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Issue 222 - BT22 • BT23

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Mayor Alistair Cathcart with Victoria PS students at Londonderry Play Park

Borough gains Blue Flag and Seaside Awards

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, recently visited Bangor Marina and Groomsport Beach after their recent success in Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful's Beach and Marina Awards.

Bangor Marina has again received a Blue Flag award, one of the world's most recognised standards for water quality, safety, accessibility and environmental management in marinas. Meanwhile, Groomsport beach was one of four beaches in the Borough that retained its Seaside Award status, with Ballywalter South Beach, Cloughie Beach and Millisle Beach also retaining the award. This award recognises these beaches as being clean, safe and well-managed.

The Mayor said: "Ards and North Down Borough Council continues to deliver high standards in environmental protection, sustainable tourism, and accessible coastal experiences. These awards are a testament to the tireless work of Council teams, volunteers, local businesses and partner organisations who work year-round to ensure our coastline is welcoming, clean and safe for everyone to enjoy."

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NEW PLAY PARKS IN BANGOR AND NEWTOWNARDS

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, recently visited the new and refurbished play parks in Bangor's Ward Park and Newtownards' Londonderry Park.

In Newtownards, the Mayor joined students from Victoria Primary School to try the new equipment. This £220,000 refurbishment has enhanced the park with modern, inclusive equipment and improved play features. Carnival

Promotions entertained pupils with a magic show, balloon modelling, and a lively disco.

In Bangor, pupils from Bangor Central Integrated Primary School joined the Mayor in Ward Park to see the brand new play park after

its £250,000 investment. Vikki Lynn from Plant and Play provided engaging activities for the children to get involved in.

These upgrades bring the parks up to contemporary standards, offering more inclusive

and exciting play experiences. Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to enhancing its recreational spaces, with additional upgrades planned for Seapark in Holywood as well as other parks throughout the Borough.

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During **Volunteers' Week** held recently, we celebrated the incredible impact volunteers have across the UK. It's the perfect time to express our sincere gratitude to the dedicated volunteers who power St John Ambulance Northern Ireland. Our **Youth Team Volunteers** are particularly vital, consistently empowering our **Badgers** (ages 5-10) and **Cadets** (ages 10-17) to develop crucial life skills and foster a spirit of community. This week truly underscores the invaluable contributions of all our volunteers.

St John Ambulance Youth Programmes: Building Healthier, Safer Communities

At the heart of St John Ambulance (NI) is our commitment to young people. Our youth programmes operate throughout Northern Ireland, equipping young people aged 5 to 25 with essential **first aid knowledge**, boosting their **confidence**, and imparting vital **life skills**.



Our Youth Sections: Fun, Learning, and Lifesaving Skills

Badgers

For our youngest members, **Badgers** (ages 5-10) offer an exciting blend of fun, adventure, and **first aid learning**. Meeting weekly, Badgers discover the importance of good citizenship, community spirit, and vital life skills, all while exploring the rich history of our charity. Above all, being a Badger is a truly enjoyable experience!



Cadets

Our flagship programme, **St John Ambulance Cadets**, boasts a century of success and a promising future. Young people aged 10 to 17 learn **lifesaving skills** and much more as they work towards their prestigious **Grand Prior's Award**. Cadets also engage in a variety of other activities, including the **Duke of Edinburgh's Award**, and gain invaluable practical experience by supporting our adult volunteers at events.

With such a diverse range of activities, there's truly something for every Cadet. As they turn 18, many Cadets transition into adult volunteers, often continuing to support their Cadet Units or joining us as student volunteers at university.



By engaging young people in a wide array of programmes, events, and activities, we not only create healthier and safer local communities but also provide experiences that can influence career paths, enhance prospects, and benefit their physical and mental well-being.

Our local youth units, located in **Bangor, Dundonald, and Newtownards**, are only possible thanks to our incredible adult volunteers. These dedicated individuals generously give their spare time to run our youth programmes. This is where you come in! We're actively seeking enthusiastic new **Youth Team Volunteers** to support our programmes in your local community.



Become a Youth Team Volunteer

If you're over 18, consider joining us as a **Youth Team Volunteer**. In this flexible volunteer role, you'll receive comprehensive training to teach young people both **life skills** and **lifesaving skills**, all while having a great time! You'll be volunteering with either Badgers (ages 5-10) or Cadets (ages 10-17).

We provide all necessary training and offer flexible volunteering options, allowing you to tailor your commitment to suit your lifestyle. Whether you can volunteer every week or just once a month, there are plenty of opportunities available! We are excited to announce a **new Cadet unit opening in Newtownards in September 2025**.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering with us, please email youth@sjani.org or visit sjani.org to learn more.

Civic Award Winners Announced at Prestigious Awards Ceremony

Ards and North Down Borough Council hosted the 2025 Civic Awards at a prestigious awards ceremony in Bangor Castle.

The awards provided an opportunity for the heroes of Ards and North Down to be recognised for their exceptional contribution to civic life in the Borough.

The Council invited nominations across five categories that included a Community Champion Award, Community Group Award, Youth Impact Award (for those aged under 18), Arts, Culture or Heritage Award, and the Environmental Sustainability Award.

In addition, the Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, selected an additional recipient to receive the Mayor's Special Civic Award in recognition of outstanding service.

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, said:

"One of my priorities as Mayor was to ensure the Civic Awards was rejuvenated so it was my absolute pleasure and privilege to host our first Civic Awards ceremony since 2018. The awards evening provided an opportunity to honour some of our very special local people and local



groups who have made an exceptional contribution to civic life in our Borough. Congratulations to all."

The winners were:

Community Champion Award: Charlene Lappin, for an outstanding contribution to her community in Ballygowan.

Community Group Award: Ards Peninsula First Responders, for providing a vital service to the people of Ards and North Down.

Youth Impact Award: Ben Mooney, for his charity raising efforts and the dedication of his time to

help others.

Arts, Culture or Heritage Award: Kieran and Alison Gilmore, for being the driving force behind 25 years of Bangor's annual Open House Festival, together with the more recent refurbishment of Bangor's heritage listed Court House.

Environmental Sustainability Award: Inler Angling Club, for acting as custodians of the River Inler in Comber, County Down.

Mayor's Special Civic Award: Roberta Dunlop,

the founder of Bangor International Choral Festival.

Highly Commended (Community Champion Award): Lt. Brian Harvey RNR, for dedicating over 30 years to Bangor Sea Cadets.

Highly Commended (Environmental Sustainability Award): Harry Wilson, for being a valued member of Donaghadee Community Development Association's management committee since 2017 where he has demonstrated a clear passion for sustainability.

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DAERA Minister Andrew Muir has announced that the 2024/2025 Rural Business Development Grant Scheme awarded grant aid of £2.6 million to 763 rural micro businesses.

Capital grants up to a maximum value of £4,999, to support 50% of costs were available to rural businesses from the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme to purchase capital equipment to

enable rural businesses to remain sustainable and in many cases grow, innovate, and create rural jobs and strengthen the rural economy.

Minister Muir visited Strangford Lough Activity Centre, Killinchy, and Alpine Signs, Comber to observe firsthand the positive impacts the capital items purchased through the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme have had on these rural businesses.

Minister Muir said: "I am delighted to announce that 763 rural businesses across Northern Ireland have received grants totalling £2.6m to support their sustainability and growth. These small capital grants encourage rural businesses to invest in expanding their operations, provide additional services, innovate, enter new markets, stay competitive and in many cases create employment opportunities.

"The Rural Business Development Grant Scheme which is funded under the Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Framework aligns very well with my Department's goal of cultivating strong, sustainable, and diverse rural communities."

The scheme is delivered by local Councils Economic Development Units in partnership with DAERA.

Speaking at Strangford Lough Activity Centre, Killinchy, Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart said: "We would like to extend our thanks to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for the financial support that enabled the delivery of the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme in Ards and North Down.

"The scheme has successfully supported businesses within our



rural areas to continue to innovate, expand, and thrive. This was a valuable opportunity to deliver essential support to our local businesses, demonstrating both the Department and the Council's commitment to fostering vibrant rural communities."

Alderman Amanda Grehan, Regeneration and Growth Chair at Lisburn and Castlereagh City

Council said at the visit to Alpine Signs, Comber: "Our team is proud to deliver this grant scheme across our area and the rural areas of Belfast on behalf of DAERA. It is important for all levels of government to support the growth of rural businesses. Through the recent funding round Alpine Signs was able to purchase new equipment that improves productivity

and maximises efficiency.

"In addition to these benefits the new equipment improves the quality of each print job and has meant an apprentice can be employed. As a council we are supportive of apprenticeships and believe at Alpine Signs this new individual will learn a skilled trade from experienced members of the team."

SCRABO CHILDREN'S CENTRE SHOWCASE KEY SERVICES DURING MINISTERIAL VISIT

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt, MLA, visited Bangor Hospital and Scrabo Children's Centre at Ards Hospital, where he met with staff and learned about the vital services provided at both sites.

At Bangor Hospital, the Minister was welcomed by the Director of Primary Care and Older People, Clare-Marie Dickson, Assistant Director of Allied Health Professionals Workforce, Julie Alexander and the Clinical Director of Community Dental

Services, Karen Maxwell. The Minister was briefed on the range of Allied Health Professional outpatient services available, including Orthopaedic ICATS, Radiology X-rays and DEXA scans, Orthoptics, Physiotherapy, Podiatry,

Speech and Language Therapy and the services of the Community Stroke Team.

During the visit, Minister Nesbitt toured the newly upgraded dental suite and engaged with Community Dental Service staff. He learned about the referral-only service that provides essential dental care for individuals with special care needs, such as those with learning disabilities, significant medical conditions, mental illness, physical disabilities and severe anxiety or behavioural difficulties.

The Minister then proceeded to Scrabo Children's Centre where he was warmly welcomed by Assistant Director for Cared for Children, Maurice Largey and Assistant Director of Children and Young People's Healthcare, Julie Kilpatrick. The Minister had the opportunity to meet with staff and explore the facility and was informed about the diverse range of services available in the Centre, including the Children's ASD Service, ADHD Service, Community Children's Nursing Service and Special Educational Needs Service. Plans to expand the Children's

Disability Service were also discussed, aiming to enhance early intervention, short break provision, residential care options and Edge of Care support for young people transitioning into adulthood.

Speaking after the visits, Minister Nesbitt said:

"Scrabo Children's Centre is a lovely bright airy Centre where they do so much to help children, particularly the vulnerable and those with exceptional needs. It was a great opportunity to hear the developments in respect of the Children's Disability Service and the short breaks for children with severe learning disabilities and autism."

Delighted that the Minister visited Scrabo Children's Centre, Julie Kilpatrick commented, "It was lovely to welcome the Minister to hear firsthand about the challenges that Children's Services are facing in relation to increased capacity and increased demands on the service. It was wonderful for the staff to be able to meet with the Minister directly and to hear from those on the frontline who are working with children and families on a daily basis, that means so much to them."

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Groomsport Inclusive Beach Officially Opened for 2025

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, has officially opened Groomsport's inclusive beach for the 2025 season, where a free beach equipment loan scheme is operated by Ards and North Down Borough Council's Community Development team in partnership with Mae Murray Foundation.

The range of equipment available, such as Hippocampe / G explorer all-terrain wheelchairs and beach walker, enable users to move easily onto the hard sand via the specialised matting that is temporarily set out by the beach wardens. The equipment loan scheme is available on Fridays and Sundays until Sunday 24 August.

The Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart said:

"Ards and North Down Borough Council continues to support the delivery of these vital services in partnership with the Mae Murray Foundation charity. Combined with the nearby Changing Places accessible toilet facilities that offers hoisting and adult-sized changing bench resources, Groomsport has excellent facilities that ensure the beach is accessible for everyone. I was delighted to officially open the new season, and it was wonderful to see so many people enjoying the dancing and African Drum Circle."

Visitors to Groomsport's inclusive beach can avail



Mayor of Ards and North Down, Councillor Alistair Cathcart, with Alix Crawford (Founder and Chairperson of Mae Murray Foundation) and her daughter Talia. Image: Ian Pedlow.

of appropriate parking and dignified toileting facilities, ensuring a stress-free arrival with the knowledge that appropriate equipment is available to support visitors' mobility.

The Mae Murray Foundation was originally established to enable individuals of all ages and abilities to engage in

activities, explore the world, and build friendships in an inclusive environment. In addition to offering beach equipment for individual loan, they often host events and activities such as family fun days, to include animal road shows, African drum circle, magic shows and much more. In addition, there are also litter picking

events at inclusive beaches.

The loan scheme operates under advance booking conditions with full details, including days of operation, equipment options and other useful information, available from the Mae Murray Foundation's website. For more information, visit www.maemurrayfoundation.org.

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FIVE AWARDS FOR ARDS AND NORTH DOWN AT 2025 BEACH AND MARINA AWARDS

Northern Ireland's award-winning beaches and marinas have been revealed at a ceremony at Belfast Harbour Office.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, who manage the accreditations locally, announced 22

winning sites across 5 council areas. Bangor Marina is one of 16 sites across

Northern Ireland to earn the iconic Blue Flag Award- one of the world's most recognised awards for beaches and marinas.

Winning sites met international standards in criteria such as safety, accessibility, cleanliness, environmental education and, for beaches, water quality.

Kevin Baird, Bangor Harbour Master said - "Earning the Internationally recognised Blue Flag once again is a clear reflection of our

commitment to our marine environment. It's not just about meeting standards—it's about taking responsibility for protecting our waters now and for the future. This recognition highlights the consistent efforts of our team at Bangor Marina and the shared values of the wider Boatfolk community."

A further 6 beaches across NI received Seaside Awards, the UK's mark of quality that ensures visitors are guaranteed to find a clean, safe, attractive, and well-managed coastal stretch. Ballywalter South, Cloughie, Groomsport and Millisile Beaches were among the sites to receive a Seaside Award.

Eric Randall, CEO of Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful said:

"We are extremely pleased that 22 beaches and marinas are being recognised with either a Blue Flag or a Seaside Award. Northern Ireland can rightly be proud of the amazing beaches and marinas we have to enjoy. Our offering is world class, and the public can be assured of an excellent experience when they visit one of these sites.

As we recognise these areas, we need to take steps to protect them for future generations. All parts of government and society must proactively adopt approaches that reverse the devastating impact of the climate emergency and ensure



that these areas thrive into the future."

Mayors from across councils, and beach and marina operators were invited to collect the awards.

Award-winning

beaches will now have their respective flags in place for this year's bathing season. In the event that water quality is not safe for members of the public to swim in the water, Blue Flags

and Seaside Awards Flags are lowered until the water is safe to swim in.

Blue Flag Marinas, which are not designated bathing waters, fly their flags all year round.

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Greenmount Campus student formal

College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) students swapped their workwear for their finest attire to attend the annual Greenmount Campus formal.

The event held in the Tullyglass House Hotel brought together Agriculture, Floristry, Horticulture, Land-based Engineering, and Veterinary Nursing students for a well-deserved night of

celebration.

The hotel provided the perfect setting for a night of dining and dancing with laughter and music filling the room. For many, it was a chance to catch up with friends, share a few stories, and make memories before the demands of exams and final pieces of coursework fully set in.

Students were delighted to welcome back to CAFRE Clare Gowell, who had studied for a semester at Greenmount Campus, as part of the student exchange programme with Michigan State University (MSU) in the autumn.

Clare attended the event with current MSU student, Mariah Palazzola. The students completed Agriculture and Horticulture modules for a semester at the Greenmount Campus during the 2024-2025 academic



year.

The night was made even more special thanks to the generous support of local agri-food businesses who donated a fantastic array of prizes for a charity raffle. A fantastic total of £1,246 was raised for the Student

Council's nominated charities, Friends of the Cancer Centre and Kidney Research.

The event proved to be a great night of fun with friends. We wish all our students well in their forthcoming assessments,

and for some their final exams at CAFRE Greenmount Campus, your future starts now.

If you are considering a career in the land-based sector, discover courses available at CAFRE: www.cafre.ac.uk

Lyons commits to 'doing things differently' in initial Budget allocations

An additional resource allocation to National Museums NI and Libraries NI will allocate £200k to Newtownards Library.

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has set out his commitment to 'doing things differently' in his initial budget allocations for 2025-26 to deliver positive outcomes in the lives of people.

Speaking in the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Minister said: "The work that my department does is transformational. It impacts people across Northern Ireland and delivers positive outcomes, often for those in greatest need.

"I am determined to use the money that has been secured to best effect. Recognising the financial pressures, this means doing things differently."

The Minister announced a series of innovative pro-

grammes to increase home building; to increase employability and to protect discretionary funding for those who most need it.

He said: "It is not enough to simply ask for more money.

"I will be bringing proposals to the Executive shortly on how we can do more with the money we have and build more homes.

"I will also bring forward a new employment programme, the most extensive in recent times, which will support all age groups and tackle the barriers to economic inactivity.

"I am committed to continuing to support those who need it most. I intend to maintain the Discretionary Support Grant Budget

but will be introducing reforms to protect this money from fraud and protect those who really need it."

The Minister highlighted a number of initial budget allocations:

- an additional allocation to Homelessness and the Supporting People Programme of £3.7m above the 2024-25 Budget position.

- £2.8m capital to the New Foundation Project to move forward with securing 110 units of accommodation to support Young People Leaving care.

- investment in a new employment program to support all tackle the barriers to economic inactivity.

- An additional resource allocation to National Mu-

seums NI and Libraries NI

- Capital funding of £750k which includes the replacement of Enniskillen Library allocating £200k to Newtownards Library.

- Capital funding of £30k for the National Museum NI's Museum Collection Fund and £80k for small capital grants.

- Grassroots arts funding of £750k for musical instruments and £500k small capital grants to support local venues and creative spaces

The Minister's full Oral statement is available here: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/news/oral-statement-ni-assembly-communities-minister-gordon-lyons-mla-initial-budget-allocations-2025-26>

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Olympian Ciara Mageean signs up to road safety campaign

Olympian Ciara Mageean is the latest high-profile sports personality to support a road safety campaign to reduce road deaths.

The Portaferry athlete has signed up to the Department for Infrastructure's Share the Road to Zero campaign, which encourages greater responsibility and care on our roads.

Mageean joins a growing list of well-known sports stars backing the initiative, including Liverpool and Northern Ireland footballer Conor Bradley, senior women's footballer Emily Wilson, Ulster Rugby trio Jacob Stockdale, Nick Timoney, and Michael Lowry, Ulster GAA star Rory Grugan, and Belfast Giants.

The 1500m European Champion added gold to her previous silver and bronze medals at last summer's championships in Rome. Currently recovering from surgery that forced her withdrawal from the 2024 Olympic Games, Mageean is focused on returning to competition and has her sights set on the World Championships in Tokyo this September.

Speaking about supporting the campaign,



Ciara Mageean, with Minister Liz Kimmins, encourages road users to take more care as she signs up to the Department for Infrastructure's Share the Road to Zero campaign.

Ciara Mageean said: "I'm proud to add my voice to the Department for Infrastructure's Share the Road to Zero campaign. When I race, speed is essential - but on the road, excessive speed can be deadly.

"As drivers, we must always adjust our speed to suit the road conditions. Coming from a rural area in County Down, I know

firsthand the challenges of country roads - sharp bends, poor visibility, and unexpected obstacles like pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, horse riders, and slow-moving farm vehicles. We must anticipate these at every turn and drive with caution."

Sadly, 69 people lost their lives on roads in the north in 2024. Hundreds of

people were also seriously injured.

Two-thirds of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions occur on rural roads.

So far this year 12 people have lost their lives on our roads.

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

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HANNON Coach & Sail is perfect for a city break in Glasgow!

Direct Belfast – Glasgow Express now departing from the new Belfast Grand Central Station.

An award-winning service offering hassle-free travel, HANNON Coach & Sail is ideal for a city break in Glasgow and the perfect antidote to flying and airport stress! Already hugely popular with those in the know, the Belfast – Glasgow Express Coach Service is rated 5-Star on TripAdvisor.

A shopper's paradise, Glasgow is recognised 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.

Not just shopping, Glasgow is also famous for its fantastic nightlife, and great choice of restaurants and bars. Glasgow is the perfect choice for your next city break away.

With a simple flat fare of £47 which includes the cost of the ferry and your bag, the Belfast – Glasgow Express offers a really attractive, convenient and low-cost alternative to flying.

The service is operated



by HANNON Coach and leaves twice a day from Belfast, Grand Central Station (Stand 18) and 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.

Call 028 9265 0700 (Mon – Fri) or visit www.hannoncoach.com

LIZARDS AND LEGENDS

JV Allister focuses on our only native reptile, The Common Lizard

Legend has it that St. Patrick banished all the snakes from Ireland, but if he had had all the reptiles in mind, he overlooked one, the Common Lizard. Maybe it was hiding under a stone at the time!

In any case, it's our only native reptile, and a very interesting animal.

Like all reptiles, common lizards are cold blooded, relying on external heat to regulate their body temperature, and are often found sunbathing on rocks or sand in the mornings in their known habitat 'hot spots', mostly in mountainous areas such as the Mourne and Sperrins, even the Belfast Hills, as well as some bogs and coastal dunes.

They might be slow when cold but can run fast when fully heated, which is their main means of escape if birds or mammals try to catch and eat them. But they have another much more cunning plan: they can shed their tails (still wriggling) to confuse predators, and regrow them, even if they're usually shorter than the originals. A remarkable adaptation for survival of an otherwise vulnerable creature.

They have also adapted to living in colder northern regions as they spread through Europe and beyond. Most reptiles, and all birds of course, lay eggs, but our female



common lizards give birth to live young. In more southern, warmer climes, common lizards are known to lay eggs.

While their overall numbers here are not exactly known, it's thought likely that they are in decline, mainly because of habitat loss; and the extensive wildfires this year will have destroyed precious habitat for many

years to come, as well as killing many lizards. Despite their adaptations, they live precarious lives, particularly as weather patterns change and people do stupid things like setting fire to wild places.

Incidentally, St. Patrick didn't banish the snakes from Ireland, for the simple reason that there were none in his time, since before the last Ice Age. Rather, it

seems that snakes served as an allegory for paganism, which Patrick 'banished' as he brought Christianity to our shores.

Myths and legends have their place in our folk memories, but we also need to know the stories about our highly adaptable native wildlife, and in the case of common lizards, protect our only native reptile.

JVA



Air Ambulance NI is a charity needing £6,850 per day to operate

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ARDS PENINSULA BUSINESS AWARDS NIGHT AT CLANDEBOYE HOTEL

Newtownards Chamber of Trade, in collaboration with Love Local Comber and Visit Donaghadee recently hosted the Ards Peninsula Business Awards 2025, in association with Ards Business Hub.

Celebrating the outstanding achievements, innovation, and diversity of local businesses, from manufacturers and retailers to hospitality, technology, and beyond, these awards recognised the vital contributions that businesses make to the local economy!

The prestigious, glittering, awards ceremony took place on Thursday 22 May 2025, at The Clandeboye Lodge Hotel.

Award Category winners announced on the night were:

Excellence in Customer Service Award: Specsavers Business Growth Award (Under 10 employees): Applichat Ltd

Excellence in Hair and Beauty Award: Blush, Newtownards

Best Company to

Work For: Sharon Malcolm Hairdressing

Contribution to the Local Community Award: John Minnis Estate Agents

Best New Business Award: Optomise Hearing

Lifetime Achievement Award: Cecil Kettle

Independent Retailer of the year: Stairlift Solutions

Best Family business Award: The Ark Open Farm

Best Tourism Provider Award: Strangford Lough Activity Centre

Outstanding Business of the Year Award: Northstone NI

Best Non-Licensed premises: The Goose Coffee House

Best Licensed premises Award: Sugarcane Café Bistro

Best Employee Award: Maureen McDonald, Knotts Bakery



Newtownards Credit Union thanks Maisie for going a Cut Above for The Little Princess Trust

The Little Princess Trust provides real hair wigs, free of charge, to children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer treatment or to other conditions such as Alopecia.



The charity is also one of the largest funders of childhood cancer research in the UK.

The Little Princess Trust relies solely on the generosity of its wonderful supporters who help the charity give Hair and Hope to so many children and young people with cancer each year.

Maisie had never had her hair cut ever! In April she made the decision to have her hair cut and donate it to help those children and young people affected by hair loss.


Maisie donated a

massive 23inches and has achieved an incredible fundraising total of £1660.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of friends, family and the local community who have supported this worthwhile cause.

The Newtownards Credit Union have supported Maisie from the beginning of this journey and have donated a staggering £720.

Their support for one of their young members and this amazing charity has been truly appreciated.



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Is your Laptop running extremely slow? We can fix that!

A slow laptop can be very frustrating, but several steps can be taken to improve its performance.



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PS5 or Xbox game consoles.

We also offer new and refurbished laptops, printers and ink cartridges.

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“We will offer a home

service every Monday, Tuesday and Thursday to help those who cannot easily come into Newtownards ensuring everyone who needs technical support can access it.”

You can easily schedule a repair appointment by calling 02891 828601 or Google - Tech Repair Solutions Newtownards. We provide a free, no-obligation diagnostic on your device along with a 1-year limited warranty on all repairs



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5 STAR CARE AT HELENS BAY DENTAL

Helens Bay Dental Practice frequently emerges in patient narratives as a place that genuinely transforms confidence and well-being.

Reviewers often speak of life-changing outcomes—from implants that restore chewing function to cosmetic treatments that revive self-esteem

One patient shared how broken front teeth were fixed with “three implants to carry five front teeth,” enabling them to eat comfortably and smile radiantly. The whole process was praised as “very efficient, pain free” with “a new lease of life”

Another described overcoming discoloration, unevenness, and gaps through whitening, implants, and fillings—a journey so successful they “no longer ashamed to let people see” their smile

Cosmetic cases also thrive, such as Invisalign or Six Month Smile users who highlight how previously camera-shy individuals now feel able to flash genuine grins: “now I have straight teeth and I couldn’t be happier”

Across 229 Google

reviews, the practice consistently earns five-star praise for its clean, welcoming environment and gentle, professional staff. Recent reviews underscore that the team—especially hygienists Lorraine and Emily—delivers dependable, reassuring care: “Staff are very pleasant ... I felt at ease,” and “Seamless as always”

In essence, a visit to Helens Bay Dental not only addresses practical dental needs but often leads to profound personal transformation—granting renewed comfort, confidence and a smile patients are proud to share.

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Your smile deserves the very best.



Big Summer Sale

Bowman Windows BIG Summer Sale starts on Monday 21st July 2025. We are now celebrating 55 years in business – so you can be confident you are dealing with a well-established local family business who care.

With up to 30% discount across many of our products, it's the perfect time to undertake some home improvements. Why not upgrade to new 'A' Rated PVC windows, install new fascia, soffit & guttering or design your stunning new Apeer composite door. You could also eliminate all that unsightly cement mortar along your gables with our attractive PVC dry verge edging system. Replace your old Velux roof window and get a bright new white PVC finish inside with optional black out blinds.

Our Story

55 years ago a young but determined glazier called Victor decided to chase his dream of supplying top quality glazing products to the public and the building trade. Together with his wife Helen, over the next few decades they developed and grew the business until Bowman Windows became a trusted household name. 55 years on, Bowman Windows are still one of the leading window and door suppliers throughout Ireland.

Our Offer

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July 2025

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- Win a local £55 Voucher to spend in Banbridge*
- Win £550 off your order total*

*With every order placed you enter our prize draw to win one of 10 local £55 vouchers.

*With every order placed over £5000 value you will also have the chance to win £550 extra discount off your total price.

Our Service

When you place an order with us you can be sure you're in trusted hands. From our first survey until your job is completed our dedicated sale team will look after you. To help other customers we welcome your 'before and after' photographs for our social media platforms.

Bowman Windows sale



office and showroom is located at 50a Newry Street Banbridge BT32 3HA


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Set in the heart of the County Down countryside with views of the Mourne mountains and the rolling fields, this was once the bakery for the local area. An ideal tranquil location for exploring the Mourne Area of Outstanding Beauty but also with easy access to Belfast. Whether you want to relax and unwind in peace and soak in the 6 person hot tub or explore the numerous local attractions The Bakers Cottages is your perfect base.

Fully refurbished in 2019, many of the original site features have been sympathetically restored, including the Bakers Hole well. Beautiful granite kerbing entices you along the drive leading up to the private accommodation and grounds. An idyllic location where tradition meets modern 5* awarded accommodation. The Bakers Cottages has it's own private wild flower gardens, sweeping towards the restored well. A covered BBQ area means you can grill outside whatever the Northern Irish weather may bring. Across the courtyard brings you to the hot tub house, with it's 6 seater tub. This building also offers a cosy sitting area with a wood burning stove that opens out through double glass sliding doors to an outdoor dining area overlooking the tranquil rolling hills, with the Mourne Mountains in the distant background. The perfect setting to relax and enjoy the sunset. An outdoor play area for the children is located within sight of this outdoor living space, and the dog building is also here, allowing your whole family to enjoy making memories at The Bakers Cottages.








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Taekwon-Do NI shines with Scottish T-Uk Open Success!

The competitive spirit and rigorous training within Taekwon-Do NI were recently on full display as the team travelled to Scotland for the T-Uk Scottish Open.

Their performance was nothing short of spectacular, with the team bringing home an impressive haul of 22 medals! This remarkable achievement included: 13 Gold Medals; 7 Silver Medals and 2 Bronze Medals.

The team's success is a clear indication of their terrific skill, unwavering sportsmanship, and sheer determination. This medal count once again proves that the hard work and dedication invested in training are yielding fantastic results.

The sporting calendar is already filling up with exciting opportunities for Taekwon-Do practitioners and enthusiasts in Northern Ireland:

- N.I. National Championships: 21st September 2025, Lisburn.
- W.I.T.C. European Championships: October 2025 (TBC), Almere, Netherlands.

- Battle of the Lowlands: 25th October 2025, Almere, Netherlands.

- Chang Ung Cup: 2nd November 2025, Glasgow, Scotland.

- Open Taekwon Championships: 23rd November 2025, Oss, Netherlands.

- Open Dutch Championships: 31st January 2026, Helmond, Netherlands.

- Flanders Fields Championships: 7th February 2026, Belgium.

- Warrior Open Championships: March 2026 (TBC), London.

- N.I. Colour Belt Championships: 12th April 2026, Lisburn.

Taekwon-Do in Northern Ireland continues to thrive under the expert guidance of Mr. Maguire, the Chief Taekwon-Do Instructor for the region and the esteemed President of the Northern Ireland ITF (International Taekwon-Do Federation).



The dedication and leadership of Mr. Maguire were further recognised last November at the International Instructors Course, where he was deservedly promoted to the prestigious rank of 7th Dan, earning him the awarded title of Master! This significant achievement is a testament to his years of commitment and contribution to the art of Taekwon-Do.

For those in Northern Ireland eager to embark on their own Taekwon-Do

journey, classes are available in various locations across the region. Getting started is easy – interested individuals can find more information and book their enrolment through the official UKTC NI website at www.taekwondo-ni.co.uk.

Any businesses that may be interested in sponsoring future events held in Northern Ireland, or local students attending events in other countries should contact Leo Maguire on 07891191494 or email taekwondoni@msn.com.

Milne adds two more sites to Holiday Park Portfolio

Milne Holiday Parks has recently expanded its portfolio with the exciting acquisition of two new holiday parks, now known collectively as Groomsport Bay.

This significant development further solidifies Milne Holiday Parks' position as the leading provider of high-quality holiday destinations along the stunning Northern Irish coastline.

Milne Holiday Parks now boasts a collection of seven beach-front parks, offering an enviable selection of locations for those dreaming of owning a home by the Sea. The addition of Groomsport Bay complements their existing parks: Cranfield Bay, Mourneview, Silvercove, Pebble Beach, Cranfield House and Shanslieve All 12x month holiday parks. Each of these parks offers unique characteristics and access to the beautiful beaches and landscapes that Northern Ireland is renowned for.

The appeal of owning a holiday home at a Milne Holiday Park is further enhanced by the attractive financial options available. Prospective owners can step

into their dream with deposits starting from as little as 10%. Flexible finance options are available at low rates, making holiday home ownership more accessible than ever. This allows families and individuals to invest in a lifestyle of relaxation and coastal enjoyment without undue financial strain.

Currently, Milne Holiday Parks offers an impressive selection of over 200 new and pre-owned holiday homes for sale. This extensive range ensures that there is something to suit various tastes and budgets. Adding to the appeal, Milne Holiday Parks is currently offering free site fees for 2025 & 2026 on new purchases, representing a significant £6000 saving for new owners. This limited-time offer presents a compelling reason to explore the opportunities available at their six beach-front locations.

Owners at Milne Holiday Parks can enjoy their



holiday homes ALL Year Round, allowing for extended breaks and the flexibility to visit whenever they desire. This extended season maximizes the value of ownership and allows for enjoyment across different seasons, from summer beach days to cosy autumn retreats and refreshing spring escapes with the added bonus of being able to rent out their holiday homes with great returns.

For those interested in

learning more about owning a holiday home at any of the Milne Holiday Parks, including the new Groomsport Bay, further information can be found on their website: www.milneholidayparks.com. Additionally, individuals can text "HOLIDAY HOME" to 07860 617 616 to request a call-back and speak directly with a representative who can provide personalised assistance and details on available properties and financing options.

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Book your stay today, and let us help you create unforgettable memories. Whether it's a weekend getaway or a longer break, a caravan holiday promises the perfect blend of relaxation and adventure.

Premiere Care and Premiere Caring at The Irish Equine Rehabilitation & Fitness Centre

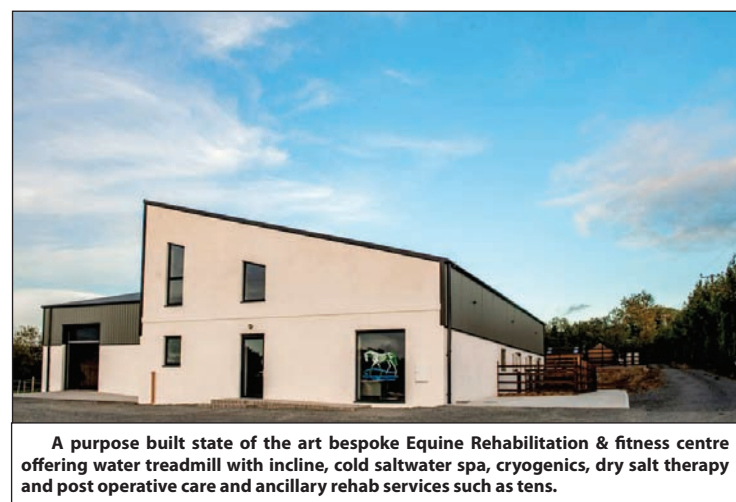
Located just outside Lisburn, lies a facility that is redefining equine recovery and performance: the Irish Equine Rehabilitation & Fitness Centre (IERFC).

This state-of-the-art centre offers a holistic and innovative approach to equine rehabilitation and fitness, catering to horses of all disciplines and levels, from top-tier athletes to beloved companions. Due to impressive results The IERFC has quickly established itself as a leader in its field and in 2022 received a Royal Visit from The Princess Royal, Princess Anne!

What underlines the success of the centre? Founder and Owner Michelle Kane reveals that the business grew out of her own need to access quality rehab and fitness resources in order to rehabilitate her own injured horses.

Michelle, who has over 50 years experience, and a wealth of industry experience says: "It's vital that family ponies and horses belonging to hobby owners can access the same quality rehabilitation services as a grand prix show jumper, a 4* eventer or a Grade 1 racehorse as those horses and ponies mean the world to their owners and that the cost is achievable for all. Every equine client through the doors has a bespoke plan and access to the best resources available."

A family run and family friendly business (where each resident



A purpose built state of the art bespoke Equine Rehabilitation & fitness centre offering water treadmill with incline, cold saltwater spa, cryogenics, dry salt therapy and post operative care and ancillary rehab services such as tens.

pony or horse even gets a bedtime carrot!) The IERFC prides itself on providing bespoke, individually tailored rehabilitation or fitness programs. The tranquil setting, with 12 stables, promotes relaxation and recovery, essential for a horse's physical and mental well-being during rehabilitation. The team at IERFC team was the first team in Ireland to achieve formal qualification in Water Treadmilling. The Centre works closely with a network of world class sports injury specialist vets, chiropractors, dentists, physiotherapists, massage therapist, body workers and farriers to ensure every horse receives comprehensive and integrated care. Care

packages are reviewed daily. The IERFC boasts an impressive array of facilities designed to optimise equine recovery and enhance fitness including: ECB Water Treadmill with Incline; ECB Cold Saltwater Hydrotherapy Spa; Treatment Room with Solarium; State-of-the-Art Stabling; Carpet Gallop Sand Arena and Indoor Lunge Pen; Cryotherapy Sessions and Salt Room Therapy.

A range of hand-picked products and supplements are available from the Centre, after being successfully trialled. Plans are afoot for further expansion of the business! Whether it's a day visit for specific treatments

or a longer-term livery for fitness bootcamp, recuperation and recovery or for post-operative care, the IERFC offers flexible options to meet each horse's individual needs. By combining cutting-edge technology with experienced horsemanship and a dedicated team, IERFC is helping horses across Ireland and beyond return to soundness, achieve peak fitness, and enjoy a better quality of life.

The IERFC is located at 6 Aghalee Road, Lower Ballinderry, Lisburn Tel: 07522 227335 and Michelle is happy to discuss your equine's needs.

Email: ierfc@outlook.com or see www.ierfc.co.uk



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Who uses us

- Every equine needs us and our clients range from family ponies to top level competition horses across all disciplines



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COUNTDOWN IS ON TO THIS YEAR'S CASTLEWELLAN AGRICULTURAL SHOW

The Organising Committee of Castlewellan Agricultural Show hosted its supporters and sponsors recently to officially launch this year's Show, which takes place on Saturday 19th July in the beautiful setting of Castlewellan Forest Park, Co. Down.

The Show offers a fantastic, fun day out for all the family, with something for everyone. It is a one-day celebration of local farming, food and rural life.

Visitors can expect a variety of livestock classes, with thousands of animals being judged; including beef, dairy, sheep, horses, ponies, donkeys, pigs, poultry, rabbits and covies.

Attractions include the ever-popular showjumping, impressive dog agility, pony games and a family pet show. For younger visitors there is plenty to see and do, with children's entertainment, bouncy castles, face painting and much more.

A great variety of trade stands means there is something to suit all tastes, from cosmetics

brand B Perfect, top clothing retailers Auld Forge Clothing and Edinburgh Outdoor Wear, not forgetting high end farm machinery to browse. In the impressive Craft Village visitors will find local, homemade arts and crafts as well as original artwork by acclaimed artists.

Other highlights include the Home Industries marquee, where local schools get involved with some amazing displays. The Food Village offers tasty local produce and this year there is a larger Eco Village, promoting the environment and sustainability. There will also be cookery demonstrations throughout the day from top local chefs promoting the very best of local agri-food.

Attractions this year



include Mourne Alpacas, Sheep Shearing in the Fleece Marquee, Model Farm Displays, Spinners & Weavers, NI Stick Makers, Seaford Vintage Club Displays, Displays from PSNI & NIFRS, Castlewellan Integrated Choir and the popular

Vintage Tea marquee returns, this year run by volunteers from RNLI Newcastle, to raise funds for this fantastic local charity.

The Show's chosen charity of the year is OG Cancer NI, which was formed to benefit patients and families affected

by Oesophago-Gastric cancer. A proportion from all catalogue sales will be donated to the charity.

We have a range of musical acts performing on the main stage to delight the crowds, as well as dancing displays from the fantastic Jiving Gym and a new Jiving

Competition. To end the Show we have Tug of War from County Down Young Farmers. With all this and much more, it's a day out not to be missed!

Castlewellan Show runs Saturday 19th July, from 9am-6pm at Castlewellan Forest Park.

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MAKE FOR THE COAST ON THE ARDS PENINSULA

As summer arrives, the urge to escape the hustle and bustle of city life grows stronger.

Fortunately, Northern Ireland offers some of the most breathtaking coastal destinations, perfect for a refreshing getaway. Among them, the Ards Peninsula stands out as a hidden gem, offering a tranquil retreat with stunning landscapes, charming villages, and rich maritime heritage.

For those seeking a secluded escape, the Ards Peninsula provides a stunning alternative. Nestled between Strangford Lough and the Irish Sea, this peninsula boasts 185km of scenic shoreline, making it one of Northern Ireland's most picturesque coastal regions.

For a peaceful seaside escape, Portaferry and Strangford offer picturesque harbours, fresh seafood, and a relaxed atmosphere. Ballywalter Beach



provides miles of unspoiled coastline, perfect for a tranquil walk, while Cloughie Beach is ideal for those looking to embrace the sea breeze and open landscapes.

Check out the Ards Peninsula's coastal

villages, including Donaghadee, Portavogie, Portaferry, Greyabbey and Millisle, which offer a mix of seaside charm and historical intrigue with lighthouses, golf courses, and local artisan shops.

Whether it's a scenic drive, a quiet beach, or an exhilarating coastal hike, Northern Ireland's coastline—especially the Ards Peninsula—offers the perfect escape from city life. With fresh sea air, stunning landscapes,

and welcoming communities, a coastal retreat is just what's needed to recharge and reconnect with nature. So, pack your bags, leave the city behind, and embrace the beauty of Northern Ireland's shores.

Festivals Around the Ards

The Ards Peninsula and the surrounding Ards and North Down area are hosting a variety of exciting events this year, perfect for locals and visitors looking to experience the best of Northern Ireland's culture, food, and entertainment.

One standout event is the Comber Earlies Food Festival (Sat 25th June), a celebration of the region's famous Comber Early potatoes. The festival features cooking demonstrations, artisan food stalls, and family-friendly entertainment,

making it a must-visit for food lovers. It's a great opportunity to sample locally grown produce and enjoy a vibrant community atmosphere.

For music and arts enthusiasts, the Bangor Open House Festival (August 2025) is a



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highlight of the summer. This festival transforms Bangor into a hub of creativity with live music performances, comedy shows, film screenings, and art exhibitions. With events spread across various venues, visitors can enjoy everything from intimate gigs in cafés to large outdoor concerts.

Another popular event is the Tide and Turf Portavogie Seafood Festival, (Sat 6th September) which combines Northern Ireland's

finest seafood with live entertainment and coastal festivities. With cooking demonstrations from top chefs, fresh seafood tastings, and craft stalls, the festival showcases the rich maritime heritage of the region while offering a delicious day out.

Beyond these major events, Ards Arts Centre and AND Culture regularly host exhibitions, workshops, and performances, providing opportunities for creative engagement year-round. Whether

you're interested in traditional crafts, contemporary art, or theatrical performances, there's something for everyone.

With its stunning coastal landscapes and strong cultural heritage, the Ards Peninsula is a fantastic destination for summer festivals and community gatherings. Whether you're a local or visiting for the first time, these events promise memorable experiences filled with great food, music, and art.

FAMILY FUN IN ARDS AND COUNTY DOWN: A GUIDE TO CHILD-FRIENDLY DAYS OUT

Ards and County Down, offers a fantastic array of child-friendly attractions guaranteed to keep the whole family entertained.

From animal encounters and historical explorations to thrilling adventures and relaxed park days, there's something to capture the imagination of every child (and adult!).

Here's a guide to some of the best child-friendly days out in Ards and County Down:

WWT Castle Espie Wetland Centre, Comber: A haven for nature lovers, Castle Espie allows families to get close to a diverse collection of wild and endangered birds from around the world. With hides for birdwatching, nature walks, an indoor soft play area, and the "Wildwood – The Natural Outdoor Woodland" play area, it's a perfect spot to connect with the natural world. Don't forget to visit the Loughshore Café for some delicious treats.

Exploris Aquarium, Portaferry: Northern Ireland's only aquarium, Exploris, offers a fascinating journey into the underwater world. Meet penguins, spot sharks, and marvel at the diverse marine life. The aquarium also features a seal sanctuary, Asian Short-Clawed Ot-



ters, and a capybara, along with a restaurant and soft play area. They even offer "Night at the Aquarium" experiences for something truly unique.

Pickie Funpark, Bangor: A classic seaside attraction, Pickie Funpark promises hours of fun. Take a ride on the iconic giant pedal swans, hop aboard the Pickie Puffer train, enjoy the splash pad, challenge each other to a round of adventure golf, and let loose in the free playground. It's perfectly situated along the promenade for beautiful views and a refreshing sea

breeze.

Crawfordsburn Country Park: For families who love the outdoors, Crawfordsburn offers a range of walking trails through woodlands and along the coast. It's an ideal spot for a leisurely stroll, a picnic, and simply enjoying the fresh air and natural beauty.

Mount Stewart, Newtownards (National Trust): While known for its stunning gardens, Mount Stewart also offers plenty for families. Explore the many trails, discover the natural outdoor playground, and look out for the squirrel

hide. Kids can enjoy climbing trees and bug hunting in this beautiful National Trust property.

Scrabo Tower, Newtownards: Standing proudly atop Scrabo Hill, the tower offers breathtaking panoramic views of Strangford Lough and the surrounding area. There are also walking paths through the woodlands around the disused quarries, providing an adventurous outing for active families.

Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra: Step back in time and experience life in Ulster over 100 years ago at this

remarkable living museum. Wander through a recreated bustling town with authentic period buildings, where costumed locals demonstrate traditional crafts in cottages, farm dwellings, schools, and shops. It's an immersive and educational experience for all ages.

Tips for a Great Family Day Out:

Check Opening Times and Booking: Always check the attraction's website for current opening hours, admission prices, and any booking requirements, especially during peak seasons or school holidays.

Pack for All Weathers: Northern Irish weather can be unpredictable, so bring layers, waterproofs, and sun cream, regardless of the forecast.

Snacks and Picnics: Many attractions have cafes, but packing your own snacks and drinks can save money and cater to picky eaters. Some places have designated picnic areas.

Comfortable Footwear: You'll likely be doing a lot of walking, so comfortable shoes are essential for both adults and children.

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YOUR HOME, YOUR STYLE, YOUR SOLUTION!

Check out the new curtain department at The Blind Spot

The Blind Spot is now offering made to measure curtains and also curtain rails, complete with a full measuring and fitting service, at their spacious new showroom in East Belfast.

The Blind Spot is already a well-established blinds and shutters company with over 30 years of experience.

Manager Krystina Bradford says:

"The original factory shop was opened in 1990 by my mum and Grandfather. We still specialize in manufacturing and fitting high-quality window coverings for

both residential and commercial properties. This now includes venetian, vertical, roller and roman blinds but also embraces new technologies and advancements – today we also offer motorised blinds, shutters, multi-function Blindscreens as well as our new curtain department!

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In addition to opening throughout the week, The Blind spot is also Open Saturdays: 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM, the showroom is open and free for you to browse at your leisure.

Explore a stunning range of blinds, shades, and shutters to find your perfect match. The office is ready to help schedule your home appointment for a personalised quote—no guesswork, just real numbers tailored to your space! Stop by and see them this Saturday they'd love to help make your home vision a reality!

In the showroom you can fully appreciate the wide range and colour choice in beautiful

Sante Fe Shutters—these can be installed in less than 6 weeks. You can also appreciate the difference that motorised blinds could make to your lifestyle. View the range of Blindscreens - manufactured within the UK. These are great for keeping out bugs as well as giving total blackout on any window and door including bi fold doors and can revolutionise the way you manage your access to the outdoors at home or in your business.

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Kindergarten Kids Voted Among NI's Best Nurseries!

Kindergarten Kids, in Newtownards, has been officially recognized as one of the Top 20 nurseries in Northern Ireland, a remarkable achievement among 223 early years settings.

This prestigious award comes directly from daynurseries.co.uk, the leading reviews website for nurseries, and is based entirely on the glowing feedback from the families and carers of the children attending.

"We are incredibly honoured to receive this award," said Judith Nelson and Andrea Pyper, Joint Managers at Kindergarten Kids. "It reflects the dedication of our team and the wonderful sense of community we have built with our families. Seeing our children thrive, and watching families come together at our events, is what makes our nursery so special."

Amanda Hopkins, reviews manager of co.uk, highlighted the significance of the award: "It is a huge achievement to be rated so highly by the families and carers of children that attend the setting. Our award is a valuable recognition from parents and carers that this nursery is giving their children an excellent standard of care and a nurturing environment."

At Kindergarten Kids, excellence in early years education is paramount. Our dedicated management team and staff pour their passion into creating a safe, nurturing, and engaging environment



where every child can thrive. This commitment has earned us a perfect review score of 10, a testament to the love and care in every aspect of our nursery.

Beyond exceptional learning experiences,

Kindergarten Kids is truly a community hub. We believe in strengthening bonds between staff, children, and parents through a variety of cherished events throughout the year. From our exciting Halloween party to our special pre-school graduation and a magical Christmas celebration with Santa's grotto, we create lasting memories and an atmosphere of warmth and inclusion.

Don't miss out on securing a place at one of Northern Ireland's top nurseries! Spaces in our baby room are limited, and early booking is highly recommended.

• See what parents are saying: <https://www.daynurseries.co.uk/daynursery.cfm/searchazref/65432242465>

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C&R Interiors, creating dream rooms – inspired by You!

C&R Interiors is a supplier of quality Kitchen and Bedroom furniture. Their purpose built showroom and workshop is at Balloo industrial estate in Bangor.

On display are modern and traditional kitchen and bedroom layouts complimented with a full range of solid timber, painted or PVC doors, handles, worktops and appliances by leading Manufacturers. One of the most important features in the kitchen and bedroom process is the installation. C&R Interiors project manage the complete job leaving you free to make the important decisions such as choosing wall tiling, flooring and room décor!

Beautiful and contemporary bedrooms

C&R Interiors offer a wide selection of affordable fitted bedroom furniture designed to suit your individual requirements, with a wide selection of door finishes and sliding doors, allowing us to design the perfect layout maximising your storage space. You can be assured of excellent customer service throughout the design and installation process.

Bespoke kitchen fitting and design

C&R Interiors can supply a wide range of kitchen designs. The wide variety of door styles means there is something for everyone, from classic and traditional to the latest high gloss finishes.



Each kitchen can be tailored to your individual needs and the in-house designer who has over 30 years experience will help create your dream kitchen with the help of computer generated images of the highest quality.

The C&R team are a reliable force in the industry and will deliver the highest standards possible when crafting your kitchen. They offer a wide range of appliances from suppliers that they feel produce the highest grade and standard that we implement into your layout.

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C&R Interiors sliding wardrobe range provides a contemporary and stylish alternative to regular storage. With a wide variety of colours and finishes to choose from we provide bespoke fitting tailored, adding space and extra storage to your home.

Crafting your dream sliding wardrobe should be effortless and that is why the C&R team is at hand to ensure quality that will last – using the highest grade, standard materials and brands to build your contemporary design.

Sliding Wardrobes
can be implemented almost anywhere such as bedrooms, studies, bathrooms, hallways, living/dining rooms and even sloping ceilings. Fitted with an anti-jump mechanism it allows you to effortlessly open and close as well as silencing the movement and providing an unmistakably smooth operation.

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SUMMER BARBEQUE GUIDE

With the sun beating down and heat slowly rising, it is clear to see that barbeque season has finally arrived. However, if you are thinking of investing in a barbeque, there is a great deal to consider.

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Prices for barbeques can range from £10 to the multiple thousands and the extensive range has something to cater for every possible need. Depending on the number of grills, number of additional features and quality of its production – there is a lot to consider when choosing your perfect barbeque.

The timeless debate which has been had over many a family barbeque once again raises its head on this occasion – gas or charcoal?

In many cases your budget might well dictate your choice for you as charcoal barbeques tend to be significantly more cost effective. For those barbeque stalwarts, nothing will compare to a traditional charcoal barbeque and using a gas equivalent is as

good as cheating. It is also widely held that the taste from cooking on a charcoal barbeque is distinctive and cannot be reproduced by a modern gas counterpart.

Charcoal does, however, take a considerable length of time to heat up whereas with gas, you can begin cooking almost immediately – providing an obvious advantage. For the sheer convenience of instantaneous cooking, gas barbeques are hard to beat.

In terms of running costs, with gas barbeques you will often 'rent' a cylinder and pay for each refill of gas that you require – a 13Kg canister costs approximately £35. With charcoal however, costs approximately £15 for a 10kg bag which will serve up to three medium barbeques.

Other factors that

should be considered include if the barbeque has a lid, the number of people you are likely to be cooking for and what type of food you intend to be cooking.

Buying a barbeque with a lid brings a degree of versatility to your barbequing that is not otherwise available. It grants you far greater control over the heat and allows you to cook food more thoroughly as opposed to burning the outside whilst leaving the inside underdone. If you are sticking to traditional burgers and sausages then perhaps charcoal is for you, however if you wish to branch out and cook chicken or pork then gas may be the safest option.

If you have a large family or intend on cooking for guests on a regular basis, it



might be worth investing in a gas barbeque as it will give you the reliability and accuracy that is required when hosting for numerous guests. It also brings unrivalled convenience that allows its owner to mingle freely knowing that the

cooking is fully under their control. More upmarket barbeques will also come with various features such as heating racks that allow food to sit above the heat of the grill whilst still in the barbeque to ensure that it will remain warm.

Creating Eye-Catching Summer Containers

Summer is the season of vibrant life, and what better way to bring that energy to your doorstep than with overflowing window boxes and cascading hanging baskets?

These portable gardens offer a fantastic opportunity to showcase a riot of colour and texture, transforming even the smallest outdoor space into a floral paradise. But creating truly eye-catching displays takes a little more than just scattering some seeds. Let's delve into the secrets of crafting stunning summer containers that will have your neighbours green with envy.

The Foundation: Choosing the Right Containers and Location

Before you even think about plants, consider the containers themselves. For window boxes, ensure they are sturdy, have adequate drainage holes, and are the right size for your window ledge. Hanging baskets should also be well-

draining and strong enough to support mature plants and moist soil. Consider the material too – terracotta offers a classic look but dries out faster, while plastic is lightweight and retains moisture better.

Next, assess the location. How much sunlight does the area receive? This will dictate the types of plants that will thrive. South-facing spots bake in the sun, ideal for heat-loving varieties, while shadier north-facing walls call for different selections. Understanding your microclimate is crucial for long-lasting, vibrant displays.

Selecting Your Summer Stars

To create eye-catching arrangements, consider these key elements:

• **Thrillers:** These are your focal point – tall, upright plants that add height and drama. Think geraniums (Pelargoniums), petunias with interesting habits, snapdragons, or even small ornamental grasses.

• **Fillers:** These bushy plants fill out the container, adding volume and supporting the thrillers. Consider calibrachoa (Million Bells), lobelia, verbena, or cascading petunias.

• **Spillers:** These trailing plants cascade over the edges, softening the look and adding movement. Ivy geraniums, trailing lobelia, sweet potato vine (Ipomoea), and Dichondra 'Silver Falls' are excellent choices.

Adding Texture and

Colour Harmony

While choosing individual beauties is important, the magic happens when they work together. Think about:

Colour Palette: Do you prefer a bold and contrasting scheme, a harmonious blend of similar hues, or a cool and calming white and green display? Consider your home's exterior and your personal style.

Foliage Interest: Don't underestimate the power of foliage! Silvery leaves of dusty miller, the vibrant lime green of creeping Jenny, or the deep purple of Alternanthera add texture and visual interest even when flowers aren't in full bloom.

Varying Forms and Textures: Combine plants

with different leaf shapes and flower forms for a more dynamic look. The delicate blooms of lobelia contrast beautifully with the bolder flowers of geraniums.

Once you've selected your plants, it's time to get your hands dirty:

Good Drainage is Key: Ensure your containers have adequate drainage holes. You can add a layer of gravel or broken pottery shards at the bottom, although modern advice often suggests using a good quality potting mix alone is sufficient.

Use Quality Potting Mix: Avoid using garden soil, which can become compacted in containers. Opt for a lightweight, well-draining potting mix specifically formulated for containers.

Howdens Newtownards is under New Management

Colin McAlister took up the role of Manager of Howden's Newtownards in April 2025 having previously served 30 years in various retail roles across sectors including kitchens, bedrooms, furniture, cataloguing and fashion.

Attracted by the opportunity to steer the success of the fast-growing depot, located on the Portaferry Road, Colin

is looking forward to the challenge!

He says: "These are exciting times for Howdens as the company is rapidly

expanding across Northern Ireland. The fact that this is a family friendly organisation especially appealed to me. Howdens



have upwards of 900 depots in the UK and do much of their own manufacturing in kitchens, bedrooms and Joinery. We pride ourselves on providing the best service to our customers, and as a result, we are the UK's Number 1 Trade Kitchen Supplier. We are always listening to what our customer require – we have 1000's of lines available for immediate delivery. My team have

built strong relationships with our customers, and our customers know, we won't be beaten on price!"

Colin and his team look forward to welcoming their customers for a free design appointment or just to catch up over a coffee!

Howdens Newtownards at Unit 1, Portaferry Road, BT23 8NN Email newtownards@howdens.com or see www.howdens.com Tel: 028 9124 2320.

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The company is based locally in Ballynahinch and covers all of Northern Ireland. Clover Energy Systems helps clients reduce their carbon footprint, lower energy costs, and contribute to a greener future!

One satisfied customer told EDA Media:

"After receiving notification that our electricity rate was increasing by 25%, we decided it was time to think seriously about solar. As we are nearing retirement age the idea of securing energy costs and reducing bills was very appealing. After much research for MCS accredited companies, we got in touch with Clover Energy Systems to see what solutions were available for our home.

We spoke to Tim who was able to provide a lot of information over the phone and arranged to come out and survey the house in person. To begin, he assessed the condition of our roof, had a look at equipment locations and then sat down for a chat to answer all our questions. Within a couple of days, we received our final quotation which included



16x PV panels, a hybrid inverter and a battery. We were very happy with the proposed system and scheduled our installation date. Three weeks later the Clover team arrived and the entire process was finished within two days. The team were fantastic - they left everything clean and tidy and took the time to explain exactly how the system works.

Needless to say, after one full year, we are over the moon with the results. Previously we were buying around 5000 units of electricity per year but this year we have only imported 598 units! We also are being paid for the electricity we feed back to the grid which helps offset the winter bill. Overall, we are incredibly happy with our system and couldn't recommend Clover

Energy Systems more." The Benefits of Solar Energy include reduced energy Bills, Increased Property Value and Energy Independence Contact Clover Energy Systems Today To learn more about solar energy and how it can benefit you, contact Clover Energy Systems at 0800 048 7716 or visit their website at cloverenergysystems.com

Balcony Gardens – What You Need

With house prices rising year-on-year, many are finding themselves having to compromise for living accommodation with little or no outdoor living space.

For those in cities across the globe, apartment living is becoming more and more common as contractors have begun building towards the skies on account of the limited ground space.

A consequence of this drive towards urban living has been that apartment dwellers have had to be pragmatic in the use of their outdoor space – often limited to only a balcony area. This has allowed for the rise of balcony gardens, a feature that has grown in popularity over the last number of years. These unique spaces are the ideal compromise for urban dwellers, providing

a comfortable outdoor seating area surrounded by plants whilst limiting the amount of maintenance work required. Balcony gardens are very low maintenance on account of the fact that they do not have soil, weeds or pests and yet still offer the openness and beauty factor of any outdoor space.

When planning your own balcony garden, you must firstly consider whether it is in the sun or shade. This tends to be relatively binary, either you have sun or you don't and can be a determining factor as to if a balcony garden is realistic option.


It is vital that you

think about safety when considering balcony gardens. One of the main issues is the risk of something falling from a significant height and causing damage to a person or their property below. Be careful that adequate drainage is in place and that not too much weight is put on the balcony.

Pragmatism is also key. Work with what is on offer, if you have natural sun, think about providing shade and if it's windy then consider wind-breaks. Even if the view leaves a lot to be desired, this can be blocked by plants or trellis.





In such a confined space, the scent of your balcony is an essential element of your space. Creating a scented garden can both create a magical area to relax outdoors, whilst also defusing throughout your home. Scented plants can reap rewards year round by providing beautiful scents.

Maintenance is of the utmost importance for any balcony. Even with the most beautiful display, if left untouched it will begin to depreciate and lose the beauty factor that it once had. Even 10 minutes a week to water, clean and maintain your balcony can make a huge difference.




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FEARS NEW CAR TRENDS WILL DRIVE UP YOUR INSURANCE

Keeping up with the latest car trends could lead to drivers paying more on their insurance premiums, according to price comparison site CompareNI.

In a survey of 800 drivers in Northern Ireland, CompareNI discovered that when it comes to growing car trends such as the increase in vehicle size year on year, it seems many local drivers are not in favour and fear the expense.

When asked why they were not a fan of bigger cars, 15% of those surveyed felt these types of vehicles use too much fuel, while a further 15% said they were too expensive to buy.

Meanwhile, 14% were put off by the potentially higher cost of car insurance, while 11% pointed to larger cars being more difficult to park.

Only 11% said they liked bigger cars, claiming they felt safer driving these vehicles. Despite all the ‘upscaling’ going on in the motoring world, it would appear the public seem to prefer a smaller option.

A resounding 85% of those surveyed admitted they thought that the bigger the car, the more the insurance is likely to be, this however, is not always the case.

Size alone is unlikely to affect insurance premiums. Chances are, bigger cars may be more expensive as

they have more advanced technology on board, more powerful engines or in general, are more expensive to buy - all of which will likely have an effect on the price of the car insurance.

When it comes to other motoring trends, interest in the electric car option is starting to pick up pace, but drivers are being warned that unforeseen issues may lead to higher costs and higher insurance premiums. To replace an electric car battery for example, could cost from £4,000 to £16,500 depending on the type of car and the size of the battery. *

There’s also a danger of accidentally voiding the insurance altogether, some home insurance providers recommend that EV home chargers get checked annually by a professional, **failing to do so may void the policy and leave people unprotected.

New technology in cars could also affect insurance premiums. Whether it’s the very latest audio system or lane departure warning system, the more technology present, the more expensive the car is likely



to be and the greater the risk of theft, something insurance providers take into consideration when determining risk.

Also, the larger the amount of software systems and the more online connectivity the car has, the greater the cybersecurity risk *** Encryption and firewall systems can help control this but it’s an additional risk insurance providers are likely to take into consideration.

AI will also leave its mark on the automobile revolution, with AI powered braking systems and advanced driver assistance systems.

AI can look out for the blind spot and help with a smooth transition to a new lane. ****The

sensors in the car can keep drivers a safe distance from the car in front, but be aware that the more advanced features a vehicle has, the higher the insurance cost is likely to be as they can be expensive to repair and replace and increase the overall cost of the vehicle.

The arrival of the hydrogen car could also mean a more expensive vehicle. While the hydrogen is converted into electricity and may indeed offer a cleaner option, the hydrogen fuel cell option is expensive to manufacture, costing much more than a gas or electric option. The fuelling points are not that prevalent, with only a handful across the UK, which creates an added problem.

BMW intend to unveil a hydrogen powered car in 2028, which will be expected to travel further than the current hydrogen fuel cell options and potentially further than any electric vehicle currently on the market.*****

Car ownership is also changing in 2025. The subscription based model is becoming more popular, as motorists can pay a monthly fee

to use the car for a set period.***** The insurance can be included in the subscription fee and drivers can change the car whenever suits them. Given the financial pressures currently facing the UK, this may pose an interesting proposition for many drivers.

CompareNI helps drivers compare and find savings on all sorts of motoring products, such as car, van and motorbike insurance.

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Top Cars for Summer Motoring

As we shake off the last of the spring chill and longer, sunnier days beckon, many drivers turn their thoughts to enjoying the open road.

Whether it’s coastal drives, countryside escapes, or simply making the most of the pleasant weather, the right car can significantly enhance the summer motoring experience. Here are some of the best and most recently released models that cater to various summer driving preferences:

For the Wind-in-Your-Hair Enthusiast: Convertibles

Nothing quite says summer like a convertible, allowing you to soak up the sun and fresh air. Several exciting new and recent models offer this exhilarating experience:

- Mazda MX-5: A timeless classic, the latest iteration of the MX-5 (launched in 2015 but continuously updated) remains a top choice for affordable open-top fun. Its lightweight design and engaging handling make it a joy on winding country roads. You can choose

between the traditional soft-top or the retractable hard-top (RF) version.

- BMW 4 Series Convertible: For those seeking a bit more practicality and luxury, the latest 4 Series Convertible offers four seats and a more refined driving experience. It boasts powerful engines, a premium interior, and a sophisticated retractable hardtop that provides good insulation when closed.

- MINI Convertible: If you’re after a stylish and agile city car with open-top thrills, the MINI Convertible is a fantastic option. Its compact size makes it perfect for navigating urban streets, while its fun handling and distinctive design add a touch of summer flair. It’s available with an automatic gearbox for relaxed cruising.

- MG Cyberster: A



newcomer making waves as an all-electric convertible, the MG Cyberster offers a futuristic design, powerful electric performance (up to 496hp), and impressive range. Its striking scissor doors and modern interior make a statement, offering a unique blend of open-top driving and electric mobility.

The Versatile Choice: Electric Vehicles for Summer Adventures
Electric vehicles (EVs) are becoming increasingly popular in the UK, and

many of the latest models are well-suited for summer motoring, offering smooth, quiet driving and impressive range for longer journeys:

- Tesla Model 3 Performance: Continuously updated, the Model 3 Performance offers exhilarating acceleration and a sleek design, making it ideal for summer road trips. Its advanced Autopilot features enhance safety and convenience on long drives, while its spacious interior ensures passenger comfort.

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Success lies in providing the right conditions and consistent care throughout their growing cycle.

Sunlight is Key: Tomatoes are sun-worshippers. Aim for at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight daily. This fuels photosynthesis, leading to vigorous growth and intensely flavoured fruits. Choose the sunniest spot in your garden.

Soil Matters: Well-draining, fertile soil is crucial. Amend your soil with compost or well-rotted manure before planting to improve structure and nutrient content. Tomatoes prefer slightly acidic soil with a pH between 6.0 and 6.8.

Planting Deep: When transplanting seedlings, plant them deeper than they

were in their pots, up to the first set of true leaves. This encourages more root growth along the buried stem, resulting in a stronger, more resilient plant.

Consistent Watering: Inconsistent watering can lead to problems like blossom-end rot. Water deeply and regularly, especially during dry spells, aiming for consistently moist but not waterlogged soil. Mulching around the base of the plants helps retain moisture and suppress weeds.

Feeding for Flavour: Once the first flowers appear, begin feeding your tomato plants with a balanced, tomato-specific fertiliser. As fruits develop, switch to a fertiliser higher in potassium to promote ripening and flavour



development.

Support and Pruning: Depending on the variety (determinate or indeterminate), provide appropriate support with stakes, cages, or trellises. Indeterminate varieties, which continue to grow and produce throughout the season, benefit from regular

pruning of "suckers" (the shoots that grow between the main stem and branches) to improve airflow and focus energy on fruit production.

Pest and Disease Management: Regularly inspect your plants for pests like aphids and whiteflies, and address any infestations

promptly using organic methods if possible. Ensure good air circulation to prevent fungal diseases.

By paying attention to these key aspects, you can cultivate tomato plants that yield an abundant harvest of truly exceptional, flavourful fruits, making your summer salads and sauces sing.

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ESSENTIAL HOME MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST FOR SUMMER

In summer our attention often turns to enjoying the outdoors.

However, these months also present the perfect opportunity to tackle essential home maintenance tasks, ensuring our properties remain in top condition and ready for whatever the season – and beyond – throws our way.

Don't let the allure of barbecues and beach trips distract you entirely. Investing a little time and effort now can save you significant headaches and expenses down the line. Here's a rundown of the most popular and crucial home maintenance tasks to add to your summer to-do list:

Embrace the Great Outdoors (and Maintain It!):

The exterior of your home bears the brunt of the elements year-round, so summer is the ideal time for a thorough check-up:

Guard Your Gutters: Clogged gutters are a silent menace. Overflowing rainwater can damage your roof, fascia boards, and even your foundation. Take a ladder and scoop out any accumulated leaves, twigs, and debris. A good clear-out at the start of summer is a smart move.

Roof Review: While you're up high (exercise caution!), take a good look at your roof. Are there any missing, loose, or cracked tiles or slates? Check the flashing around

chimneys, vents, and skylights for any signs of damage or gaps. Addressing these small issues now can prevent costly leaks. If you're unsure, a professional inspection is always a wise investment.

Wash Away Winter's Grime: Winter can leave your home's exterior looking dull. A good power wash can revitalize siding, walkways, driveways, and patios, removing dirt, mildew, and algae. This not only improves aesthetics but also prevents potential damage.

Window and Door Wisdom: Give your windows a sparkle inside and out to maximize natural



light. Inspect frames for any rot or damage and ensure seals and weather stripping are intact to maintain energy efficiency.

Paint and Protect: Summer's warmer and

drier conditions are perfect for tackling any peeling, cracking, or fading paint on exterior walls, fences, gates, and sheds. A fresh coat not only enhances curb appeal but also protects

the underlying materials from the elements.

Deck and Patio TLC: Your outdoor living spaces deserve some attention too. Clean decks and patios to remove slippery algae

and dirt. Inspect for any signs of damage and apply sealant or stain to wooden decks for lasting protection.

Green Thumb, Safe Home: Keep trees and shrubs trimmed, especially those close to your house, to prevent potential damage from strong winds or overgrown branches. Ensure proper drainage in your garden to avoid water pooling near your foundation.

Fortify Your Fences: Check fences for any damage, loose posts, or broken panels. Summer is a good time for repairs or a fresh coat of paint or stain to keep your boundaries secure and looking their best.

Don't Forget the Details:

Outdoor Play Safety: If you have a playset, inspect it for any signs of wear or damage and ensure it's safe for children to use.

Water Wise: Check outdoor taps and hoses for leaks and make any necessary repairs to conserve water.

Pest Patrol: Be vigilant for signs of pests both inside and outside your home and take appropriate measures to prevent infestations.

Insurance Insight: Summer can bring different risks, so it's a good time to review your home insurance policy to ensure you have adequate coverage.

Designing a Dream Patio or Deck

The summer months in the UK beckon us outdoors, and what better way to embrace the sunshine and fresh air than with a beautifully designed patio or deck?

This outdoor extension of your living space can become the heart of summer gatherings, a tranquil spot for relaxation, and a valuable asset to your home. But where do you begin? Designing your dream patio or deck involves careful consideration of layout, furniture, and those all-important finishing touches like pergolas, shade sails, and outdoor rugs. Let's delve into the elements that will transform your outdoor area into a true oasis.

Mapping Your Space: Layout and Functionality

Before laying a single stone or plank, consider how you intend to use your outdoor space. This will heavily influence the layout:

Dining Area: Allocate enough space for a table and chairs, ensuring comfortable movement around the seating. Consider proximity to your kitchen for easy serving.

Lounge Area: Designate a zone for comfortable outdoor sofas, armchairs,

and perhaps a coffee table. Think about creating a cozy and inviting atmosphere.

Cooking Zone: If you plan on grilling or even installing an outdoor kitchen, ensure adequate space and consider ventilation and safety.

Transition Zones: Plan smooth transitions between different areas and from your indoor space to the outdoor area. Consider pathways and steps.

Consider the Sun's Path: Observe how sunlight hits your space throughout the day. Plan for shaded areas if your patio or deck receives intense afternoon sun.

Outdoor furniture has evolved significantly, offering both comfort and style to withstand the elements. Consider these factors:

Material: Choose weather-resistant materials like wicker (synthetic), aluminium, teak, or treated hardwoods. Cushions should be made from durable, water-resistant fabrics.

Style: Select furniture that complements the overall aesthetic of your home and garden. Consider modern, rustic, traditional, or bohemian styles.

Pergolas: These open-roofed structures provide partial shade and create a defined space. They can be adorned with climbing plants for added beauty and natural cooling. Consider freestanding or attached pergolas.

Shade Sails: A more contemporary and flexible shading solution. These tensioned fabric canopies come in various shapes and sizes, offering stylish protection from the sun. They are relatively easy to install and can be moved or adjusted as needed.

Outdoor Rugs: These instantly add warmth, colour, and texture to your patio or deck, defining different zones and making the space feel more like an outdoor living room. Choose rugs made from durable, weather-

resistant materials like polypropylene or jute.

The Finishing Touches: Lighting and Greenery

Don't forget the importance of lighting for extending the usability of your outdoor space into the evening. Consider string lights, lanterns, spotlights for pathways, and even integrated lighting in steps or railings.

Finally, incorporate greenery through potted plants, hanging baskets, or even small trees in containers. Plants add life, colour, and can help to soften the hardscaping, creating a more inviting and natural atmosphere.

Creating your dream patio or deck is an exciting opportunity to enhance your outdoor living experience. By carefully considering the materials, layout, furniture, and those special features, you can design a space that not only looks beautiful but also perfectly suits your lifestyle and the unique charm of your garden.

Summer Jobs in the Garden

High summer in the UK garden (June-August) is a time for both reaping rewards and consistent maintenance.



With longer days and warmer temperatures, growth is at its peak, demanding regular attention.

Key tasks include watering deeply and less frequently, focusing on the base of plants to encourage strong root systems and reduce evaporation. Deadheading spent flowers is crucial to encourage continuous blooming, particularly

for roses and bedding plants. Regular weeding prevents competition for water and nutrients, keeping your borders tidy.

Harvesting is a joy of this season. Pick ripe fruits and vegetables regularly to encourage further production. For crops like tomatoes, consistent watering and feeding are vital. Consider taking softwood cuttings from

tender perennials to increase your plant stock.

Don't forget the lawn! Mow regularly, but avoid cutting too short during hot spells to prevent scorching.

Finally, keep an eye out for pests and diseases, addressing any issues promptly to keep your garden thriving throughout the high summer months

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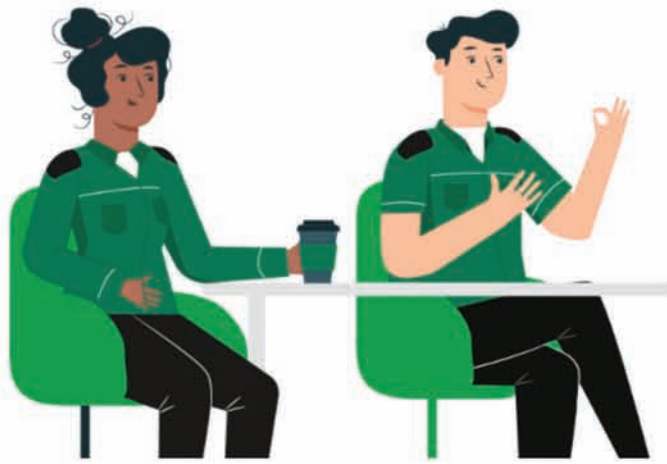
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