgrading the brain of your heating system: the thermostat. By replacing an old manual thermostat with a programmable or, even better, a smart model, you gain granular control over your home's temperature, ensuring you only heat the house when you need to.

The Case for Programmable Savings. A programmable thermostat allows you to set customized heating schedules that automatically adjust the temperature throughout

the day. This simple feature prevents your furnace from running unnecessarily while you're away or asleep.

The core principle is setback: intentionally lowering the temperature during periods of low activity.

- When You're Away: There's no reason to keep your house a cozy when everyone is out at work or school. Setting the temperature back by to for eight hours a day can save you up to 10% on your heating bills annually.
- When You're Asleep: Your body naturally lowers its core temperature overnight. A setback of to while



you sleep not only saves energy but can also promote better rest.

- The Sweet Spot: Don't turn the heat off completely. Setting the temperature too low

forces your system to work overtime to reheat the house in the morning, negating the savings. A moderate setback is far more efficient.

Stepping Up to Smart Technology. While programmable models are great, smart thermostats offer an even greater leap in efficiency, convenience, and control. These Wi-Fi-enabled devices learn your routines, monitor your HVAC system, and can be adjusted from anywhere using your phone.

Programming Tips for the Winter Season.

To get the most out of your smart or programmable thermostat, follow this simple scheduling strategy:

1. Morning Warm-Up: Set the heat to turn on about 30 minutes before you wake up. This ensures the house is warm when you step out of bed, without wasting heat all night.
2. Daytime Setback: Program the heat to drop as soon as the last person leaves the house for work or school.
3. Evening Warm-Up: Set the heat to rise about 30–60 minutes before you arrive home. This allows the house to warm up gradually and efficiently.
4. Nighttime Setback: Program the temperature to drop once everyone is under the covers, typically around 10:00 PM.

By setting up a customized, automated heating schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat, you take the human error out of energy management. It's an investment that pays for itself quickly through lower utility bills and provides a more consistently comfortable home all winter long.

Set the heat to rise about 30–60 minutes before you arrive home. This allows the house to warm up gradually and efficiently.

4. Nighttime Setback: Program the temperature to drop once everyone is under the covers, typically around 10:00 PM.

By setting up a

The Draft-Buster Guide: Sealing Air Leaks to Keep the Cold Out

When winter winds howl, the last thing you want is that chilling breeze sneaking into your living room.

Those tiny gaps and cracks around windows and doors are silent thieves, robbing your home of warm air and dramatically increasing your heating bills. Sealing these air leaks is one of the quickest, cheapest, and most effective ways to winter proof your home.

1. Pinpoint Your Problem Areas Before you can fix a draft, you need to find it. An easy way to detect air leaks is to perform a "draft test" on a cool, breezy day:
 - The Hand Test: Simply hold a damp hand near the edges of all windows, around door frames, and near any wall penetrations (like cable lines or dryer vents). If you feel a noticeable chill, you've found a leak.
 - The Incense Test: Light a stick of incense or a thin candle and slowly move it around the frame of a window or door. If the smoke suddenly blows sideways or the flame flickers violently, cold air is entering.
2. The Solution for Fixed Gaps: Caulking Caulking is the go-to solution for sealing gaps that don't move, such as where window frames meet the exterior siding or where trim boards meet the wall.
 - Choose the Right Caulk:

For exterior applications, use silicone or polyurethane caulk, as these are flexible, durable, and resistant to extreme temperature changes and moisture. For interior cracks, acrylic latex is easier to clean up and paint over.

- Prep the Surface: For maximum adhesion, make sure the surface is clean, dry, and free of old, cracking caulk. You may need a utility knife to scrape away the old material.
- Apply a Smooth Bead: Cut the caulk tube nozzle at an angle, making a small opening. Apply steady pressure as you draw the gun along the gap, then smooth the bead with a moistened finger or a caulking tool for a professional seal.

3. The Solution for Moving Gaps: Weatherstripping Doors and operable windows (the ones that open) require a solution that seals the gap when they're closed but compresses to allow movement when they're opened. That's where weatherstripping comes in.
4. Temporary Fixes for Extra-Drafty Windows If you have very old or single-pane windows, caulking and weatherstripping might not be enough. For these situations, temporary meas-

ures can provide a significant boost in insulation:

- Plastic Window Film Kits: These inexpensive kits use a clear plastic film applied to the interior window frame and shrunk tight with a hairdryer. They create a layer of still air between the window and the film, which acts as excellent insulation.
- Insulated Curtains: Heavy, thermal-backed curtains or cellular shades can be drawn at night to block the cold radiating from the glass. Remember to open them during the day to capture any solar heat! By taking a few hours to become your home's draft-buster, you'll ensure the heat generated by your furnace stays inside where it belongs, keeping your family comfortable and your energy bills manageable.

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