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Art Lecturer Charles Walsh (centre) with some of the SERC students exhibiting their work at the Downpatrick Campus (l-r): Maxine Beighton from Ballygowan; Adam Reeves (Ballykinler); Joe Hughes (Ardglass); Jessica Weir (Dundrum); Christina Wilson (Downpatrick); and Holly Watson (Clough)

TALENT AND TECHNIQUE IN DOWNPATRICK ART EXHIBITION

Students completing the Level 3 Art and Design and the Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at SERC Downpatrick Campus welcomed visitors, family and friends to the launch of their end of year exhibition recently.

The art on display, from 31 students, included oil paintings, video, acrylic on Perspex and mixed media sculptures.

The creators were happy to talk to visitors about their techniques and the inspiration for their work, which

included violence against women and girls, local landscapes and Buddhist philosophy. The range of work and the different styles and media used, add up to an amazing display of talent and technique.

The exhibition marks

the end of their course for most of the students, though many of the Level 3 Technical Diploma students plan to return to SERC and progress to the Foundation Diploma. Meanwhile, many of those successfully completing the

Foundation Diploma have places to study Higher Education at art schools and at universities, including Lancaster University and Ulster University, in the autumn. Visit www.serc.ac.uk Real Learning for Real Life #BetterOffAtSERC.

Next Phase of Castlewellan Forest Park Treetop Walk

Northern Ireland's first-ever treetop walk at Castlewellan Forest Park, following the successful completion and approval of the project's Outline Business Case.

Working in partnership with EAK Ireland, which is part of the EAK group, a leading provider of immersive, nature-based experiences, the Council has explored the feasibility of introducing this unique attraction to one of the district's most cherished outdoor spaces.

At a recent meeting, elected members approved a significant £6.8 million investment to support the delivery of the Treetop Walk. The project is expected to attract an additional 220,000 visitors each year, positioning Castlewellan as a standout destination within both the regional and national tourism offer.

Strategically aligned with wider initiatives such as the Narrow Water Bridge and the Newry City Centre Regeneration, the attraction

will deliver meaningful economic returns including supporting up to 33 construction jobs during its development and creating 32 permanent operational roles once open, while encouraging longer stays and increased visitor spending throughout the district.

Sustainability and all-inclusiveness are central to the vision. The Treetop Walk will blend sensitively into its forest setting, enhancing local biodiversity and supporting environmental education. With a gradient that never rises above 6% it's suitable for all ages and abilities. It will also promote low-impact and active travel options to help reduce the region's carbon footprint - ensuring that the attraction is not just good for the economy but for the environment too.

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Down District Council Champions Daily Mile Initiative

The Daily Mile is a free and simple initiative that encourages children to run, jog, walk or wheel for 15 minutes each day during school hours.

Taking place outdoors and alongside friends, The Daily Mile supports the physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of our children, regardless of age, ability or personal circumstances.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is proud to support The Daily Mile, delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency and the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. The Council is committed to expanding the reach of this initiative across the district, promoting daily physical activity as a fun and accessible part of school life.

Local delivery is being led by the Council's Health Inequalities Officer, Alannah Brennan, who is working to ensure that all primary school children in the district have the opportunity to participate. In a new phase of the programme, efforts are now underway to extend The Daily Mile to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, helping children develop healthy habits from their earliest years.

The initiative is built on four core principles - fun, friendship, fresh air and freedom which align with the ethos of early years education. Children who take part in The Daily Mile benefit from improved mood



and reduced anxiety, better focus and concentration, enhanced motor skills and physical fitness and greater social interaction.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Philip Campbell, welcomed the initiative saying, "The Daily Mile reflects Council's ongoing commitment to improving health and wellbeing across all communities in partnership with Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Public Health Agency. By introducing this initiative in both primary schools and

early years settings, we are supporting children to build positive, lifelong habits. I commend the work of our partners and encourage all schools and nurseries to embrace this simple but impactful activity."

Southern Health and Social Care Trust's Physical Activity Lead, Clare Drummy said, "The early years are a pivotal time for children to learn and adopt healthy behaviours. The Daily Mile introduces children to the joy of movement, whether walking, wheeling or jogging. It has huge benefits

for social, emotional and mental wellbeing and its great fun too. I would encourage all nurseries to get involved in The Daily Mile, it's so easy to add to daily routines."

Ashgrove Nursery School Newry recently joined the initiative and Principal Seona Hamill said, "Both children and staff are thoroughly enjoying being part of such a fantastic scheme. The children especially love keeping track of their steps and the daily walk helps them feel refreshed and ready for learning."

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28 SCHOOLS IN NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN AREA AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS ECO-SCHOOLS GREEN FLAGS.

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305 schools across NI have been awarded prestigious Eco-Schools Green Flags this year, bringing the total number of schools flying Green Flags up to 563, or just over 50% of all schools in Northern Ireland.

28 schools have been awarded Green Flags in Newry, Mourne and Down Council; Down High School, St Brigid's Primary School and St Bronagh's Primary School being awarded the title of Ambassador School for their outstanding performance. Eco-Teacher of the Year was awarded to Leverage Murphy from St Malachy's Primary School.

Eco-Pupil of the Year was awarded to Sara from Sacred Heart Grammar School and Eco-School of the Year was awarded to Saintfield High School.

Eco-Schools is an international programme, managed locally by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. Eco-Schools is run in 79 countries through the Foundation for Environmental Education. Of these 79 countries, Northern Ireland is only the second country to achieve this impressive milestone.

Charlene McKeown, Environmental Education Manager at Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful said:

"Reaching 50% of schools flying a Green Flag is a huge milestone for environmental education

and is a testament to the hard work of pupils, teachers and wider school communities across Northern Ireland.

We all know that our education system is under pressure with tight budgets and limited resources. That is why it is so heartening to see so many schools investing time and effort into this programme- it's a clear indicator that schools see the value of environmental education. I hope over the coming years we can go further in developing this part of our curriculum."

Local schools collected their Green Flags at an awards ceremony in the Great Hall, Downshire Hospital on Thursday 5th June- the culmination of two years of hard work.



Achieving a Green Flag requires schools to participate in a challenging seven stage programme, beginning with the establishment of a pupil-

led Eco-Committee, and leading to the development of a school Eco-Code. Along the way the Eco-Committee must carry out a full environmental

review of their school, develop a detailed action plan and monitor its implementation. Schools fly their flags for two years before they must reapply.



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Royal Visitor Welcomed to SERC

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh visited South Eastern Regional College (SERC) Lisburn Campus on Monday (23 June 2025), where he met students doing their Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE).

His Royal Highness chatted to students as they demonstrated activities that they have engaged in for their Volunteering and Skills sections, including

learning circus skills and creating a board games club. The students, who are based on SERC Campuses in Downpatrick, Lisburn and Newtownards, have also volunteered with local wildlife conservation group, True Harvest Seeds, collaborated with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council on Food Waste Action Week, and created dog tug toys for the RSPCA, as part of their Award efforts.

The Duke was welcomed to SERC Lisburn Campus by Chair of the Governing Body, John Nugent, and Principal and CEO Tommy Martin.

Speaking after the visit, Tommy Martin said: "We



Students from SERC Downpatrick Campus who are working towards Duke of Edinburgh's Awards welcomed VIP guests and showcased their work with True Harvest Seeds carried out as part of the awards scheme. In the picture, l-r: John Egan, Chief Operating Officer Duke of Edinburgh's Awards (DEA); Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly MLA; students James Russell, Tiernan Andrews and Anthony Horrox; and Jackie Bull, DEA UK Operations Director.

were immensely proud to introduce to His Royal Highness some of our amazing

students who are working hard and embracing challenges to achieve their DofE and Gaisce Awards. The DofE and the Joint Award Initiative, which we facilitate at SERC, reflects our approach to education through project-based learning - developing skills for real life which will serve our students well in years to come. Many of these students displaying their achievements today have specific barriers to learning, and the experience offered by the Award scheme represents a great opportunity for personal growth, allowing participants to reach and

often exceed their individual goals. I know they were delighted to showcase their work to The Duke today."

Among the VIP guests were the Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim, David McCorkell, and Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly, as well as representatives of the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme and the Department for the Economy NI.

Ten SERC students have achieved their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards this year, and another 38 students are currently working towards the Gold DofE/ Gaisce Awards.

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DOWNPATRICK PATIENT PRAISES MYCARE APP FOR TRANSFORMING HIS MS JOURNEY

Downpatrick man, Jake Reilly, has spoken about how the MyCare app has transformed his healthcare journey after being diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in September 2024.

Jake, who's 24, attends the Medical Day Case Unit at the Ulster Hospital every six weeks to receive an infusion and says the app has been a "game changer."

"MyCare" is a user-friendly digital app that gives patients secure access to their Health and Social Care information, including some hospital test results, hospital appointments and correspondence. With over 49,000 patients already signed up in the South Eastern Trust area, the app is empowering people to take a more active role in managing their own health.

Reflecting on his experience, Jake explained, "When I initially received my diagnosis, I was very anxious. I signed up to MyCare straight away and it completely changed how I felt about my treatment. I was no longer waiting at home for letters to arrive, my appointments appeared on the app, which gave me peace of mind."

Jake continued, "MyCare is so useful for seeing the dates and times of my appointments so I do not forget them. Staff

can message me directly about my treatment and I can see those messages as soon as they are sent. I also have access to all my information, whether it is from a consultation or a letter and I can view some of my test results. It really puts me in control of my healthcare."

Encouraging others to take advantage of the app, Jake added, "Definitely download MyCare, it is the future of healthcare and the modern way to look after your health."

Ward Clerk at the Medical Day Case Unit, Michelle McIntyre, highlighted how the app benefits both hospital patients and staff, saying, "MyCare is amazing. Patients tell me how much it helps them. They tend not to forget their appointments, so fewer appointments go to waste."

"It also reduces the number of calls we get from patients asking for appointment details and with fewer letters being sent out, we are not using as much paper! Patients can even access some of their test results directly, which



saves time and reduces anxiety.

"The app helps patients feel more in control and better informed about their care. They can check-in online for appointments too, so we know they have not forgotten. We always encourage patients to sign

up and help them through the process. It is a fantastic app that really makes a difference to patient care."

For more information and details on how to download MyCare, visit <https://dhcni.hscni.net/digital-comms/welcome-to-my-care-your-patient-portal/>



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MOURNE GULLION STRANGFORD GEOPARK WELCOMES INTERNATIONAL GOLFERS

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor Philip Campbell, warmly welcomed an international group of 20 golfers to the Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark recently.

The trip was organised as part of a high-end golf tour organised by Golfer to Golfer – a specialised tour operator who create Golf Trips by Golfers for Golfers.

The group of 20 visitors, largely made up of guests from France, along with others from the United States and South Africa, were invited to experience the region's exceptional golf and tourism offering first-hand. The tour forms part of an initiative to promote Mourne Gullion Strangford as a premium golf destination to international

tour operators responsible for designing luxury golf travel experiences for discerning global clients.

Over the course of their four-night stay at the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle, the group played several rounds of golf at the internationally acclaimed Royal County Down Golf Club – consistently ranked among the top golf courses in the world. Their itinerary also included dining at local restaurants, allowing them to sample the area's hospitality and vibrant local food scene.

The visit was arranged following a successful engagement between a destination representative and Golfer to Golfer, during which the region's unique combination of world-class golf, spectacular landscapes and warm hospitality was highlighted. This collaboration reflects Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's commitment to proactive tourism development and international market engagement.

In welcoming the visitors, Council Chairperson,

Councillor Philip Campbell said, "We were delighted to host this group of international golf travel professionals and to introduce them to the unique appeal of our district. Their visit forms an important part of our efforts to raise the global profile of Mourne Gullion Strangford as a high-quality tourism destination.

"This initiative not only showcases our world-class golf offering at Royal County Down but also supports local businesses from accommodation providers and restaurants to transport and retail - by encouraging increased international visitor spend. Strengthening our position in the premium tourism market contributes directly to sustainable economic growth and job creation



across the district."

This trip marks the first organised group visit to the destination through Golfer to Golfer, building on a growing partnership with the operator and generating

immediate economic benefits within the district.

For more information on golf, local tourism experiences and accommodation please visit: www.visitmournemountains.co.uk

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DEDICATED TEAM DELIVERS SPECIALIST SENSORY SUPPORT FOR DEAFBLIND PATIENTS

The South Eastern Trust is highlighting the specialist support available for individuals who are deafblind through its dedicated Sensory Support Team as part of Deafblind Awareness Week.

The team offers a wide range of services including social work support, technical aids and rehabilitation, tailored to meet the complex needs of those with combined hearing and sight loss.

Deafblindness, also known as dual sensory loss, is defined as a combined hearing and visual impairment that significantly affects a person's ability to communicate, access information and navigate their environment. Recognising the unique challenges faced by this group, the Trust has made specialist services available to ensure individuals receive person-centred, meaningful support.

Within the South Eastern Trust area, two Specialist Deafblind Practitioners are in post, providing comprehensive assessments and bespoke support plans. These



focus on how individuals access communication, one-to-one human contact, social interaction and emotional wellbeing, as well as support with mobility, assistive technology and rehabilitation needs.

South Eastern Trust, Community Services Manager, Sue Curry, emphasised the importance of support for those with a sensory loss and said,

"We aim to make our services appropriate and recognise that, although a person is deafblind, mainstream services for either deaf or blind individuals may not meet their unique needs."

"Within the Sensory Support Team, we provide information and advice in ways that are fully accessible to

deafblind Service Users. We also work closely with local and national organisations to build services across the Trust and raise awareness of the deafblind community."

The Sensory Support Service is open to all and referrals can be made by professionals, carers, family members or individuals themselves by contacting Ards & North Down Team on (028) 9151 0136, Downpatrick Team on (028) 4461 6915 or Lisburn Team on (028) 9260 7746.



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Draft Local Development Plan Strategy unveiled at Burrendale

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council officially launched its Local Development Plan 2035 – draft Plan Strategy recently at the Burrendale Hotel, setting out a bold new vision for the future development of the district.

Since taking on planning powers in April 2015, the Council has worked within the policy framework inherited from the former Department of the Environment (DOE) and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). Now, with the publication of its own draft Plan Strategy, the Council is putting forward a tailored framework that reflects the unique needs, opportunities and ambitions of the district.

The strategy outlines how the district should grow and develop over the next decade, addressing housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental priorities. A 12-week public consultation is now open and the Council is calling on residents, businesses and community groups to help shape the future by submitting their views before 5pm on Monday 22 September.

Speaking at the launch, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson, Councillor



Philip Campbell said, “This is a major milestone for the Council. The draft Plan Strategy sets out our growth agenda and planning policies that align with both our Community Plan and Corporate Plan.

“It provides a long-term spatial vision that supports economic development, helps build sustainable communities and protects our rich historic and natural

heritage. We want to make sure that the right development happens in the right places – creating places where people want to live, work, visit and invest in.”

The Council is encouraging everyone with an interest in the future of Newry, Mourne and Down to review the draft strategy and have their say. The draft Plan Strategy and all supporting documents are

available online at: www.newrymournedown.org/local-development-plan. Hard copies can also be viewed in person, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm at the Council’s Civic Centres in Newry and Downpatrick.

Details on how to respond to the consultation and upcoming public engagement exhibitions are also available on the Council’s website.



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A clue to their poisonous nature can be found in their Latin name, Taxus Baccata, because they contain alkaloid compounds, taxines, which are lethal to all living creatures, including humans, pets and livestock, although as you typically find in nature, there is one teeny, little thing that not only lives on yews but eats the otherwise poisonous needles.

Yews are evergreen conifers, but they don't produce cones; instead, individual seeds (as toxic as the leaves and bark) are contained in fleshy open-ended red berries called



arils, which, strangely, are not poisonous, but food for squirrels and badgers, and birds such as thrushes. Despite the berries not being toxic, let's be clear: never eat any part of a yew tree or hedge. Incidentally, there is a special yew species which we're probably

most familiar with, the Irish Yew, Taxus Baccata 'Fastigiata'; every specimen of this upright, typical graveyard tree is descended from a common yew mutation found in Fermanagh in 1780 and grown at Florence Court. Oh, and that wee creature

which has found a vital home on toxic yews? The caterpillar of the satin beauty moth. Nature is full of surprises and often finds a way for very different living things to work well together, hand in glove, even if one is toxic. JVA

Tullywest Manor is celebrating over 30 years in business!

Tullywest Manor is situated in a beautiful rural setting, overlooking the hills, lakes and farmlands of the Co. Down countryside.

It opened its doors to its first residents on 17th March 1989. The aim is to provide high quality services catering for the individual needs of each resident, ensuring that privacy, dignity and respect of each resident is maintained at all times.

Residents coming into care here encouraged to maintain their normal social interests, hobbies and outings with relatives and friends as well as participate in activities and outings arranged by the home

Residents views and suggestions for social activities, outings are sought at Resident meetings and actioned if appropriate

Tullywest Manor features a large lounge, dining room, entrance hall with seating area and a spacious conservatory,



where residents can circulate and meet with each other and relatives.

Each tastefully decorated bedroom, most with en-suite, offers complete privacy where residents are encouraged to express their own personal tastes.

Tullywest recognises the need for a person-

centred approach to care. Encouraging staff to learn more about the Residents lives helps us tailor our care to each individual need.

Tullywest Manor recognises that residents are individuals with family and relatives of their own and encourage this bond to continue. They aim to

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Let the coast call you back this winter.

WELCOME EXPANSION OF SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDCARE FROM SEPTEMBER 2025

Many families with school aged children across Northern Ireland rely on registered childcare providers every day to enable them to go to work.

This childcare may be being provided by a registered childminder or a day nursery, or in a setting attached to a primary school. While childcare costs remain a significant expense it is welcome news that there is an increase in the number of families who will be able to claim vital support from September 2025.

NI Childcare Subsidy Scheme extended

The Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme currently provides a 15% subsidy on childcare costs for eligible working parents of children under Primary school age, who are in receipt of Tax-Free Childcare.

The Education Minister, Paul Givan, has announced that from 1 September 2025 the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme will be extended to include school age children who attend a registered childcare facility. These



families will now also qualify for the 15% subsidy.

It is estimated that this extension could give financial support to the families of a further 8,000 children who are currently unable to access support through the Northern Ireland Childcare Subsidy Scheme. The NI

Childcare Subsidy Scheme is administered by Early Years, their website www.early-years.org will be updated in due course as more information becomes available.

Get advice to make sure this is right for your family

While these changes will provide valuable additional support to more families, working out which is best form of support for your family can be confusing. We would encourage anyone using registered childcare to call the Family Benefits Advice Service on 028 9267 8200 for advice to ensure they are receiving the best form of support or email hello@employersforchildcare.org.

Hydraquip Opens New Trade Counter in Lisburn, Northern Ireland

Established in 1989, Hydraquip Hose & Hydraulics, one of the UK's leading providers of hydraulic solutions, is proud to announce the opening of its new hydraulic trade counter in Lisburn, Northern Ireland.

This exciting development coincides with Hydraquip's one-year anniversary of operating in Northern Ireland. The launch of the Lisburn branch marks a key milestone in strengthening support for local customers and enhancing service delivery throughout the region. The company is proud of the progress made over the past year and is looking forward to further growth in the years ahead.

Hydraquip's trade counters provide access to over 70,000 products, offering customers immediate availability of essential parts. From hoses and fittings to vital hydraulic components, there is no need to wait for delivery, helping projects to stay on schedule.

Alongside the trade counter, Hydraquip operates a dedicated fleet of mobile hydraulic service engineers across Northern Ireland, delivering a 24-hour HQ Onsite Hose Replacement Service. The team, equipped with up-to-date and specialised training, achieves a 95% first-time fix rate for on-site repairs. From hose replacements to full hydraulic installations and maintenance contracts, Hydraquip offers tailored solutions to meet the diverse needs of various industries.

Avoid costly downtime by visiting the Lisburn trade counter, open from 8 am to 5 pm at 19 Ferguson Road, Knockmore Road, BT28 2EX.

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NEW EVENTS PROGRAMME ACROSS FOREST PARKS AND BEACHES

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council has unveiled an exciting new schedule of activities set to take place across its scenic forest parks and beaches, celebrating the natural environment, local folklore, and the cultural heritage of the Mourne Gullion Strangford Geopark.

Delivered annually, the Council's Visitor Experience Activation Programme offers a wide range of free, family-friendly experiences designed to educate and entertain. From interactive wildlife sessions and hands-on workshops to traditional music, Viking encounters and spectacular outdoor shows, there's something to inspire every age and interest. Highlights include, Mountain of Music, at Slieve Gullion, a lively celebration for European Geopark Day featuring talented local artists. At Castlewellan Forest Park, Flying High will wow audiences with aerial stunts from the Banbridge Aeromodelling Club as model planes and helicopters take to the skies in a stunning display. Families can step into the wild with an

announce this new programme across our beautiful forest parks and beaches. These activities are a fantastic opportunity for families and visitors to connect with nature, learn about the vital role our environment plays in the ecosystem and immerse themselves in the myths and legends that shape our unique cultural identity."

unforgettable animal adventure at Delamont Country Park. Visitors will have an opportunity to meet the majestic owls from The World of Owls and get up close to fascinating creatures like snakes, spiders and colourful geckos from the Amazon Jungle Show.

In Kilbroney Forest Park, Dino Discovery



Day provides the perfect opportunity for young explorers to step back in time when dinosaurs ruled the earth and let big imaginations run wild. The programme spans Castlewellan Forest Park, Slieve Gullion Forest Park, Kilbroney Park, Delamont Country Park, Tyrella Beach, and Cranfield Beach.

For the full schedule and event details, visit: Forest Activities: <https://www.visitmournemountains.co.uk/whats-on/forest-activities> Summer Beach Activities: <https://www.visitmournemountains.co.uk/whats-on/summer-beach-activities>

Sea-Fit Wellness Event for Harbour Workers in Kilkeel

Harbour workers in Kilkeel availed of free health and wellbeing support during a recent Sea-Fit Wellness Event, held recently Organised by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council's Health Inequalities Team and the Mournes District Electoral Area Forum (DEA), the event was delivered in partnership with the Fishermen's Mission.



Over 25 participants took part in the session, which offered basic health checks, a taster exercise class, and access to a range of health and wellbeing information. The initiative aimed to improve access to men's health services and raise awareness of the importance of proactive health care

among harbour workers in the area. This event is part of a wider programme of health and wellbeing initiatives being rolled out across the Mournes DEA, reflecting the Council's continued commitment to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of residents in both rural and coastal

communities. Council extends its gratitude to the various agencies and teams who supported the event, including the Council's Ethnic Minority Support Centre, Be Active Team, Cancer Focus, PIPS, Volunteer Now, Community Health Worker and Faith Donaldson Optometrist.

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Autumn 2025: The DIY Boom Transforming Homes Across the Country

Homeowners are rolling up their sleeves and diving into DIY projects that enhance their living spaces.

This season, the trend is all about targeted upgrades—small but impactful changes that breathe new life into homes without requiring a full-scale renovation.

According to recent reports, flooring installations are among the most popular projects this season. Homeowners are opting for luxury vinyl planks and engineered hardwood, which offer durability and a sleek aesthetic while being easier to maintain than traditional hardwood. Similarly, tile installations are gaining traction, with geometric and marble designs adding texture and personality to kitchens and living rooms.

Another standout trend is accent wall curation. Instead of repainting entire rooms, many DIYers are focusing on a single wall, using wallpaper or bold paint colors to create a striking focal point. This simple yet effective approach allows homeowners to refresh their spaces without committing to a full redesign.

Bathroom remodeling remains a top priority, with many opting for cabinet and fixture enhancements or new flooring and tile installations. These updates not only improve functionality but also add a touch of luxury to everyday routines.

Outdoor spaces are also receiving plenty of attention. Landscaping updates, including tree planting and sprinkler system installations, are helping homeowners create lush, inviting gardens.

Meanwhile, deck and porch remodels, concrete patio installations, and gazebo additions are turning backyards into stylish retreats perfect for summer gatherings.

With homeowners increasingly investing in their current spaces rather than moving, these DIY projects are proving to be both practical and rewarding. Whether it's a fresh coat of paint, a new floor, or a revamped backyard, this summer's DIY boom is all about making homes more comfortable, functional, and visually appealing.

So, if you're looking for inspiration, now is the perfect time to pick up a paintbrush, lay down some tiles, or plant a tree. After all, nothing says autumn like a home improvement project that brings lasting joy.

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Looking to transform your garden or outdoor space? Head straight to Urban Outlet, located at 163 Moneyreagh Road – your one-stop destination for all things landscaping and hardware!

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Need tools, accessories, or building supplies? We've got you covered. We even carry concrete, screed, and both building and plastering mortar. Our shelves are stocked and updated daily, so there's always something new to discover.

And don't worry about delivery – with our fleet of tipper lorries, we'll get your order right to your doorstep. Or if it fits in your car, we'll gladly help you load up and hit the road.

From railway sleepers and kerbs to decorative bark and agricultural supplies, Urban Outlet is your go-to place to create the perfect outdoor living space.

Our friendly, knowledgeable team is always on hand to offer expert advice and answer any questions you have.

Stop by today and see why Urban Outlet is the ultimate destination for outdoor inspiration!





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What to plant to add Autumn Colour to Your Garden

As the vibrant hues of summer begin to fade, many gardeners might think the show is over.

But autumn, far from being a time of decline, offers a spectacular opportunity to infuse your garden with a rich tapestry of colour. With careful plant selection, you can ensure your outdoor space remains a visual delight well into the cooler months.

Embrace the beauty of fall with these fantastic colour-givers:

- **Fiery Foliage Stars**
Perhaps the most iconic autumn display comes from trees and shrubs whose leaves transform into a breathtaking spectrum of reds, oranges, and yellows.
- **Acers** (Japanese Maples): These
- are perhaps the quintessential autumn tree, offering an unparalleled range of leaf shapes and colours. Varieties like ‘Bloodgood’ turn a deep, rich red, while ‘Osakazuki’ boasts brilliant scarlet. Even smaller gardens can accommodate dwarf varieties or those grown in pots.
- **Euonymus alatus** (Spindle Bush): Known as the “burning bush” for good reason, this shrub explodes into an intense, fiery red that truly lives up to its name. It’s a showstopper that demands attention.
- **Liquidambar styraciflua** (Sweet Gum): For a larger garden, the Sweet Gum offers a kaleidoscope of autumnal shades, from gold and orange to deep purple-red, often all on the same tree. Its distinctive, spiky



- seedpods also add winter interest.
- **Parthenocissus quinquefolia** (Virginia Creeper): While a vigorous climber, its five-fingered leaves turn a stunning, intense crimson in autumn, perfect for scrambling over walls or fences.
- **Late-Blooming Beauties**
Don’t underestimate the power of flowers to extend the season of colour. Many perennials and even some annuals provide a final flourish before winter sets in.
- **Chrysanthemums**: These classic autumn flowers are available in an astonishing array of

colours, from vibrant yellows and oranges to deep bronzes and purples. Choose hardy garden varieties for reliable performance year after year.

- **Seedum** (Hylotelephium): Varieties like ‘Autumn Joy’ (now *Hylotelephium spectabile*) are invaluable for their sturdy stems and broccoli-like flower heads that start pink and mature to a rich rust or reddish-brown, providing interest for weeks. They’re also a magnet for late-season pollinators.
- **Asters**: Offering daisy-like flowers in shades of purple, pink, and white, asters are a vital source of nectar for bees and butterflies in autumn. ‘Purple Dome’ is a particularly popular, compact variety.
- **Anemone x hybrida** (Japanese Anemone): These elegant perennials produce delicate, cup-shaped flowers in shades of pink and white on tall stems, dancing in the autumn breeze. They add a touch of grace to borders.

By incorporating a selection of these plants, your garden can shrug off the dullness often associated with autumn and instead become a vibrant sanctuary of seasonal beauty, extending the gardening joy well beyond the summer months. So, grab your gardening gloves and start planning your autumn spectacular!

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Food-to-go manufacturer invests £19m to expand range and create 130 jobs

Economy Minister Dr Caoimhe Archibald has announced that Warrenpoint manufacturer DELI LITES is making a significant investment in its sandwich production and 'heat-to-eat' product range.

A planned £12.8m investment to automate the company's production and broaden its product range is supported by Invest NI's Agri-Food Investment Initiative. A further £6m investment by the company will help upskill the existing workforce and create 130 new jobs.

Speaking at DELI LITES' Warrenpoint facility, the Economy Minister said: "The north's food and drink processing sector is a true local success story, with latest statistics showing that it generates £6.5 billion in sales and supports over 25,500 jobs across our towns and countryside.

"This investment will unlock significant growth opportunities for DELI LITES in this exciting sector. Increased capacity and new automated equipment will boost productivity and enable it to expand its fresh and frozen ranges, growing

its sales in Britain and Ireland, and open up additional export markets. With 78% of our food and drink sold outside the north, this industry showcases the quality, innovation, and global appeal of what we produce right here at home.

"The creation of 130 new jobs in Warrenpoint, which will help leverage almost £10m in wages and salaries across the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area by 2027, is also good news as we work to deliver a more regionally balanced economy."

Established in 1998 by husband-and-wife Brian and Jackie Reid, DELI LITES supplies fresh gourmet sandwiches and food-to-go products to convenience stores, supermarkets, major coffee chains and international airlines. Customers include Applegreen, Costa Coffee, Aer Lingus and American Airlines.



Brian Reid, CEO at DELI LITES, said: "Since our beginnings over 30 years ago, we are now an all-Ireland business with export sales growing in international markets. We've always been a trailblazer in our sector, shown when we became the first sandwich maker in the UK and Ireland to achieve B Corp certification."

As well as expanding its storage and production process, DELI LITES will continue to invest in Research & Development to enhance their product range for international markets.

DELI LITES' investment will increase its capabilities and reduce food waste by up to 50%.

Invest NI's Agri-Food Investment Initiative is a £46m scheme to support

local agri-food and drink processors to improve competitiveness and productivity.

The new jobs include a range of highly skilled positions, ten of which are management positions, including a new Chief Commercial Officer.

The Agri-Food Investment Initiative is open to applications from all eligible agri-food and drink processors in Northern Ireland to access support towards productivity improvements.

Full details on eligibility, the support available and how to apply are available at www.investni.com/support-for-business/funding-support/agri-food-investment-initiative?utm_source=pressDeliLites

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Autumn Interiors: The 2025 Trends

Bringing Light and Freshness to Homes

This season, homeowners are embracing light, airy, and nature-inspired interiors to create refreshing spaces that feel both stylish and comfortable.

This season, the focus is on soft textures, organic materials, and breezy colour palettes that enhance relaxation while keeping homes cool.

One of the standout trends is coastal chic, which brings a beachy, laid-back vibe indoors. Think soft blues, sandy neutrals, and crisp whites, paired with natural elements like rattan, linen, and driftwood. This aesthetic creates a serene atmosphere that feels effortlessly elegant.

Another popular approach is bringing the outdoors inside. Large windows, indoor plants, and botanical prints are being used to blur the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces. Vertical gardens and hanging planters are particularly trendy, adding a lush, green touch to interiors while improving air quality.

For those looking to add a touch of luxury, sculptural lighting is making a statement. Hand-blown glass globes, matte brass finishes, and artistic silhouettes are

transforming lighting into a focal point rather than just a functional element.

Soft textiles are also playing a key role in summer interiors. Linen curtains, cotton throws, and bamboo-blend bedding provide a cooling effect while maintaining a cozy feel. These materials are perfect for creating a relaxed yet sophisticated ambiance.

When it comes to colour, warm neutrals and pastel tones are dominating the scene. Shades like soft peach, mint green, and powder blue reflect light beautifully, making

spaces feel open and inviting. Accent walls with understated floral prints or textured paint techniques add depth without overwhelming the room.

With homeowners prioritizing comfort and style, these interior trends are all about creating spaces that feel fresh, breathable, and effortlessly chic. Whether you're revamping your living room, bedroom, or outdoor patio, this

season's design choices ensure that your home remains a sanctuary of relaxation and beauty.

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CREATING A COZY HOME SPACE

Embrace the Warmth of Colour

Autumn's palette is rich and inspiring. Incorporate shades of deep orange, burnt sienna, mustard yellow, forest green, and earthy brown into your decor. This doesn't mean repainting your entire house! Think about accent pieces: new throw pillows, a cozy blanket draped over your sofa, or a vibrant centerpiece for your dining table. Even a few strategically placed items in autumnal hues can dramatically shift the mood of a room.

Layer Up with Textiles

Texture is key to coziness. Swap out lighter summer fabrics for heavier, more luxurious materials. Think chunky knit throws, faux fur blankets, velvet cushions, and wool rugs. Layering these textiles not only adds warmth but also creates a visual depth that's incredibly inviting. Imagine sinking into a sofa piled high with soft throws on a chilly evening!

The Power of Warm Lighting

As the days shorten, lighting becomes paramount. Ditch harsh overhead lights and opt for multiple sources of soft, warm

illumination. Table lamps, floor lamps, and even strings of fairy lights can create a magical glow. Consider smart bulbs that allow you to adjust the colour temperature to a warmer, more amber hue, mimicking the comforting glow of a fire. Don't forget the timeless appeal of candles – their flickering flames instantly add a touch of romance and coziness. Scented candles with notes of pumpkin spice, cinnamon, or sandalwood can further enhance the autumnal ambiance.

Bring the Outdoors In

Autumn offers a bounty of natural beauty. Collect fallen leaves, pinecones, acorns, and branches to create rustic displays. A simple vase filled with colourful autumn leaves or a bowl overflowing with pinecones can bring the essence of the season indoors.

Pumpkins and gourds, in their various shapes and sizes, are also quintessential autumn decor.

Create Inviting Scents

Our sense of smell is powerfully linked to memory and comfort. Fill your home with the delightful aromas of autumn. This can be



achieved through scented candles, essential oil diffusers (cinnamon, clove, orange, cedarwood are great choices), simmering potpourri on the stove, or even baking autumn treats like apple pie or pumpkin bread. The smell of freshly brewed coffee or hot chocolate also adds to the cozy atmosphere.

Designate a Cozy Nook

Every home benefits from a dedicated cozy corner. This could be an armchair by a window, adorned with a

soft throw and a good book, or a reading nook piled with cushions. Make it a space where you can unwind, relax, and truly feel at peace. Add a small side table for your warm drink and a lamp for reading.

Prepare for Comfort

Finally, think about the practical aspects of autumn coziness. Ensure your heating system is in good working order. Stock up on your favourite hot beverages – teas, coffees, hot chocolate mixes. Keep warm socks

and slippers readily available. These small considerations contribute significantly to your overall comfort and enjoyment of the season.

By incorporating these elements, you can transform your home into an autumnal sanctuary, a warm and welcoming retreat from the crisp air and changing landscapes outside. So, as the days grow shorter and the leaves fall, embrace the opportunity to make your home the coziest place to be.

Essential Plants for Your Autumn Garden

Autumn offers a spectacular opportunity to fill your outdoor space with a different kind of charm.

With cooler temperatures and softer light, certain plants truly shine, providing a stunning display of colour, interesting textures, and even late-season food for wildlife.

To keep your garden captivating well into the colder months, here are some essential plants to consider for your autumn landscape.

Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses are the epitome of autumn elegance. Their graceful plumes shimmer in the low sunlight, creating an ethereal display. From the stately Maiden Grass

(Miscanthus sinensis) to the upright Feather Reed Grass (Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'), there's a grass for every style. They provide vital winter interest, standing tall even after frost, and offer shelter and food for birds.

Asters

For a vibrant burst of late-season color, asters are indispensable. These daisy-like perennials bloom profusely in purples, pinks, blues, and whites, just as many other flowers fade. They are crucial nectar sources for migrating butterflies and late-flying bees. Varieties

like New England Asters (Symphyotrichum novae-angliae) are robust, offering a long-lasting and colorful display.

Sedum (now Hylotelephium spp.) Known for their drought tolerance and easy care, Sedums are autumn garden superstars. Their fleshy leaves provide summer interest, but in late summer and autumn, their sturdy flower heads transform, deepening in color from pale pinks to rich reds and rusts. 'Autumn Joy' is a classic, but many new cultivars offer exciting variations. Their architectural shape

provides structure, and they're highly attractive to pollinators.

Chrysanthemums (Chrysanthemum spp.) No autumn garden is complete without the cheerful resilience of chrysanthemums. Available in an astonishing array of forms and colors—from warm oranges and deep reds to vibrant yellows and classic whites—"mums" are the quintessential autumn flower. They provide a dense splash of color that brightens even the dullest autumn days, offering both nostalgic charm and a powerful visual punch.

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High Street Heroes NI 2025 Launched – A Celebration of Local Excellence

Retail NI’s annual High Street Heroes campaign returns for 2025, offering a unique opportunity to honour Northern Ireland’s outstanding independent retailers and vibrant high streets.

In partnership with National Lottery operator, Allwyn, SSE Airtricity and Gig Grafters, Retail NI has officially launched the High Street Heroes NI 2025 campaign. The initiative is a celebration of the businesses that are at the heart of communities across Northern Ireland.

Unlike traditional awards programmes, High Street Heroes is entirely driven by the public. There are no judging panels. Local people are invited to vote for their favourite businesses across 13 categories, ranging from food and drink to fashion and essential services.

Voting opens on Friday 4th July. This symbolic date marks the independence and resilience of local trade. Among the top honours are High Street of the Year and Independent Retailer of the Year.

These awards recognise excellence in customer service, sustainability, innovation and community impact.

Retail NI Chief Executive Glyn Roberts said:

“The High Street Heroes NI campaign continues to grow from strength to strength, with a record-breaking 15,000 votes cast last year. Our high streets are more than shopping destinations. They are vital centres of employment, entrepreneurship and community life.

“Independent retail is the lifeblood of communities right across Northern Ireland, and this campaign is the biggest celebration of our thriving local retail sector. This year, we are preparing to host our biggest ever showcase and a major celebration of the individual businesses that form the beating heart of our



towns and cities.”

The economic value of shopping local is clear. For every £1 spent at an independent retailer, 70p stays in the local economy. That money supports farmers, producers, jobs and neighbourhood vibrancy.

High Street Heroes will be promoted across Northern Ireland through Translink bus advertising, with striking T-side branding designed to raise awareness and drive public voting. Retail NI is delighted to collaborate with Translink to amplify the campaign’s visibility and to recognise the vital role public transport plays in connecting people to their local high streets.

Shortlisted finalists will be announced in early August. The campaign will conclude with a celebration event on Thursday 21st August 2025.

To cast your vote or find out more, visit www.RetailNI.com/High-Street-Heroes

TRENDS ILLUMINATING INTERIORS WITH STYLE

Homeowners are embracing warm, layered, and sculptural lighting to create inviting spaces that reflect the essence of late summer.

This season, lighting is more than just functional—it’s a statement piece that enhances ambiance and transforms interiors.

One of the standout trends is organic and sculptural lighting. Designers are opting for fixtures that mimic natural forms, such as branch-like chandeliers, petal-shaped pendants, and asymmetrical handcrafted silhouettes. These artistic pieces not only illuminate a space but also serve as captivating focal points.

Another key trend is layered lighting, which moves away from harsh overhead fixtures in favour of a mix of ambient, task, and accent lighting.

This approach creates depth and flexibility, allowing homeowners to adjust the mood of a room throughout the day.

Dim-to-warm technology is gaining popularity, offering a seamless transition from bright daylight tones to cozy evening hues.

For those looking to add a touch of timeless elegance, vintage-inspired lighting is making a comeback. Think matte brass finishes, hand-blown glass globes, and bespoke shades that bring a nostalgic yet sophisticated charm to interiors. These pieces blend seamlessly with both modern and classic decor styles.

Sustainability is also at the forefront of autumn lighting trends. Natural materials like rattan, wood, and aged brass are being used to craft fixtures that feel organic and eco-friendly. These elements not only add warmth to a space but also align with the growing preference for sustainable home design.

With homeowners prioritizing comfort and aesthetics, this season’s lighting trends are all about creating spaces that feel inviting, stylish, and effortlessly illuminated. Whether it’s sculptural showpieces, layered lighting, or vintage accents, the right fixtures can transform any room into a glowing sanctuary.

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MAJOR SALE OF IRISH ART AT SLIEVE DONARD HOTEL END OF AUGUST

North Coast artist Adrian Margey will be holding a major exhibition and sale of his work at the Slieve Donard Resort and Spa Newcastle over the Bank Holiday Weekend (Saturday 23rd – Monday 25th August).

The Slieve Donard exhibition will place a strong focus on the landscape and landmarks of County Down and the Mourne area. Contemporary and traditional depictions of Murlough Bay, Spelga, Silent Valley, Newcastle, Annalong Harbour, St John's Point and Dundrum Bay will take centre stage together with portrayals of North Down and the Ards Peninsula. Visitors to this stunning new exhibition will also enjoy dramatic Belfast and Dublin

cityscapes and interpretations of the artist's beloved North Coast. Representations of traditional Irish musicians and dancers will also be on show.

"I have been exhibiting at the Slieve Donard for a number of years now – and each time I look forward to showcasing my work in this beautiful old building overlooking the Mourne," enthused Adrian.

The artist will be in attendance all weekend to discuss his work. Opening times are as follows:



Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th August: 11am – 8pm | Monday 25th August: 11am – 6pm.

Admission free – everyone welcome. Further details about the exhibition can be found at www.adrianmargey.com.

For more information, telephone the Portrush Studio on 07841593762.

UNVEILING THE WONDERS OF A ROCK POOL

Rock pools are miniature marine worlds, teeming with fascinating life just waiting to be discovered.

Investigating them is a rewarding adventure, but remember to be gentle and respectful of their delicate ecosystems.

Before you begin, check the tide times and only explore during low tide. Equip yourself with a clear bucket or a magnifying glass for a closer look. Approach the pool slowly and quietly to avoid startling its inhabitants.

Begin by observing from a distance. What larger movements do you notice? You might spot small fish darting amongst the seaweed or scuttling crabs hiding under rocky overhangs.

Next, gently peer into the water. Look for anemones, often resembling colourful jelly blobs, that will retract



their tentacles if disturbed. Keep an eye out for limpets and periwinkles clinging to the rocks, and common starfish, sometimes nestled in crevices. If you're lucky, you might even spot a tiny, translucent prawn or a camouflaged blenny.

Remember to touch as little as possible. If you pick something up for a closer look, return it carefully to exactly where you found it. After your exploration, leave the rock pool as undisturbed as possible, ensuring these vibrant habitats continue to thrive for others to enjoy.

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AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2025 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

As summer transitions into autumn, County Down, Northern Ireland, bursts with vibrant events and festivals throughout August and September 2025.

From world-class music to local food celebrations, historical insights, and family fun, there's something to captivate every visitor.

August: A Month of Music, Arts, and Outdoor Adventures

August in County Down is particularly rich in cultural offerings, with Bangor taking centre stage for arts and music.

Clandeboyne Festival (August 16th-23rd, Clandeboyne Estate, Bangor): This esteemed classical music festival returns to the historic surroundings of the Clandeboyne Estate. Founded by acclaimed pianist Barry Douglas, the festival promises a week of captivating concerts and performances exploring "Aspects of Summer." Audiences can expect a distinguished roster of artists, including violinists Tatiana Samouil and Michael d'Arcy, cellist Arto Noras, and pianists Julie Alcaraz and Gustavo Diaz-Jerez. A highlight is the "Celtic Orbit" performance, a unique collaboration featuring Barry Douglas with Irish flautist Eimear McGeown, harpist Catriona McKay, and fiddle player Chris Stout. Advance booking is highly recommended.

Open House Festival (Throughout August, Bangor): Bangor truly comes alive for the entire month of August with the Open House Festival. This non-profit festival offers a diverse programme of free and ticketed events celebrating music, film, and theatre. From intimate gigs to larger performances, the festival transforms various venues across the seaside town, including Bangor Castle Walled Garden and The Court House. Keep an eye on their programme for

specific dates and acts.

Beyond the major festivals, August offers a range of ongoing activities and family-friendly experiences:

Donaghadee Summer Festival (Ongoing until September 21st, Donaghadee): This bumper summer festival continues into August with a mix of beloved returning events and new additions across various locations in and around Donaghadee.

Sir Samuel Kelly Project (Ongoing until September 30th, Donaghadee): Visit the Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat at Marina Carpark and explore an exhibition detailing its fascinating story.

Dragonfly Festival (Ongoing until September 21st, WWT Castle Espie Wetland Centre, Comber): Make special family memories at WWT's first-ever Dragonfly Festival, offering a chance to connect with nature.

Discover Groomspoint - Walking Tours (Ongoing until September 13th, Groomspoint): Join local ambassadors for free walking tours, delving into the amazing history of Groomspoint village.

Inspiration and Transformation Exhibition (Until August 31st, North Down Museum, Bangor): Explore an exciting new exhibition showcasing the works of County Down artists, celebrating the region's long history of artistic expression.

Summer Camps and Outdoor Adventures: Throughout August, several multi-activity summer schemes are available, such as the Strangford Lough Activity Centre Summer Scheme (until August 21st, Killinchy) and Kids Summer

Adventure Camp (various dates, Rostrevor). For animal lovers, Cranfield Alpacas in Kilkeel offers various alpaca adventure and field walk experiences, while the Slievenaman Goat Trail and Petting Farm in Newcastle provides a unique countryside adventure with breathtaking Mourne Mountain views.

Summer of Play at Castle Ward (Until August 31st, Downpatrick): Experience a summer of medieval adventure with thrilling challenges, interactive quests, and fantasy fun at Castle Ward.

September: Culinary Delights and Autumnal Entertainment

As the leaves begin to turn, September in County Down brings a focus on food and a continuation of cultural events.

Eats and Beats Festival (September 6th-7th, Newcastle): This highly anticipated festival returns to Newcastle, offering a vibrant celebration of food and music. With two live music stages showcasing local and international talent, and an array of locally sourced produce, artisanal delights, and live cookery demonstrations, it's a feast for the senses. Entry is free, with select ticketed events for cookery demonstrations and VIP experiences.

Newcastle Restaurant Week (September 1st-7th, Newcastle): Leading up to and coinciding with Eats and Beats, Newcastle Restaurant Week provides an opportunity to sample special dishes made with local seafood, farm-fresh vegetables, and homemade desserts at participating eateries.

Other notable events in

September include:

LUX Beginners Jewellery Making Workshop (Various dates in September, Holywood): Unleash your creativity and learn the art of jewellery making in a fun and relaxing workshop setting.

Comic Con Northern Ireland (September 6th-7th, Eikon Exhibition Centre, Lisburn): A fantastic event for families and fans of pop culture, with a wide range of activities and attractions.

Garden Workshops (Ongoing until September 14th, Hillsborough Castle & Gardens, Royal Hillsborough): Join expert gardeners for hands-on workshops in the idyllic setting of Hillsborough Castle's gardens.

Scarva Band Concerts (Ongoing until September 28th, Scarva Bandstand): Enjoy free outdoor band concerts every Sunday afternoon.

Forest-bathing (September 28th, Killeavy Castle Estate): Deepen your connection with nature through a calming and restorative forest-bathing experience.

Downpatrick Racecourse Fixtures (September 19th, Downpatrick): Another opportunity to enjoy the excitement of live horse racing, followed by live music.

County Down in August and September 2025 promises an abundance of experiences, from captivating cultural festivals to outdoor adventures and culinary delights. Be sure to check individual event listings for specific times, ticketing information, and any updates. Plan your visit to this beautiful part of Northern Ireland and immerse yourself in its vibrant autumnal offerings!

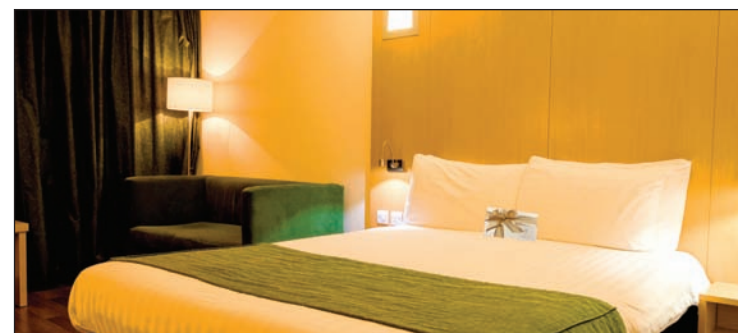
Book a Golden stay at the Station House Hotel

Superbly located in the heart of the thriving town of Letterkenny so you only have to open the doors at the Station House Hotel and you are right where all the action is.

From the endless number of family friendly activities to shopping centres, charming boutiques, the vibrant nightlife scene, relaxing restaurants, the theatre and more, and with easy access to all major routes and natural attractions, Letterkenny has so much to offer over the winter season.

The hotel is built on the grounds of where the old Station House once stood when the Railway system in co. Donegal was in operation from 1901 to the 1940's. It was bought by the Gallagher family in 1953, four years after the last train passed the old building. It became their home up until 2004 at which point it was demolished and developed into a wonderful hotel boasting 81 spacious bedrooms.

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are travelling as a couple, with family members or friends they have a number of room types for you to choose from including family, interconnecting, twin, triple, double, accessible and executive. All of which are vibrant and fresh and a contemporary approach to the décor and designed with your comfort in mind and feature plasma TVs with Chromecast allowing you

to connect your phone or device directly to the screen so you can stream your favourite TV shows and films during your stay and relax, unwind and feel right at home at the Station house Hotel.

The Station House is also home to the Depot Bar and Restaurant, a true "locals local", and one of Letterkenny's best and most popular bars and restaur-

ants. It provides the perfect excuse for a pause and to pamper your palate, offering a wide range of sumptuous dining options. Since opening in 2006 their focus has been to provide good quality food using the finest of fresh seasonal local produce to create dishes that just ooze with flavor.

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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.

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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.

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THE FIERY TRANSFORMATION: WHY AUTUMN LEAVES CHANGE COLOUR

As summer's verdant embrace loosens its grip, a spectacular transformation sweeps across our landscapes.

The lush greens of trees give way to a breathtaking palette of fiery reds, brilliant oranges, sunny yellows, and deep purples. This annual display, a hallmark of autumn, isn't just a pretty show; it's a fascinating natural process driven by biochemistry and the changing seasons.

The Science Behind the Spectacle:

The primary player in the green of summer leaves is chlorophyll, the pigment essential for photosynthesis. Throughout the warmer months, trees are busily converting sunlight into energy, and chlorophyll efficiently absorbs light in the red and blue spectrums, reflecting

green, which is what we see.

However, as days shorten and temperatures drop in autumn, trees begin to prepare for winter dormancy. This preparation involves a gradual shutdown of photosynthesis. With less sunlight and colder conditions, the production of chlorophyll slows down and eventually stops. The existing chlorophyll then starts to break down, revealing other pigments that have been present in the leaves all along, but were previously masked by the dominant green.

These "hidden" pigments are:

- Carotenoids: These

are responsible for the vibrant yellows and oranges. Carotenoids are present in leaves year-round but become visible once the chlorophyll degrades. They are also found in carrots, corn, and bananas.

- Anthocyanins: These pigments produce the striking reds, purples, and even some deep blues. Unlike carotenoids, anthocyanins are not present in the leaves throughout the summer. They are actively produced in the autumn, particularly when there are warm, sunny days followed by cool, crisp nights (but not freezing). Sugars trapped in the leaves by cool temperatures and bright sunlight contribute to their formation. The specific hue of red or purple can depend on the acidity of the leaf's sap.

The combination and concentration of these pigments, along with environmental factors, determine the precise colour we see. Some trees, like maples and oaks, are renowned for their spectacular reds and oranges due to their ability to produce abundant anthocyanins. Others, like birches and aspens, typically showcase brilliant yellows from their carotenoids.

A Last Hurrah Before Winter:

The shedding of leaves in autumn is a vital survival mechanism for deciduous trees. By dropping their leaves, trees reduce water loss during the colder, drier winter months when water can be scarce or frozen. It also helps them shed accumulated waste products. The stunning display of colour is a beautiful, albeit temporary, farewell to the growing season, preparing the tree for a period of rest before the cycle begins anew in spring.



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Shopmobility Newry: Enhancing Independence and Accessibility in the City Centre

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

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

A Helping Hand for Limited Mobility

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

Membership and Usage
Shopmobility Newry operates on a user-friendly membership system. For

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

Convenient Locations and Hours

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

in the Quays Shopping Centre during its regular opening hours.

Contact and Accessibility
Shopmobility Newry is committed to providing accessible and responsive services. For inquiries and assistance, individuals can reach the charity via email at info@shopmobilitynewry.com or by telephone at 028 30256062 or mobile 07719956921.

For weekend or out-of-hours assistance, the number to call is 028 30263627.

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

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

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

Creating your best smile with Implants & Cosmetic Dentistry at Morrison Dental Clinic

Opened last year Morrison Dental is now well known at 95 Saintfield Road, Belfast.

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

Dr Morrison says:

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

Morrison Dental Clinic is primarily a Denplan practice. The practice ethos is that prevention is better than cure, and that seeing the hygienist every six months or more is the best starting point to maintain a healthy dentition for life. As a Denplan practice, the practice plan includes twice yearly check-ups and hygiene

appointments, any x-rays required, and also gives discount off routine treatment. Preventative care, such as routine exams, cleaning, x-rays and oral hygiene instruction can help catch problems early and avoid the need for costly treatment later on.

Significant investment has already been made to ensure that the practice remains at the forefront of technology to improve the patient experience. This includes an intra-oral scanner, which uses 3D photo imaging to scan the mouth, avoiding the need for taking moulds of your teeth. Treatment can then be planned digitally and with greater accuracy than ever, achieve perfectly fitting labwork such as crowns, veneers, bleaching trays etc.

Another addition is a recently-installed CBCT scanner, used when there is a need for more information than what traditional 2D



x-rays can offer, such as 3D visualisation of jaw bone for optimal planning for implant placement.

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

He says:

"I believe that we are at an exciting time in dentistry, with more and more technological advances which can improve what is possible

for our patients. I feel as a dentist in the modern age we must continually learn and improve our practices otherwise we will be left behind!"

The growing team (so far!) consists of five dentists, five nurses, dental hygienist Claire, receptionist Shauna, Yuko (Richard's wife) who does a lot of the work behind the scenes!

Morrison Dental Clinic is conveniently located at 95 Saintfield Road (not far from Forestside), and offers free parking available on site! For your appointment Tel: 028 9070 3215

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PLANNING YOUR PERFECT AUTUMN GETAWAY

As the vibrant greens of summer begin to mellow into a kaleidoscope of fiery reds, rustic oranges, and golden yellows, Northern Ireland transforms into an enchanting autumn wonderland.

With crisp air, fewer crowds, and a magical quality to the light, it's an ideal time to explore its dramatic coastlines, ancient landscapes, and charming cities. If you're dreaming of a cozy and captivating escape, here's how to plan your perfect autumn getaway in Northern Ireland.

Beyond the breathtaking foliage, autumn offers several advantages for visitors:

- **Stunning Scenery:** From the Sperrin Mountains to the Glens of Antrim, the natural landscapes are ablaze with colour, offering incredible photographic opportunities.
- **Fewer Crowds:** Popular attractions, while still accessible, are generally less busy than in the peak summer months, allowing for a more relaxed experience.
- **Cozy Vibes:** Think roaring fires in traditional pubs, hearty local food, and a sense of warmth and welcome that perfectly complements the cooler weather.

• **Harvest Festivals & Events:** Many towns and villages host harvest festivals, food events, and cultural gatherings

throughout the autumn, offering a taste of local life.

Northern Ireland might be compact, but it's packed with diverse regions, each offering unique autumn experience.

The Causeway Coast & Glens: This iconic stretch of coastline is spectacular at any time of year, but autumn adds an extra layer of drama.

- **Giant's Causeway:** Witness the hexagonal basalt columns against a backdrop of autumnal hues and crashing waves.

• **Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge:** The walk to the bridge offers stunning coastal views, made even more vibrant by the changing leaves.

• **Dark Hedges:** Famous from Game of Thrones, these intertwined beech trees are particularly atmospheric in autumn, especially with morning mist or a golden sunset.

• **Glenariff Forest Park:** Known as the "Queen of the Glens," its waterfalls and walking trails are magnificent amidst the autumnal colours.

The Mourne Mountains: For hikers and nature lovers, the Mournes are a must-visit.

- **Walking Trails:** Explore



the numerous trails, from gentle rambles to challenging ascents, all offering panoramic views of the golden landscape and coastline.

• **Tollymore Forest Park:** A truly magical spot with ancient trees, follies, and the Shimna River, all bathed in autumn's glow.

Fermanagh Lakelands: Discover a serene landscape of shimmering loughs and ancient islands.

• **Lough Erne:** Take a boat trip to explore monastic sites like Devenish Island, surrounded by the peaceful autumn scenery.

• **Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark:** While underground, the surrounding landscape of Cuilcagh Mountain is stunning for autumnal walks.

Belfast & Derry/Londonderry: These vibrant cities offer a blend of history, culture, and excellent food.

• **Belfast Botanic Gardens:** A peaceful oasis showcasing beautiful autumnal displays.

• **Ulster Folk & Transport Museum:** Experience traditional rural life and see how autumn harvests were

celebrated in days gone by.

• **Derry/Londonderry City Walls:** Walk the historic walls and admire the city and surrounding Foyle Valley bathed in autumn light.

Autumn in Northern Ireland is a truly magical experience. With careful planning, you can immerse yourself in its stunning natural beauty, rich history, and warm hospitality, creating memories that will last long after the golden leaves have fallen. So pack your bags, embrace the crisp air, and prepare to be enchanted!

Embrace the Autumn Splendour: Tips for Your Next Walk

Autumn is arguably one of the most beautiful seasons for outdoor exploration. Here are some tips to make your autumn walks even more enjoyable:

1. **Time it Right:** The peak of autumn colour varies each year and by region, but generally, late September to mid-November offers the best chances in many temperate climates.

2. **Seek Out Deciduous Woodlands:** While urban parks can offer glimpses of colour, dedicated woodlands and forests will provide the most immersive and spectacular autumnal experience. Look for areas with a variety of tree species for a diverse palette.

3. **Go on a Sunny Day** (with a bit of chill): Bright sunshine will make the colours pop and truly glow. The best days for viewing often follow crisp, cool nights (which help promote anthocyanin production).

4. **Look for Water Features:** Lakes, rivers, and ponds create stunning

reflections of the colourful foliage, doubling the beauty.

5. **Dress in Layers:** Autumn weather can be unpredictable. Layers will allow you to adjust to changing temperatures throughout your walk. Don't forget waterproofs in case of an unexpected shower.

6. **Wear Sturdy, Comfortable Footwear:** Trails can be wet, muddy, or covered in fallen leaves, which can be slippery. Good walking shoes or boots are essential.

7. **Bring a Camera:** You'll want to capture the breathtaking beauty. Experiment with different angles and lighting to get the best shots.

8. **Pack a Flask and Snacks:** A warm drink (tea, coffee, or hot chocolate) and some autumnal treats

(like apples or flapjacks) can enhance your walk, especially on a cooler day.

9. **Engage Your Senses:** Beyond the visual feast, autumn offers a symphony of other sensations. Listen to the satisfying crunch of leaves underfoot, breathe in the earthy scent of damp soil and decaying leaves, and feel the crisp air on your cheeks.

10. **Leave No Trace:** Remember to stick to marked paths, take only photographs, and leave the natural environment as you found it for others to enjoy.

So, as the days shorten and the air grows crisp, pull on your walking boots and head outdoors. The fleeting, vibrant beauty of autumn's foliage is a spectacle not to be missed, a true celebration of nature's artistry before winter's slumber.



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HOW TO FIND A GOOD TRADESPERSON!

The majority of tradespeople are hard-working, reliable and will do a good job, but we've all heard of the cowboy horror stories. Let's help you to avoid the bad eggs with this guide that looks at how to find a good tradesperson in your area.

Request quotes from at least 3 tradespeople

With all home improvement projects, we always recommend obtaining at least three quotes from different tradespeople in your area. You'll want to shop around to make sure you're paying a fair price for the work.

Make sure they have the relevant qualifications

To get the best results, it's important to hire tradespeople who are dedicated to their trade. Look for a tradesperson with relevant qualifications and accreditations, and check if they're part of national trade schemes.

Choose tradespeople with local experience

Hiring a tradesperson with a lot of local experience can be really valuable. They'll have a working knowledge of local planning permission, have access to a local network of suppliers and labour, and will be close at hand should you need them during the course of your project.

Ask for customer references (and contact them)

We do this to make sure a tradesperson's reviews on our website are real, but there's certainly no harm in you following up on customer references.

When you've found a tradesperson (or tradespeople) you think could be right for the job, ask them to provide you with references from previous customers about the quality of the tradesperson's work, what it was like to work with them, and would they hire them again.

Ask these 10 questions...

Before you hire a tradesperson, it's a good idea to meet with them in person to discuss the work you need them to do. That way, you can find out more about their experience and approach to their trade.

If you want to know how to find a tradesperson you can trust, ask potential candidates these questions:

1. How long have you been working in the business?
2. What qualifications and/or accreditations do you have?
3. Have you done many

projects like this before?

4. Can you show me examples of previous projects that you've worked on?

5. Do you have appropriate insurance, and can you provide valid certificates?

6. Could you provide me with references from previous customers for me to contact?

7. Do you offer a customer satisfaction guarantee?

8. How long will it take you to complete the work? And when can you start?

9. How much will it cost, and what are the payment terms?

10. What steps do you take to keep your work on schedule and within budget?

The average cost of a

tradesperson will depend on the trade, the nature of the work, and where they are located (labour costs in London tend to be higher than in the North).

To help you plan a budget, here are some average rates you can expect to pay:

- Plumber costs – £40 - £60 Per hour or around £350 per day
- Carpenter prices– £30 - £45 per hour
- Builder rates – £50 per hour or £400 per day
- Electrician rates – £50 per hour or £400 per day
- Painter and decorator prices– £250- £400 per day

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Cultivating Tomato Perfection: Tips for an Exceptional Harvest

The taste of a homegrown tomato, bursting with sunshine and flavour, is a gardener's reward.

But achieving truly exceptional tomatoes requires more than just planting seeds. 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.

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 CAR MAINTENANCE FOR AUTUMN

As the vibrant greens of summer give way to the golden hues of autumn, the change in seasons brings with it unique challenges for your vehicle.

Cooler temperatures, increased rainfall, and falling leaves can all impact your car's performance and safety. Taking a proactive approach to car maintenance now can save you headaches and costly repairs down the line. Here's a rundown of essential checks to ensure your car is autumn-ready.

Check Your Tyres: Grip and Pressure Are Key

Your tyres are your car's only point of contact with the road, and their condition is paramount for autumn driving.

- **Tread Depth:** Aim for at least 3mm of tread depth for optimal grip in wet conditions. If your tyres are nearing the legal limit (typically 1.6mm in the UK), consider replacing them before the wet weather sets in.
- **Tyre Pressure:** As temperatures drop, so does tyre pressure. Check your tyre pressures regularly (at least once a month) when the tyres are cold, and inflate them to the manufacturer's recommended levels. Correct pressure improves handling, fuel efficiency, and tyre longevity.
- **Punctures and Sidewall Damage:** Inspect your tyres for any bulges, cracks, or embedded objects that could lead to a sudden deflation.
- **Inspect Your Wipers and Washer Fluid:** Clear vision is Non-Negotiable

Autumn often brings more rain and even early morning mist.

- **Wiper Blades:** Worn or cracked wiper blades won't clear your windshield effectively, leading to reduced visibility. Replace them if they leave streaks or chatter across the glass.
- **Washer Fluid:** Top up your washer fluid reservoir with a good quality screen wash that includes an antifreeze agent. This prevents the fluid from freezing in colder temperatures and helps to clear grime and salt from the road.

Test Your Lights: Be Seen and See Clearly

Daylight hours shorten significantly in autumn, making properly functioning lights crucial.

- **All Lights:**



Check all exterior lights – headlights (high and low beam), tail lights, brake lights, indicators, and fog lights – to ensure they are working correctly. Replace any blown bulbs promptly.

- **Headlight Clarity:** Over time, headlight lenses can become cloudy.

Consider a headlight restoration kit if yours are looking dull, as this can significantly improve light output.

Examine Your Brakes: Stopping Power Matters

Wet and leafy roads can significantly increase stopping distances.

Brake Pads and Discs: Listen for

discs.

Check Your Battery: Don't Get Caught Out by the Cold

Cold weather puts extra strain on your car's battery.

- **Battery Age:** If your battery is over three years old, it's worth having it tested.
- **Terminals:** Look for any signs of corrosion on the battery terminals, and ensure they are clean and securely fastened.

Top Up Your Coolant/Antifreeze: Protect Against Freezing

Your coolant system not only keeps your engine from overheating but also prevents the water in the system from freezing in cold temperatures.

- **Level and Strength:** Check your coolant reservoir and ensure the level is between the min and max marks. If you're unsure about the strength of your antifreeze, a mechanic can test it for you.

Clear Out Debris:

Protect Against Clogs and Corrosion

Falling leaves and other organic matter can accumulate in various parts of your car.

- **Wiper Scuttle/Drain Channels:** Clear leaves from the area around your windscreen wipers and the drain channels beneath your bonnet. Blockages here can lead to water ingress into the cabin or affect electrical components.
- **Radiator Grille:** Remove any leaves or debris from your car's front grille, as these can restrict airflow to the radiator and lead to overheating.

By taking the time to perform these essential autumn maintenance checks, you'll not only enhance your driving safety but also extend the life of your vehicle, ensuring a smoother and more reliable journey through the changing season.

If in doubt about any of these checks, consult a professional mechanic.

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Effortlessly electric: the all-new Nissan LEAF is the EV for everyone

Nissan Motor Co, Ltd. Recently launched the all-new LEAF. The third-generation electric vehicle (EV) benefits from over 15 years of real-world insights gained through global sales of nearly 700,000 units.

Beyond appealing to EV intenders, the all-new LEAF provides a compelling alternative for internal combustion engine (ICE) buyers with its substantially increased maximum range, enhanced charging speed and a technology suite that makes daily driving easier and enriches owners lifestyles.

The all-new LEAF is targeted to arrive at retailers across the United States from autumn, with other regions to follow.

The all-new LEAF embodies Nissan's Timeless Japanese Futurism design with a distinctive Japanese aesthetic conveyed in a simple yet powerfully modern way.

A fastback-like silhouette and features such as flush front door handles, aerotuned wheels and a flat underbody combine to ensure the all-new LEAF not only looks bold and sleek, but also offers a 0.26 drag coefficient for U.S. and Japan models, and an even more impressive 0.25 for European variants.2

The interior is spacious with an almost entirely flat floor courtesy of Nissan's CMF-EV platform and the wide horizontal instrument panel appears to be floating.

A Nissan-first Dimming Panoramic Roof featuring heat shielding with embedded Polymer Dispersed Liquid Crystal (PDLC) technology allows owners to enjoy natural light and year-round comfort at the touch of a button.

The all-new LEAF delivers a responsive, ultra-smooth drive. The all-new, 3-in-1 EV powertrain with an integrated motor, inverter and reducer is 10% smaller than its predecessor and features Nissan's unique motor control, which enhances refinement.

The new motor, paired with a new, high-rigidity motor-mount bracket, supports a 75-percent reduction in motor vibration compared to the outgoing model.

For select regions, newly available Intelligent Distance Control Assist helps intuitively maintain a set distance from the vehicle in front while driving in city traffic and also optimizes regenerative braking.

An available Intelligent Route Planner also enhances EV ownership by providing real-time route information, state of charge and identification of convenient charging stations.

Specifically for Europe, the all-new LEAF is Vehicle-to-Grid (V2G) compatible, such that in the future it will be able to send stored energy back to the power grid. This function will help customers reduce energy costs while supporting a more stable and sustainable energy system.

The all-new, third generation Nissan LEAF will be assembled at the Tochigi Plant in Japan, as well as at Nissan's state-of-the-art production facility in Sunderland, northeast England.

Further details including pricing will be provided closer to the start of sales in each respective market.

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KIA EV3 NAMED AUTOTRADER’S CAR OF THE YEAR FOR 2025

The Kia EV3 has collected two major award wins at the Autotrader Drivers’ Choice Awards 2025: ‘Best Mainstream Electric Car’ and overall ‘Car of the Year’.

The awards, formerly known as the Autotrader New Car Awards, feature 25 categories. Finalists and overall winners are determined by the real-world opinions of more than 225,000 UK car owners, who completed an online survey sharing exactly what they think of their car. Every vehicle is rated across 16 different criteria, from reliability and performance to appearance and running costs. Owners were also asked about their overall satisfaction with their car and how likely they would be to recommend it to others.

The EV3 impressed UK customers for offering great value and a complete, refined package, with owners naming the model both the EV that represents the best of the best in terms of ‘mainstream’ vehicles, and the best car overall of 2025.

The Kia EV3 is priced from £33,005 and offers up to 375 miles on a single charge* on



the WLTP ‘combined’ cycle, a range of three competitively equipped trim levels, and space for five occupants.

Erin Baker, Autotrader’s Editorial Director, said: “It may be Kia’s most affordable current EV on sale, but the EV3 still manages to pack a premium punch. It scored top marks for the quality of its features which, combined with eye-catching looks and a great driving experience, has made the EV3 a massive hit with its

owners. One told us: ‘This was my first ever electric car, and it really stood out among all the other EVs, particularly within my price bracket. It’s quirky, futuristic, packed full of brilliant features, and it’s really easy to drive.’

Plus, I can get the whole family in it with room to spare. We absolutely love it.’ Congratulations Kia on a very well-deserved win.”

Kia is no stranger to success at the Autotrader Drivers’ Choice Awards. Last

year, the Kia EV6 was named ‘Best Car for Families’ and ‘Best Car for Dog Owners’, whilst in 2023 the Soul EV collected ‘Best Value Electric Car’, and EV6 was named ‘New Car of the Year’.

The EV3 is soon to be joined by the EV4 and EV5. Both models will embark on a nationwide tour of ‘Kia Electric Experience’ events across the Kia UK dealer network, starting 8 July, and showcasing the latest of Kia’s electric offerings to customers.

Polestar innovates audio experience

Polestar is delivering a brand-new audio experience to Polestar 3 customers in its latest over-the-air (OTA) software update.

Abbey Road Studios Mode, available exclusively for the Bowers & Wilkins audio system, offers a listening experience inspired by the iconic London recording studio while on the move in the Swedish brand’s flagship SUV.

Abbey Road Studios Mode provides four entirely new sound presets, as well as an additional Producer mode, to users of the Bowers & Wilkins audio system in Polestar 3. Each preset draws on the sound of the control rooms and live spaces whilst taking inspiration from the studios’ original EMI-era equipment, used in the recording, mixing and mastering process on countless era-defining recordings. All have been curated and designed by the studios’ expert engineers, many of whom have worked with some of the biggest artists in the world. Producer mode allows for even greater personalisation, enabling users to tailor the sound to their personal preference.

The four presets in Abbey Road Studios Mode include Intimate, Open, Energised and Expansive, providing Polestar 3 with a distinct audio experience inspired by the studio’s spaces and equipment. Each preset is complimented by a bespoke image from the studio, displayed in high definition on



the sophisticated 14.5-inch touch screen inside the Polestar 3, showing some of the most iconic instruments and equipment from the Abbey Road collection.

Intimate: The Intimate preset evokes the intimacy of sitting in the producer’s chair in the studio control room, bringing the listener closer to the performance. Offering a warm, pristine and detailed experience, inspired by vintage sounds, the mode creates an intimate atmosphere, allowing the listener to immerse themselves in the music with an unparalleled sense of closeness and authenticity.

Open: The Open preset creates an immersive experience inspired by the studio environment where the music is performed. Allowing the listener to hear the music as if alongside the artists, with the rich, authentic sound of the live studio space.

Energised: The Energised preset combines vivid detail with vintage warmth, inspired by the energy and excitement of a performance in the studio’s live room. Offering a lively, vibrant acoustic with pristine detail, the sound is broad, energetic, and engaging.

Expansive: The Expansive preset immerses the listener in the ambience of the live room, enhancing the depth, dimension, and dynamic punch of the performance. Inspired by the energy and envelopment of a live experience, Expansive mode captures the vitality of the recording, with a powerful sound that brings the listener closer to the music.

Producer: Producer mode allows drivers to shape the sound of the Polestar 3, tailoring it to their personal taste, no matter the genre or individual track chosen. Using simple controls, inspired

by the sonic DNA of Abbey Road’s rooms and equipment, users can alter the tonality and ambience of the sound in real time, crafting their own bespoke listening experience in the cabin.

The optional Bowers & Wilkins audio system in the Polestar 3 features 25 strategically placed speakers, including the proprietary Continuum™ cone and is complete with a 1,610 watt power output, 3D surround sound, Dolby Atmos capability, and active road noise cancellation – making the luxurious interior of the flagship SUV the perfect place to experience music on the move.

Only available for Polestar 3 vehicles fitted with the Bowers & Wilkins audio system, the Abbey Road Studios Mode is part of a wider OTA software update that will include Stolen Vehicle Tracking and Smart Schedule for charging.



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NEW RACING SIMULATORS

**SEE PAGE 8 TO
ENTER OUR
COMPETITION!**



**PRIVATE, PERSONAL &
CORPORATE EVENTS AVAILABLE!**

BIRTHDAY PARTIES Host and plan your next birthday celebration with Game Locker!
CORPORATE AND PRIVATE EVENTS A virtual pistol in your hands with kickback and rumble
FAMILY TIME Spend quality time with your loved ones through some competitive gaming.
PLAYING WITH FRIENDS - Gather your gaming crew and create lasting memories!

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