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Tonagh Neighbourhood Partnership has developed a community garden of reflection.

## TONAGH COMMUNITY GARDEN OF REFLECTION

Translink is delighted to have been able to support the Tonagh Neighbourhood Partnership in Lisburn in developing a community garden of reflection as part of plans to leave a lasting, positive legacy associated with Translink's recently concluded major project, Lisburn Area Renewals (LAR).

Located close to the project works, the garden will provide an oasis of calm in a busy urban setting and will be of benefit to the whole community in the Tonagh area. The project has also benefitted from the co-operation and support of the Housing Executive.

Brendan Sloan, Translink Programme Manager, said: "We have been proud to support Tonagh Neighbourhood Partnership in the development of

their community garden of reflection, and it has been great to see it completed and in use as a vital asset for the community. "Although it is now completed, the Lisburn Area Renewals project has been a major scheme to ensure that high safety standards and operational performance are maintained on our railway network. As part of the project, we have been proactively engaging with the wider

community in Lisburn to explain the importance of these essential works and have very much welcomed support from local people, organisations, and representatives across the community."

Des Marley, the Housing Executive's Area Manager for Lisburn and Castlereagh said: "Tonagh Neighbourhood Partnership have transformed this area into a beautiful space for

the whole community to enjoy.

"We were happy to help facilitate this great project by allowing the use of Housing Executive land and by working closely with Translink to provide funding for the garden.

Translink is grateful to the community in Lisburn for their patience and support while this vital work to upgrade and enhance the railway has been undertaken.

## Step up for Air Ambulance this January

Local charity Air Ambulance NI is giving everyone a great reason to get active this January by challenging the public to 'Step Up for Air Ambulance' and commit to 10,000 steps a day throughout the month.

Kerry Anderson, Head of Fundraising at Air Ambulance NI said, "New Year is always a good time to get active after overindulgences at Christmas, and not only will you be helping your own health, you will also make a difference to local patients who need Air Ambulance, helping to save lives."

Each participant will receive a branded Air Ambulance NI t-shirt and is asked to raise £50 to be entered into a draw to win £100 shopping vouchers.

Participants should register their participation here <https://airambulancenl.org/stepupforairambulance/> and set up a JustGiving fundraising page [www.justgiving.com/campaign/stepupforairambulance](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/stepupforairambulance)

Once the challenge is

completed, participants have the chance of visiting the airbase in Lisburn for a cheque presentation and to see the helicopter they have helped keep in the air.

Air Ambulance NI is needed on average twice a day; people's lives can be turned upside down in an instant due to unexpected trauma or a serious medical emergency, and the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service doctor and paramedic are airborne in minutes. Once by the side of the patient the team can perform interventions that can be the difference between life and death.

Find out more by visiting [www.airambulancenl.org](http://www.airambulancenl.org) alternatively you can contact the charity directly by emailing [info@airambulancenl.org](mailto:info@airambulancenl.org) or calling 028 9262 2677.

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# Blast Off with Go Succeed

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council has launched a new 'Blast Off' programme, delivered as part of Go Succeed NI, in post-primary schools across Lisburn and Castlereagh.

The first part of the programme, provided by Young Enterprise NI, took place in Dundonald High School.

'Blast Off' will be delivered in several post-primary schools across Lisburn and Castlereagh over the next few months. It will see over 300 young people take part in a programme. It aims to give young people an enterprise and entrepreneurship experience while enhancing their employability skills. The council wants to help them succeed in the world of work while supporting the development of business acumen, teamwork and presentation skills.

Students will have the opportunity to develop a business idea, culminating in an exciting event where the young people will pitch their business to an expert panel of judges, giving them a 'Dragons' Den' style experience.

Speaking at the launch of the programme in Dundonald High School, Alderman Amanda



Grehan, Chair of the council's Regeneration & Growth Committee, said: "Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is excited to bring the Young Enterprise NI Blast Off programme into post-primary schools across the city. As a council we know that entrepreneurs are built and not made so want to help the next generation build their skills, attitudes and behaviours. The 'Blast Off' programme brings fun, creativity, innovation and

competition and will inspire and support future entrepreneurs and businesses."

Carol Fitzsimons, MBE, Chief Executive of YENI added: "Through the Blast Off programme, we are giving young students the opportunity to develop crucial skills for their futures. Working in partnership with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council means that local young people will get the support, training, and opportunities they

deserve to help them thrive in the business world and beyond. Pupils get to learn about the range of support that is available through Go Succeed and are inspired by local business leaders who have received support from the service. We are thankful to Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council for their support in bringing this to local post-primary school pupils."

To learn more about Go Succeed see <https://go-succeed.com/>



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# YOUNG ANTRIM ATHLETES OFF TO A FLYING START IN FLAHAVAN'S LEAGUE

Young athletes from across County Antrim have competed at the first round of the Flahavan's Athletics NI Primary School Cross Country League, which took place at Antrim Forum.

Competing in the individual races, Charlie McCann from Moneynick Primary School, Antrim took home the top spot in the first boys' race, followed by John Gilbert from Wallace Prep Primary School, Lisburn in second place, and Joel Leeburn from Meadow Bridge Primary School, Hillsborough in third.

In the second boys' race of the day, Stranmillis Primary School pupils Eimhin Bourke and Hugo Lowry came in first and second place respectively, followed by Harry Davidson in third.

Gaining first place in the first girls' race

was Kiyomi Tosh from Templepatrick Primary School, Ballyclare, followed by Victoria Prep Primary School pupils from Belfast, Olivia Johnston and Esme Falls in second and third place respectively.

Sarah Jackson from St Bride's Primary School, Belfast, came in first place in the penultimate girls' race of the Round, with Nell Whitehead from Knockbreda Primary School, Belfast in second place and Sophia Doris from Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, Belfast, placing in third.

Teams of six entered the girls' and boys' races and collected

points for their school to compete in the second round, with the hopes of qualifying for the final which is set to take place on 28TH of Feb 2025 at Mallusk Playing fields.

The top three boys' teams were Stranmillis Primary School, Belfast, St Bride's Primary School, Belfast and Antrim Primary School, whilst the top three girls' schools were St Bride's Primary School, Moneynick Primary School, Antrim and Victoria Prep Primary School, Belfast.

The 2024-2025 league was launched once again this year at Portstewart Strand by Athletics NI and Flahavan's and will

also be supported by popular Antrim athlete Callum Baird, who is the current NI and Ulster 100m champion and U23 Irish Indoor 200m Champion. Callum will provide inspiration and motivation to the young athletes taking part this year, passing on his expert knowledge and training tips and reflecting on his own career to date. Following the final, Callum will also visit the winning schools to meet the young athletes.

With the second round due to take place in December, schools will compete in two out of the three rounds to qualify for the final which is due to take



L-R Hugo Lowry in 2nd place and Eimhin Bourke in 1st place, both from Stranmillis Primary School in the second boys race of Round 1 in Co Antrim

place in February. The top 20 boys and top 20 girls at will be invited to join the Flahavan's Athletics Northern Ireland Junior

Endurance Squad, which will further develop their athletic careers by providing training sessions over the next 12 months.

For further information on the league, please contact Athletics NI at info@athleticsni.org or 028 9060 2707.

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## Programme to celebrate VE-Day 80 with the opening of a community grant fund

We've officially unveiled an exciting programme of events to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day.

This landmark occasion celebrates 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe, when

Britain and its Allies formally accepted Germany's unconditional surrender, bringing peace to the continent.

A wide range of council-led events will mark this significant anniversary, ensuring that all generations can reflect on this pivotal moment in history while celebrating the peace and freedoms secured in 1945. Highlights include:

A small grants fund to support community-led VE-Day 80 initiatives with a maximum of £700 available for each group.

A commemorative service of thanksgiving

to honour those who served and sacrificed during the war.

A period themed tea dance in Market Square.

Exhibitions and talks at the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum showcasing local wartime stories and memorabilia.

A beating retreat by the renowned Band of the Royal Irish Regiment, followed by the lighting of a beacon in Castle Gardens.

Councillor Kurtis Dickson, Mayor of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council, shared his enthusiasm for the programme, stating: "VE-Day 80 is an opportunity to reflect



on the sacrifices made by those who secured our freedom while celebrating the resilience and hope of the communities who

rebuilt their lives after the war. I encourage everyone to join us in commemorating this special anniversary."

Alderman Hazel Legge, Chair of LCCC's VE-Day Working Group, added: "The programme of events for VE-Day 80 offers something for everyone. From educational activities to celebratory street parties, we aim to bring together people of all ages to honour the significance of this milestone. VE-Day 80 is not only about remembrance but also about unity and celebration."

Councillor Jonathan Craig, Chair of the council's Communities and Wellbeing Committee, commented: "We

are delighted to launch the VE-Day 80 community grant fund, providing up to £700 to support local groups in marking this historic milestone. This funding empowers our communities to host their own commemorative events, ensuring the legacy of those who served is celebrated and shared for generations to come."

Councillor Nicholas Trimble, Chair of the council's Corporate Services Committee, noted: "VE-Day 80 marks a momentous occasion in our shared history. We are proud to support initiatives that not only honour our past but also celebrate the partnerships that have shaped our community since 1945."

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# Unlocking the potential of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor

Four Northern Ireland councils, four Irish councils and two universities came together recently in Hillsborough Castle for the quarterly meeting of the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor (DBEC) Partnership.

Opening the meeting, Co-Chair of the DBEC Panel, Newry, Mourne and Down Councillor Pete Byrne said: "Along the one hundred mile corridor between Belfast and Dublin, there are endless opportunities to be explored. Active collaboration between the local government and university sectors is key to driving regional growth, shaping the best possible environment for businesses and for people to live, grow and thrive."



"We remain focused on our collective vision to become a leading economic corridor in Europe, achieving sustainable growth through research and development, a highly skilled workforce and enabling infrastructure."

"We have already established excellent cross border relationships and we will continue to champion collaboration and growth as we look forward to our Summit event in February 2025."

Addressing the panel, David Burns, Chief

Executive of Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council outlined the significance of meeting at Hillsborough Castle:

"I am delighted to host our meeting today in Hillsborough Castle, in the heart of Royal Hillsborough, the only village in Northern Ireland with Royal status. This is a fitting location and a great example of the opportunities that exist along the Dublin Belfast Economic Corridor as a key tourism destination and fantastic place to do

business.

"Lisburn and Castlereagh has so much to offer for anyone seeking to invest. We are one of Northern Ireland's fastest growing regions with a strong manufacturing, engineering and agrifood presence. Major local businesses such as Coca Cola HBC say that access to our talented workforce is a key factor in their success. They also talk about the supply chain here, facilitating agile importing and exporting arrangements."

"We are well connected by major roads, regular bus and rail services, and nearby airports. Our strong digital infrastructure also keeps businesses connected to their staff and customers around the world. LCCC is a committed partner in the DBEC initiative and we look forward to unlocking the potential for our businesses in Lisburn and Castlereagh and along the corridor to grow in local and international markets. Lisburn and Castlereagh is open for business."

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- ★ Best Social Enterprise Business Award
- ★ Best Eating Establishment Award
- ★ Innovation Award
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- ★ Excellence in Contribution to the Community Award

The awards are free to enter and applications need to be submitted online by **Friday 21 February 2025**.

[www.lcccbusinessawards.com](http://www.lcccbusinessawards.com)

The glittering black tie awards ceremony will take place on Friday 28 March 2025 at La Mon Hotel & Country Club.

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# HISTORY OF COUNTY ANTRIM HIGH SHERIFF REVEALED

The history of the Co. Antrim High Sheriff is being revealed in a brand-new exhibition which has opened at the Lisburn Museum.

The exhibition includes a range of materials compiled by the current post holder Mrs Patricia Perry which helps explain the history as well as the modern-day responsibilities of the role.

The office of High Sheriff is an ancient one that dates back nearly 1,000 years, making it the oldest secular office in the United Kingdom. Each county or city borough appoints a High Sheriff as the monarch's judicial representative. The role has changed considerably over the years and is now an honorary appointment.

The exhibition explores the history and role of the High Sheriff of County Antrim. It also considers how the ancient office has evolved over the centuries

and what its modern-day responsibilities include. The artefacts on display include the old ceremonial uniform of the High Sheriff, last worn by Sir William Moore in 1964.

The Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum is the final host of this travelling exhibition which runs to 31 January 2025.

Mayor, Cllr Kurtis Dickson, said: 'This wonderful travelling exhibition, compiled by the current High Sheriff, Mrs Patricia Perry, explores the fascinating history of the office she currently holds. The High Sheriff presided over the Grand Jury, a form of local government that predated the establishment of our local council system. As elected representatives, it



is important to recognise the contribution and historic links between the High Sheriff and the modern, democratic system of local government.'

Cllr Jonathan Craig, Chairman of LCCC's Leisure & Community Wellbeing Committee,

said: 'One of the High Sheriff's most important jobs is the proclamation of the new monarch. We saw this in 2022 with the sad passing of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. It was the High Sheriff of County Antrim who proclaimed at Antrim Castle Gardens

the accession of our new monarch, King Charles III. I would like to express my Committee's thanks to the High Sheriff for the generous loans to the museum which made this exhibition possible.'

The exhibition is open Monday to Saturday, 9:30am - 5pm.

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## Vaughan Trust supporting CAFRE students

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) at Enniskillen Campus delivers part-time Agriculture and full-time and part-time Equine courses.

Emma Brow from Hillsborough received the Vaughan Trust Award in recognition of being the top final year student on the City and Guilds Level 3 Advanced Technical Extended Diploma in



Emma was presented with her award from John Egerton on behalf of the Vaughan Trust and was congratulated by Marita O'Loughlin (Lecturer, CAFRE).

Equine Management course. With a strong history of providing training to foster agricultural development, the college maintains close connections with the Vaughan Trust.

The Vaughan Trust is governed by a board of Trustees who are empowered to support local agriculture in Fermanagh, at their discretion. The Vaughan Trust made its first award to then Enniskillen College students in 1975. That year three top students and a staff member received assistance to visit a country within the then European Economic Community.

To the present day, the Vaughan Trust continues to support students at Enniskillen Campus, providing awards to top students across a range of courses. The continued support from the Vaughan Trust is of immense benefit to CAFRE students, helping to ensure that their hard work is recognised and rewarded. And it all started 260 years ago with the philanthropy and legacy of George Vaughan, to whom we are very grateful.

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# Game, Sett & Match

JV Allister writes about the perils for badgers in Winter

It's been a while since I saw a badger, at least a live one, and thankfully winter is the season when they are less likely to travel far and become roadkill, although it will not be long until mating season, a time for travel and fatal jeopardy.

Badgers are social animals, living in mixed sex 'clans' of between four and eight individuals in their home, known as a sett, which is usually dug under a large tree, with a series of tunnels leading to sleeping chambers, and often with many entrances and exits. They are very particular about bedding, regularly kicking out and replacing leaves, which helps reduce the build-up of parasites.

They are also particular about where they deposit faeces, being the only animals other than humans to dig latrines, often located on the edge of

their territory, although possibly more to do with scent-marking territory, clan and mating status rather than hygiene.

Unlike some mammals, they don't hibernate in winter, but become less active, entering what's called a torpid condition when they sleep a lot, even lowering their body temperature to conserve energy.

But winter is also when their cubs are born, placing responsibilities on the females (known as sows; males are boars) to feed and protect their young. You see, while badgers mate at almost any time of the year, but particularly in spring and early summer, because of an unusual reproductive technique known as delayed implantation, they have only one litter a year, born in the worst of winter weather in January or February, but safe and



warm underground. The cubs will not appear above ground until April or May by which time their parents and clan relations will be out foraging, possibly mating, and continuing the cycle of annual badger life.

As with most wildlife in Northern Ireland, badgers are vulnerable, mainly because of developments which damage or obliterate their territories, including new

roads which cross ancient badger tracks; as many as 50,000 are killed on roads each year in the UK, more than any other native animal.

And sadly, there are still antisocial criminals in our society who regard so-called badger baiting by dogs as 'sport'.

But hopefully at this time of the year the adults and cubs will be mostly safe in their warm beds, gently snoring. JVA.

# LISBURN CASTLEREAGH JUNIOR LEAGUE FINAL OFFICIATED BY SPECIAL GUEST IFA REFEREE

Lisburn Castlereagh City Council CEO and IFA Assistant Referee, David Burns took to the pitch at Ballymacash Sports Academy recently to officiate the u17 Boys Shield Final between Glendowen FC and Camlough Rovers. Camlough Rovers took the shield following a fierce battle ending with a 3-0 victory.

Commending the players and the League after the game, David said;

"This has been a fantastic night of football. Both teams played exceptionally well and in such a good-spirited manner. I am also impressed with the professionalism of the club officials.

It was an honour to be able to play a part and to connect with the community which is one of the most important parts of my job. I want to congratulate you all on a great game and such a well-run league. I wish you all the best for the future. It has been a privilege to work with you."

Lisburn Castlereagh Junior League Chairman Chris Budd added;

"I would like to thank David Burns for officiating at our u17 Cup Shield Final. David shares our passion and commitment to supporting young people to develop a love of sports and fitness, recognising the benefits this brings on and off the pitch. Our Junior League now reached over 6,500 young people and we want to continue to grow.

We are so proud of all our young players and are ever grateful for the endless support of parents, coaches, and the many other staff and individuals who support us as well

as our sponsors, Briggs Equipment, and of course Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council.

We were delighted that LCCC Chief Executive could officiate for us and in line with our commitment to improving health and wellbeing, Lisburn Castlereagh Junior League will make a £250 donation to the Mayor's Charity, Emerge Counselling services in support of the fantastic work they do with local people in crisis."

David Burns also praised the facilities at Ballymacash Sports Academy;

"Providing opportunities and facilities to help young

people develop a healthy mindset towards sports and fitness contributes greatly to their future success and improves health and wellbeing within our communities.

The facilities at Ballymacash Sports Academy are top class. This is an exciting example of what a community can achieve when they are empowered and provided with the right support. As the first recipients of the Council's Community Investment Fund in 2021, a vibrant community hub now exists beyond the football field and is one that I hope can be replicated elsewhere in the Council area."

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## Unlock the Secrets to a Pain-Free Back

By Gavin Noble, Gav Noble Physiotherapy

In the hustle and bustle of our modern lives, back pain has regrettably transformed from an occasional grievance to a ubiquitous companion. The National Health Service reports a staggering number of individuals consulting for back-related woes each year. However, amidst the plethora of medical jargon and an array of purported solutions, many are left wondering - where does one truly begin?

Herein lies the essence of my endeavour: an eBook titled '7 Easy Ways to Ease Back Pain'. And in a world where

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'free' often comes with caveats, let me be clear: this guide is 100% FREE. Yes, that's right. No catches, no gimmicks. Just straightforward, tried-and-tested advice.

Drawing from my extensive experience in physiotherapy, this eBook distils years of research and hands-on practice into seven simple, actionable tips. These aren't just fleeting remedies, but sustainable practices designed to be seamlessly incorporated into your daily life. From the executive swivelling in their office chair to the gardener bent over the roses, relief is on the horizon.

So, why free? It's simple. Every individual deserves access to knowledge that empowers them to lead a healthier, pain-free life. This eBook is my gesture towards that very goal.

Join me in turning the page on back pain. Download your free copy today, at <https://www.gavnoble.com/back-pain/> and embark on a journey towards a more agile, comfortable, and happier you.

You can also subscribe to our youtube channel 'the 10X physio channel' where you will find even more top tips and exercises.

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## NEW YEAR SLIMMING WORLD START GAVE NATASHA CHANCE FOR REAL CHANGE

**Natasha has lost over 8 stone and is feeling good! Here she explains how her local (Trinity) Slimming World Group became the secret to her success.**

In Northern Ireland 65% of adults are either living with being overweight or obesity. Males (43%) had a greater tendency to be living with overweight than females (33%) and around a quarter of children aged 2 - 15 are either living with overweight or obesity.

Natasha says:  
"In January 2023 I walked through the doors of a Slimming World group. I felt nervous, was lacking in confidence and not sure if it was going to work for me because of the amount of times I had previously tried to lose weight but couldn't stick to anything."

My Consultant Christine and the fellow members welcomed me with such an understanding of the journey I was about to begin.

That very night I just got up off the sofa and went to the group. I didn't plan it. I just had enough with how I felt inside and out. At a size 22/24 and not being able to shop in most local stores for clothes, not hav-

ing the confidence to go out with friends and being concerned about what the excess weight was doing to my health - it was time for change.

After Christine had explained Slimming Worlds Food Optimising and activity programmes I was filled with hope, excitement and an eagerness to get started. I stood on the scales and was horrified to see my weight was 20 stone 4.5lbs. I knew in a split second that I wasn't going to see that number again. Christine reassured me of this too.

My first month was the most challenging. The changes I made were significant but a swapping strategy from the foods I was eating before and not over snacking or having too many takeaways. By the end of the first month I had lost 1 stone 7 lbs. Not once was I hungry or restricted from eating food and I had so much more energy and could already feel and see the benefits of my food choices.

In December 2023 I received my 6 stone award and was so happy to be so much lighter in less than a year!

In March 2024 I joined a gym. I didn't have a clue what I was doing so signed up for a number of classes which were so helpful and a great way to meet people. I also trained with a personal trainer for 6 months because I really started to enjoy the gym and wanted to learn more about building muscle while losing fat.

Before I joined Slimming my activity was little to none whereas now I'm at the gym for 3 sessions per week and walking on my treadmill at home for a few minutes throughout the day.

The Slimming World food optimising plan is great. There is so much variety, it makes me feel so much fuller and gives me way more energy than my previous food choices. I can still have chocolate and takeaway food. Previously my breakfast would have been



**Natasha before and after her Slimming World Journey.**

toast with butter or nothing. Now it's fruit, yogurt and granola or a wrap or sandwich. In the past for lunch I often would have bought a shop sandwich and a chocolate bar. Now lunch is an egg wrap with chicken and salad or leftovers from the previous nights dinner. Dinners used to be processed foods, frozen pizza/takeaway pizza with snacks of more chocolate, sweets, crisps and more toast with butter. Now I'm cooking a healthy chicken curry, a pasta bolognese, or making my own Slimming World friendly pizza. Snacks now are fruit, yogurt, freddos chocolate bars, ice

lollies.  
I have spent most of my life being overweight and never did I think when I joined than in less than 2 years I would have lost over 8 stone eating the way I am and exercising. People I haven't seen in a couple of years don't recognise me and I have had some strange conversations explaining to old friends that it's actually me.  
Attending my Slimming World group at Trinity each week is what got me there. I could never have done this on my own. The accountability of the weekly group is important to me and with

the encouragement of my Consultant and like minded fellow members I was able to stay committed each week. I still find myself having urges to binge eat and even if I do overindulge I

will face the scales and get straight back onto the plan. I recently started helping out in our groups social team which has been great to keep me motivated and meeting all the members.

I am very close to my chosen target weight and am feeling so good about myself and what I have achieved.  
For more information on Christine's Slimming World Groups Tel: 079 8174 5742




# SOLA

**Sexual Offences Legal Advisers offer free, confidential legal advice and support to victims of serious sexual crime.**

**Contact [sola@victimsupportni.org.uk](mailto:sola@victimsupportni.org.uk) or visit [www.victimsupportni.com/sola](http://www.victimsupportni.com/sola)**



**"Giving children the best possible start in life"**

Bryson PATHWAYS

**Lisburn Sure Start aims to deliver the 'best start in life' for every child living within the Old Warren, Tonagh, Hillhall 1, Hilden 1 and Hilden 2 catchment areas offering a free programme of services for all families with a child aged 0 - 3 years, as well as for expectant mums and dads, who live in the above areas.**

**Services can be offered in your own home or a local venue.**

**Your postcode can be checked for eligibility using the postcode checker at: [www.lisburnsurestart.org](http://www.lisburnsurestart.org)**

**Support is offered via programmes and one to one support through four key areas:**

- 1. CHILD HEALTH WORK:** Focus on antenatal, postnatal and breastfeeding support via telephone calls, home visits, programmes,
- 2. FAMILY SUPPORT:** Provide support to parents and children aged 0 - 3 years via home visits, telephone calls and programmes.
- 3. EARLY YEARS:** Provide support for children through good quality play and interactive learning.
- 4. SPEECH AND LANGUAGE:** Provide support via tailor made programmes of activity, home visits and telephone support.

**For more information and a calendar of events see [www.lisburnsurestart.org](http://www.lisburnsurestart.org)**

**Lisburn Sure Start Administration: Tel: 028 92 66 6987 or email: [lisburnreception@brysonsurestart.org](mailto:lisburnreception@brysonsurestart.org) website: [www.lisburnsurestart.org](http://www.lisburnsurestart.org)**



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# Entries Open for Lisburn & Castlereagh City Business Awards 2025 in association with GMcG Chartered Accountants

Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council is proud to announce the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Business Awards 2025, in partnership with GMcG Chartered Accountants, are officially open for entries before Friday 21 February 2025.

Businesses and entrepreneurs within the Lisburn and Castlereagh area are encouraged to apply for these prestigious awards that have 14 categories

They celebrate the vibrant and diverse business landscape of the region, recognising excellence across various sectors including manufacturing, retail, hospitality, technology, and more. The winners will be unveiled at a distinguished black-tie ceremony on Friday 28 March 2025, at La Mon Hotel & Country Club.

Alderman Amanda Grehan, Chair of the Regeneration and Growth Committee, emphasised the importance of the event: "It is important for us to recognise

the outstanding contributions of our local businesses. Their hard work to deliver quality products and services is crucial to drive our economy forward.

"These awards aim to shine a spotlight on the exceptional achievements of companies across Lisburn and Castlereagh, which is known for its diverse array of talents and industries. We have announced a new award category for 2025 that recognises inclusion and equality in the workplace. We look forward to businesses who have made an advancement in their policies and practices within the workplace to promote inclusion and reduce inequalities."

"Our awards are always a tremendous



success and attract entries from businesses of all sizes. We expect a similar level of enthusiasm this year, and I urge businesses not to miss this opportunity to gain recognition and celebrate their successes. Submit your entries and join us in showcasing the

best that Lisburn and Castlereagh has to offer."

For more information or to submit an entry for the LCCC Business Awards 2025, please visit [www.lcccbusinessawards.com](http://www.lcccbusinessawards.com). Remember, the deadline for entries is 12 noon on Friday 21 February.

## Start off the new year with a spring clean of your family finances!

Start as you mean to go on with your first new year's resolution – find out what financial support your family may be entitled to.

### Employers For Childcare



We know that Christmas will have been an expensive time for parents, with presents to buy and celebrations to plan, and this can make January feel very long until the next pay day.

Financial support with childcare costs

Now is the time to check the support you are getting towards registered childcare costs, which could be through Tax Credits, Universal Credit, Childcare Vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare. Due to changes in the way some benefits are now calculated, and for those claiming Tax-Free Childcare the introduction of the NI Childcare Subsidy Scheme, the support that was best for you last year may no longer be your best option this year. Added to this, if you've had any change in your household circumstances it is im-

portant that you make sure you are receiving the best and most appropriate form of support for your family.

Extra childcare support when starting work

If you are in receipt of benefits, such as Universal Credit, and are considering moving into employment or increasing your working hours, and feel that the costs of registered childcare are a barrier to doing so, then you may be entitled to additional support. Talk to your work coach about the Advisor Discretion Fund as you may be entitled to receive a non-repayable grant to pay up to £1,500 of your first month's upfront childcare costs.

Childcare Vouchers

If you are a member of the Childcare Voucher scheme have you made sure to make at least one payment from your salary into your

account within the last 52 weeks? If you've paused your Childcare Voucher payments or been unable to sacrifice into your account, but have plans to use registered childcare again in the near future, have you looked into backdating your payments to make the most of your annual allowance?

We are here to answer your questions

Simply give Employers For Childcare's Family Ben-

efits Advice Service a call on 028 9267 8200 and our advisors will be able to calculate exactly what support you may be entitled to in 2025. We provide advice and guidance on a wide range of support including help towards registered childcare costs.

So ahead of the long wait until January's pay day, give our team a call. We will be delighted to hear from you, and to help you get 2025 off to a good start!

## Affidea NI: Leading the Way in Independent Healthcare

Affidea NI is a prominent provider of high-quality healthcare services across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. With a focus on patient-centred care and cutting-edge technology, Affidea NI offers a range of services at its three state-of-the-art clinics:

Hillsborough Private Clinic: Located in the picturesque village of Hillsborough, Co Down, this clinic provides a comprehensive range of services, including ophthalmology (cataracts), gastric-intestinal investigations, general surgery, hepatology, antenatal and Gynaecology care, podiatric surgery, urology, neurology, respiratory medicine, rheumatology, cardiology, ultrasounds, weight loss (gastric balloons), plastic surgery, orthopaedics, and paediatric medicine.

Orthoderm Private Medical Clinic: Also situated in

Hillsborough, this clinic specializes in orthopaedics, dermatology, general surgery, rheumatology, pain management, women's health and gynecology, GP services, urology, sports medicine, plastics and dietetics.

Affidea Belfast: This dedicated MRI clinic on the Malone Road in Belfast offers same-day MRI scans with 48-hour turnaround reports. Services include cardiac, brain, joint, spine, neuro, and musculoskeletal MRI.

Room One Physiotherapy & Sports Injury Clinic Affidea NI also operates Room One Physiotherapy, with locations at the Orthoderm Private



Medical Clinic in Hillsborough and The Culloden Estate and Spa. This clinic provides personalized Physiotherapy treatments, working closely with surgeons and physicians to ensure optimal patient outcomes.

A Commitment to Excellence

All Affidea NI clinics prioritise patient comfort and well-being. Patients can expect a welcoming and professional environment where they are treated with the utmost

integrity, respect and dignity at all times. The clinics boast modern technology and offer easy access to outpatient consultations and advanced surgical procedures.

Contact Information: Hillsborough Private Clinic: +44 28 9268 8899

Orthoderm Private Medical Clinic: +44 28 9268 0940

Affidea Belfast: +44 28 9066 0050

Room One Physiotherapy: +44 28 9268 0940 (40% off your first appointment)

# APRIL COUNTRY MUSIC WEEKEND

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## FRIDAY 11TH APRIL 2025

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**ADRIAN RYAN**  
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## SATURDAY 12TH APRIL 2025

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2.30PM - 4.30PM

**JOHNNY BRADY**  
9.15PM - 11.15PM

**MICHAEL ENGLISH**  
11.30PM - 1.30AM

**STACEY BREEN**  
1.30AM

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## SUNDAY 13TH APRIL 2025

**PATRICK FEENEY**  
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**KIERAN MCAREE**  
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## The Blind Spot: EAST BELFAST SHOWROOM IS THE SPOT FOR ALL KINDS OF WINDOW DRESSINGS!

The Blind Spot, located in East Belfast, is a well-established blinds and shutters company with over 30 years of experience.

Manager Krystina Bradford sheds light on current company news. Book Now for delivery within 6 weeks! The Blind Spot is now offering made to measure curtains and also curtain rails - complete with full measuring and fitting service.

What is the history of the business?

The original factory shop was opened in 1990 by my mum and Grandfather. We still specialize in manufacturing and fitting high-quality window coverings for both residential and commercial properties. This now includes venetian, vertical, roller and roman blinds but also embraces new technologies and advancements - today we also offer motorised blinds, shutters, multi-function Blindscreens as well as our new curtain department!

So tell us about the new showroom!

To accommodate and showcase our ever expanding stock we have opened a new Showroom at 4 East Belfast Enterprise Park, Belfast BT5 4GX (just around the corner from our old shop which is still our manufacturing site!) It's around x3 times larger than our previous retail space so that you can easily see the benefits and choice of products in a contemporary styled showroom space.

Whats on offer?

In particular you can now fully appreciate the wide range and colour choice we offer in our beautiful Sante Fe Shutters - which we can install in less than 6 weeks and appreciate the difference that motorised blinds can make to your lifestyle. You can also see for yourself our range of Blindscreens - manufactured within the

UK. These are great for keeping our bugs as well as giving total blackout on any window and door including bi fold doors and can revolutionise the way you manage your access to the outdoors at home or in your business.

Tell us more about BlindScreen NI?

We are so impressed with Blind Screen - These easy to operate blinds come in a variety of styles, including net/fly screens for keeping insects out perfect to update your home or office with a modern and contemporary blind option! We're so impressed that we've become one of only two NI retailers for Blind Screen!

What's the difference when you choose The Blind Spot?

All of our blinds and shutters are made-to-measure and crafted with



precision. We offer a free measuring service right across Northern Ireland - so there's no need to guess-timate!

We offer Affordable Prices without compromising on quality and a wide range of Choice. Explore various styles, fabrics,

and colours to match your property's aesthetic. Get in Touch or Visit our NEW SHOWROOM at 4 East Belfast Enterprise Park, Belfast BT5 4GX or give us a call at 028 9059 5255 to discuss your requirements. [www.theblindspotbelfast.co.uk](http://www.theblindspotbelfast.co.uk)

## Consumer focused 'Save Energy, Save Money'

Economy Minister Conor Murphy has launched a 'Save Energy, Save Money' information campaign which aims to lower energy bills through energy efficiency.

Funded by the Department for the Economy and delivered by the Consumer Council, the campaign will run until March 2025. The campaign aims to help consumers save money on their bills through energy efficiency advice and information whilst also increasing public understanding about the transition to net zero in Northern Ireland.

Minister Murphy said: "I am delighted to launch this 'Save Energy, Save Money' campaign being delivered by the Consumer Council. As we face into the cold winter months ahead, it's vitally important consumers have access to trusted energy efficiency advice and information that will reduce their bills and carbon footprint. As decarbonisation is central to my economic plans, I welcome the campaign's ambition to increase consumer awareness about our journey



Guided by consumer protection principles

towards achieving net zero." Speaking about the campaign, Noyona Chundur, Chief Executive of the Consumer Council, said: "We know that energy bills remain a real challenge for many. We use most of our heating and electricity over the colder months, so delivering the 'Save Energy, Save Money' campaign will empower consumers to make essential changes in their own homes to save money on their energy bills, reduce their energy consumption and contribute to a sustainable

future. We appreciate Minister Murphy and the Department for the Economy supporting this campaign."

The campaign includes energy toolkits for electricity, natural gas, and home heating oil customers, keeping your home warm information guides, energy price comparison tools, an appliance cost checker tool and energy efficiency advice videos. As well as digital support, the campaign involves significant community engagement across the region.

# THE BLIND SPOT

The Blind Spot is a well-established blinds and shutters company in Belfast. With over 30 years of experience in the business, manufacturing and fitting, we work closely with our clients to achieve the best results. Whether you're looking for Santa Fe shutters or Roman blinds, we have got you covered.

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# Choosing the Right Window Blinds: Essential Questions to Ask Your Supplier & Installer

Investing in new window blinds is a significant decision that impacts both the aesthetics and functionality of your home.

To ensure you make an informed choice and have a smooth installation experience, it's crucial to ask the right questions to your supplier and installer.

Before you even start browsing, it's helpful to determine your budget and prioritise your needs. Consider factors like light control, privacy, insulation, child safety, and style. Accurate window measurements are also essential.

When interacting with the supplier, inquire about the types of blinds they offer, such as Venetian, roller, Roman, vertical, pleated, wooden, or bamboo. Ask about the available materials and finishes, including wood, fabric, aluminum, and PVC. Inquire about child safety options like cordless mechanisms, clutch mechanisms, and wand controls. It's crucial to understand the



warranty on the blinds and request samples of fabrics and finishes. Ask if they offer a free consultation or in-home measurement service and inquire about the typical lead time for orders.

When discussing installation with the installer, ask about their experience with the specific types of blinds you're interested

in. Inquire about their guarantee on installation work, the typical timeframe for installation, and whether they remove and dispose of old blinds. Ask if they offer any after-sales support or maintenance advice and inquire about their preferred method of payment.

Don't forget to ask about motorization

options if you're considering motorized blinds. Inquire about compatibility, costs, and remote control options. Determine if the blinds can be customized to fit unusual window shapes or sizes. If you have pets, allergies, or specific needs (e.g., blackout blinds for bedrooms), be sure to discuss these considerations with the supplier.

Finance options may be available if you are ordering multiple blinds or window treatments. By asking these questions, you can make an informed decision, ensure a smooth installation, and get the most value for your money. Remember to compare quotes from multiple suppliers and installers to find the best deal.

# A GUIDE TO WOOD FLOORING OPTIONS

Wood flooring remains a popular choice for UK homeowners, adding warmth, character, and natural beauty to any space.

While the variety of options can seem overwhelming, this guide will help you navigate the key considerations.

Types of Wood Flooring

- **Solid Wood:** Crafted from a single piece of timber, solid wood is durable and refinishable, making it a long-term investment. However, it's sensitive to moisture and temperature changes.

- **Engineered Wood:** Composed of multiple layers, engineered wood is more dimensionally stable than solid wood, making it suitable for areas with varying conditions. It's also generally more affordable.

- **Reclaimed Wood:** Offering a unique character and rustic charm, reclaimed wood is an eco-friendly option sourced from old structures.

Wood Species



Popular options include:

- **Oak:** Durable, strong, and available in various colours, from light to dark.
- **Ash:** Light and airy, with smooth grain and subtle colour variations, ideal for contemporary interiors.
- **Walnut:** Luxurious with a rich, dark colour and

striking grain patterns.

- **Maple:** Hard and dense, with a pale colour and fine grain, often used in modern and minimalist designs.

**Finishing Touches**  
Staining enhances the wood's natural beauty, while sealing protects it from moisture, stains, and

wear and tear. Finishes like matte, satin, and gloss offer different levels of sheen.

**Choosing the Right Wood Flooring**

Consider your lifestyle (pets, children), budget, desired aesthetics, and installation method when making your decision.

## Spring into Action: Designing, Planning, Planting & Landscaping Your Small Garden

Spring is the perfect time to revitalise your outdoor space.

Whether you have a tiny courtyard or a modest backyard, transforming your small garden into a blooming oasis is achievable with careful planning and a touch of creativity.

Begin by accurately measuring your garden space and creating a simple scale drawing or utilizing a garden planning app to visualize your layout. Note the sun's path throughout the day to identify areas of full sun, partial shade, and deep shade, which will guide your plant selection. If privacy is a concern, explore options like tall hedges, bamboo screens, or strategically placed climbing plants. Divide your garden into distinct zones, such as a seating area, a herb garden,

or a flower bed, to create a sense of order and function.

When choosing plants, focus on verticality by utilising climbing plants like clematis or honeysuckle to add height and visual interest without consuming valuable ground space. Embrace compact varieties such as dwarf shrubs, miniature roses, and space-saving perennials. Consider container gardening to maximize space by growing herbs, vegetables, and flowers in pots and hanging baskets. Prepare the soil by adding compost or well-rotted manure. Plant strategically by placing taller plants at the back of borders to create a layered effect and group flowers in clusters for maximum visual



impact.

Landscaping can further enhance your small garden. Create winding paths using stepping stones, gravel, or decorative paving slabs. Add a tranquil touch with a small birdbath or a miniature fountain, which can also attract wildlife. Install low-voltage lighting to illuminate pathways and highlight key features. Incorporate

trellises, obelisks, and wall-mounted planters to add visual interest and maximize space.

Maintaining your garden is crucial for its continued beauty.

Water deeply and infrequently to encourage strong root growth. Keep weeds at bay to prevent them from competing with your plants for nutrients and water. Feed your plants with a balanced fertilizer during the growing season. Regularly remove spent blooms to encourage continuous flowering.

Remember to embrace simplicity by avoiding overcrowding your garden with too many plants. Create a cohesive colour scheme to enhance the overall look and feel of your space.

Combine plants with different leaf shapes and textures to add visual interest. Don't be afraid to experiment and see what works best in your garden.

By following these tips, you can transform your small garden into a beautiful and functional outdoor living space that you'll enjoy all season long. Happy gardening!

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# SPRING HOME INTERIOR TRENDS FOR 2025

**Embrace the New Season with These Vibrant and Inviting Trends**

Spring is a time for renewal and rejuvenation, and this extends to our homes as well. As we bid farewell to the winter blues, it's time to embrace fresh, vibrant trends that will infuse our living spaces with a sense of warmth, energy, and optimism.

Here are some of the top spring home interior trends for 2025:

**Bold and Bright Colour Palettes:**

Say goodbye to muted tones and embrace a symphony of colours! This spring, we're seeing a resurgence of bold and vibrant hues. Think deep yellows, electric blues, and vivid greens. These

colours add a sense of excitement and vitality to any room.

**Organic Modernism:**  
This trend seamlessly blends natural elements with modern aesthetics. Expect to see plenty of natural materials like wood, stone, and rattan, paired with clean lines and minimalist furniture.

**The Allure of Chrome:**

Chrome accents are making a comeback, adding a touch of glamour and sophistication to any space. From light fixtures to hardware, chrome elements can elevate the look of your home.

**Chunky Porcelain Chic:**



Think oversized vases, statement bowls, and decorative plates. Chunky porcelain pieces add a touch of

personality and visual interest to any room.

**Retro Revival:**  
Mid-century modern and vintage-inspired

pieces are making a strong comeback. Embrace this trend by incorporating retro furniture, geometric

patterns, and warm wood tones.

**Maximalism:**  
Embrace the maximalist trend by

mixing and matching patterns, textures, and colours. This is a great way to express your personality and create a truly unique space.

**Natural Stone Accents:**

Bring the beauty of nature indoors with natural stone accents. Think marble countertops, stone backsplashes, and stone fireplace surrounds.

**Statement Lighting:**  
Make a statement with your lighting fixtures. From bold chandeliers to sculptural pendant lights, statement lighting can add a touch of drama and elegance to any room.

**Earthy Neutrals:**  
While bold colours

are trending, earthy neutrals like beige, brown, and cream are still popular. These colours create a calm and inviting atmosphere, making them perfect for bedrooms and living rooms.

**Sustainable Decor:**  
Sustainability is more important than ever, and this extends to home decor. Look for pieces made from recycled or eco-friendly materials, and support local artisans and businesses.

By incorporating these trends into your home, you can create a space that is both stylish and inviting. So embrace the new season and let your creativity shine!

## Slash Your Energy Bills: Simple Steps for Big Savings

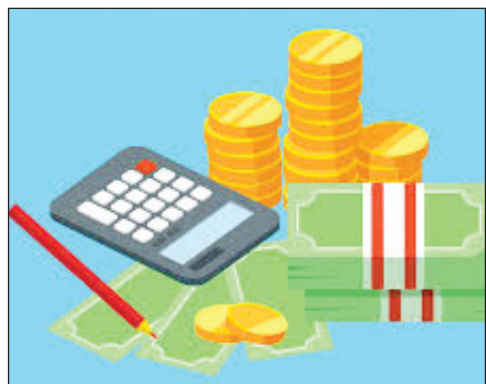
**With energy prices on the rise, it's more important than ever to find ways to reduce your energy consumption and lower your bills. Fortunately, there are many simple steps you can take to achieve significant savings.**

One of the easiest ways to reduce your energy consumption is to simply turn off lights, appliances, and electronics when you're not using them. Even leaving devices on standby can consume energy, so it's important to power them down completely.

Another easy way to save energy is to lower your thermostat by a few degrees. You may not even notice the difference in temperature, but it can make a big difference on your energy bill. Additionally, taking shorter showers can help reduce your water and energy usage.

Investing in energy-efficient appliances can also help you save money in the long run. Look for models with high energy ratings, such as A+++. Additionally, a smart thermostat can help you control your heating remotely and optimize energy usage.

To further improve your home's energy efficiency, consider insulating your loft, walls, and floor. Proper insulation can



To avoid estimated bills, it's important to provide accurate meter readings to your energy supplier. Additionally, regularly comparing energy tariffs can help you find the best deal for your needs. Finally, explore government schemes and grants that can help you improve your home's energy efficiency.

Switching your

supplier could be a good move. Check out comparison websites for current deals. Do your research in a realistic and considered fashion.

By implementing these simple tips, you can significantly reduce your energy consumption and lower your bills. Remember, every little bit helps, so start making changes today.



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# FOUR SEASONS HOTEL CARLINGFORD TO HOLD WEDDING OPEN DAY!

**This Award Winning Venue located in Carlingford, is simply one of the most beautiful places to get married in Ireland! Prospective Brides and Grooms can see this for themselves at the forthcoming Open day on Sunday 16th February, appointments are available from 11am to 5pm – reserve yours today!**

Celebrate the beginning of your love story, along with your family and friends, at the Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford with Fairytales from your childhood, including the legend of Queen Meave, the Brown Bull of Cooley and Cuchulainn which were all based in the Majestic Cooley Peninsula. Carlingford provides the perfect backdrop for Your Wedding. With Carlingford Lough and Cooley Mountains, the Old Abbey, King John's Castle and quaint cobbled streets, your photographs will be treasured forever. The Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford provides an idyllic Wedding Venue in

Carlingford boasting 58 well-appointed bedrooms and a Full Leisure Centre for your extended family and guests to enjoy, sitting quaintly beneath the Cooley Mountains overlooking Carlingford Lough. The Four Seasons Hotel, Carlingford lies peacefully under the inspiring Cooley Mountains, overlooking Carlingford Lough and only a stone's throw from the rambling streets of the beautiful medieval village of Carlingford. A jewel in the crown of Irelands Ancient East, Carlingford offers rugged landscapes, breathtaking sea views and something for all

tastes to keep your days full of enjoyment. Everything from the Carlingford Lough Ferry to boutique shopping and cultural events, consistently bringing a buzz of holiday feel and fun factor to all visitors. The hotel has recently undergone a number of renovations including the fabulous new executive bedrooms and our classically decorated Lobby with a modern twist, featuring sphere hanging chandeliers and chic button tufted couches. At the Four Seasons Hotel Carlingford you will be assured a warm welcome, superb cuisine and exceptional service along with a destination holiday

amongst the best in the Emerald Isle. The Four Seasons Carlingford was Proud Winner of the RSVP Live Best All-in-One Venue last summer. The Hotel team is also absolutely thrilled to have been awarded Highly Commended in Excellence in Service at the Irish Hotel Awards recently! This recognition reflects their dedication to providing top-notch service to every guest who walks through the doors. The hotel's most recent awards also include:

- Best Large Hotel Wedding Venue in Ireland 2024 & 2023 - Save my Day Awards
- Best Scenic



Venue Four Seasons Carlingford - RSVP • Highly Commended Wedding Coordinator of the Year 2023 - Linda Scott - Leinster - 2021  
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## Experience the Cozy Elegance of Our Winter Warmer Package

**As the chilly winds sweep across the Antrim Coast, The Causeway Hotel is thrilled to announce the return of our much-anticipated Winter Warmer package.**

Nestled near the iconic Giant's Causeway, our historic hotel offers the perfect retreat for those seeking a blend of comfort, luxury, and breathtaking natural beauty. 3\* Hotel of the Year, Duty Manager of the Year, Excellence in Service and Great Irish Breakfast are among the prestigious accolades awarded to the hotel by The Irish Hotel Awards. Starting from £330 for midweek stays and £350

for weekends, the Winter Warmer package includes a restful two night's stay, sumptuous dinner both evenings in our 1836 Ballroom restaurant, and a hearty breakfast each morning. This exceptional offer allows guests to immerse themselves in the serene beauty of Northern Ireland's winter landscape while enjoying the warm, welcoming hospitality for which The Causeway Hotel is renowned. Whether you choose to

take a brisk walk along the rugged coastline, visit the enchanting Giant's Causeway, or simply unwind in the bar, The Causeway Hotel provides an idyllic setting for creating cherished memories. With free entrance to the Giant's Causeway Visitor Experience included, guests have the opportunity to delve into the history of this UNESCO World Heritage site, adding an educational and awe-inspiring dimension to their stay.

The Winter Warmer package is more than just a getaway; it's an invitation to experience the magic of winter in one of Northern Ireland's most scenic locations. Renowned for eclectic yet charming decor, our cliff-edge hideaway guarantees a shift from magic beach walks to mellow fireside talks. To book your stay, contact our friendly reception staff at 028 2073 1210 or email reception@thecausewayhotel.com



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# SALE OF MARGEY ORIGINALS AT TITANIC HOTEL BELFAST

Artist Adrian Margey will be returning to Titanic Hotel Belfast with his latest exhibition and sale of work from Friday 28th February – Sunday 2nd March.

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Margey shot to notoriety as a result of his bold and colourful contemporary depictions of Irish landscape and landmarks. He is now also winning a great deal of praise for his more subtle, impressionistic works that embrace a naturalistic palette. Visitors should therefore expect an eclectic exhibition filled with vibrant landscapes, dramatic cityscapes and dreamy beach scenes. From large-scale canvases to smaller pieces, collectors and art lovers will enjoy depictions of Belfast City, Donegal, the North Coast, Glens of Antrim and the Mourne alongside representations of traditional Irish musicians and dancers. Margey exhibits regularly across Northern Ireland and was selected by Tourism Ireland to live paint at Ireland Week in Milan in the spring. He also exhibited at Art Source in Dublin's



Artist Adrian Margey ahead of his upcoming exhibition at Titanic Hotel Belfast

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RDS this autumn. The light filled setting of Drawing Office One at the Titanic Hotel will make for a spectacular backdrop to this stunning new body of work. With original pieces and limited edition prints going on show, there will be artwork to suit a range of budgets.

Admission is free and everyone is welcome. Opening times as follows: Friday 28th February: 6pm – 9pm | Saturday 1st March: 11am – 9pm & Sunday 2nd March: 11am – 6pm. For more information telephone Margey's Portrush studio on 07841593762 or visit www.adrianmargey.com.

## WALK, RUN OR RELAY FOR AIR AMBULANCE NI

**MOY PARK BELFAST CITY MARATHON SUNDAY 4<sup>th</sup> MAY 2025**



**OUR MEDICS FLY BUT ONLY WITH YOUR SUPPORT**



**Run for Air Ambulance NI** and ensure the medics and helicopter are there for you and your loved ones. **It might one day save your life!**

It costs £2.5 Million annually to sustain and maintain this service. Air Ambulance NI is asking you to support the charity at the Moy Park Belfast City Marathon and fundraise or donate to keep the life-saving service operational while taking on this heart racing challenge!

Air Ambulance NI works in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service which continues to be a lifeline for communities across the province, offering critical Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS).

The HEMS team attend patients who are seriously ill or injured on average twice per day, bringing emergency pre-hospital care directly to the scene of an incident with the aim of saving lives, brains, and limbs.

**TO SUPPORT US**

Email: [belfastmarathon@airambulancenl.org](mailto:belfastmarathon@airambulancenl.org)  
Air Ambulance NI is the official charity partner for Belfast City Marathon 2023 - 2025



**#MILESFORMISSIONS**



# NEW YEAR NEW EVENTS AT AIR AMBULANCE, CALLING FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The air ambulance medical team is called upon twice a day to critically ill or injured people, and the charity has expanded its events portfolio for 2025 to help raise the £7,000 needed daily to keep the team airborne and saving lives.

They are calling on you to sign up to a challenge event for 2025.

For the first time the charity is bringing a 'Firewalk' to the grounds of Stormont where 100 participants will take on temperatures of 500C in bare feet walking along a path of hot coals! This unique event, scheduled for Friday 28th March, sponsored by Scott's Fuels, is the perfect individual or corporate team building challenge, with mental and physical training provided by UK Firewalk host, Scott Bell, two-time firewalk Guinness World Record Breaker. Participants will celebrate their success with a sumptuous meal in the Long Gallery of Parliament Buildings at Stormont, a rare opportunity to enjoy an evening in this prestigious location. Registration for the event including training and post challenge meal in Stormont is just £60 with a suggested fundraising target of £150.

Air Ambulance NI has organised three abseil events, the first of which is 2nd March when participants will take on the thrilling experience of



abseiling 120ft down the iconic Europa Hotel, Belfast.

For those with a greater adrenalin drive, you could try a skydive, leaping out of a plane at 10,000 feet!

And for those who would like to keep the feet on the ground, the charity is calling upon walkers and runners to sign up to the Moy Park Belfast City Marathon which will be held on Sunday 4th May 2025. To register for the walk, relay or full 26.2 miles, go to <https://belfastcitymarathon.com/>.

Kerry Anderson, Head of Fundraising said, "This year our charity aspires to

raise £3m to sustain the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) and during that time it's expected the medics will be called approximately 700 times.

Every call needs the support of the public in fundraising. Our events portfolio offers something for everyone from the firewalk to the abseils, skydives and even dragon boat racing up the River Lagan as well as a runway run at City of Derry Airport. For a full list of events please go to <https://airambulancenl.org/upcoming-events/>

None of us know what

the day ahead holds and on average for two individuals, they will need the help of the air ambulance service. It could be a serious road traffic collision, farm accident, medical emergency or sports incident, whatever the incident the medical team can be at the patients' side in minutes, providing interventions that can make a difference. Please support your air ambulance this year."

For more information and to sign up now for any of the events being organised, go to <https://airambulancenl.org/upcoming-events/>

# 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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your accommodation, whether you 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 restaurants. 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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# Tourism NI welcomes innovative proposal for Treetop Walk in Co Down

Castlewellan Forest Park is being investigated as the potential location for Northern Ireland's first ever Treetop Walk.

The aim of the project is to create a sustainable visitor experience which provides close-to-nature recreation, showcases the natural beauty of Castlewellan Forest Park and provides an adventurous and educational attraction for both residents and visitors.

The proposed treetop walk would be the first of its kind in Northern Ireland, offering visitors the chance to immerse themselves in the forest canopy, enjoy breathtaking views and engage with the park's rich biodiversity from a whole new perspective.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, in partnership with EAK Ireland, and in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Forest Service, has agreed to explore the feasibility of the project.

As part of the project development, an assessment on the

potential impact of the project on traffic and the existing road network will be required, with mitigation measures developed for the area.

Early engagement with residents and businesses will also be a key focus during the development of the proposed attraction.

Pete Byrne, Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, said: "Castlewellan Forest Park is one of our district's most cherished assets, and this exciting proposal has the potential to elevate it to an iconic landmark visitor attraction for Northern Ireland.

"By working together, we hope to create an innovative, nature-based attraction that will inspire visitors while preserving the park's natural beauty for generations to come."

Tom McArdle, EAK Ireland Treetop Walks said, "We are delighted to announce the proposed treetop walk in Castlewellan Forest Park that we are exploring



alongside Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

"The success of our Treetop Walk Avondale in Co Wicklow shows the potential for this type of tourism attraction, and we believe it would bring many benefits to the local area and surrounding region."

David Roberts, Director of Strategic Development

at Tourism Northern Ireland, said, "We welcome this innovative proposal which would add to the high-quality tourism and hospitality offering that we have in the area.

"Northern Ireland is renowned for its natural landscapes and outdoor spaces. The proposed Treetop Walk in Castlewellan Forest Park,

already a magnet for people with its activities and trails, would act as an anchor attraction for visitors who can then go on to explore the wider area.

"We look forward to working closely with Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and partner organisations to further explore this ambitious project."

# HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR GOALS THIS SPRING AND SUMMER!

During National Obesity Week recently, the Public Health Agency (PHA) is highlighting ways you can set realistic targets to help improve your health and wellbeing in 2025 and make them happen when the resolve of new year begins to fade.

Dr Hannah McCourt, Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement Manager at the PHA said: "Many of us end up making the same New Year's resolution every year – to start eating better and exercise more – only to give up after a short time because our targets aren't sustainable.

"Setting targets is important, however it is also important to be realistic. A sure-fire way to give-up quickly is to make your goals unattainable or try to do too much at once. Consider making small, manageable changes that will work for you in the long term."

Tips on setting targets  
 • Set yourself realistic and achievable targets for healthier eating, drinking and physical activity. You don't start to get fit by running a marathon straight away; so, make changes to your diet and activity a little at a time. For example, swap

two sugars in your morning cuppa for one, then swap one for none. Or getting off the bus one stop earlier and walking the rest of the way.

• Take it one day at a time – eating healthier and being more active is something to approach positively, not as a punishment!

• Don't deny yourself little pleasures now and again, just don't make it a regular thing.

• Ask your friends and family for their support; they may even wish to join you in your efforts. It's a great way to feel it's not you against the world.

• Create a timeline to measure your progress – review where you are after a month, then three months and so on – it helps to give you a sense of achievement. Decide how you are going to measure your progress. You could time how long it takes you to climb the stairs in work or how long it took you to walk around

your neighbourhood and how you felt while doing it. Measuring small simple things like this can help you track your progress and wellbeing.

Dr McCourt concluded: "By taking simple steps to move more and make healthier choices, we can help manage our weight as well as boost our mental health and wellbeing and help reduce stress and anxiety.

"Remember, if you slip up one day don't be too hard on yourself, just carry on later in the day or the next day with your target in mind – don't wait until the next week to get back on track. Following these tips is a great way to get started on the journey to living a healthier life."

For more tips and advice on getting active, setting yourself achievable targets and eating healthier, visit [www.ChooseToLiveBetter.com](http://www.ChooseToLiveBetter.com)



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

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

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# DRIVING FORCE

From autonomous delivery vehicles to connected car technology, in this article we consider the impact of AI on the motor industry and new cars in 2025.

2025 is shaping up to be a pivotal year for the automotive industry, with several key trends and developments likely to dominate the headlines:

**Electric Vehicles (EVs) Continue Their Ascent:** Expect to see a significant expansion of EV models across various segments, from affordable city cars to high-performance sports cars. Advancements in battery technology will lead to longer driving ranges and shorter charging times, addressing key concerns of EV adoption.

**Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing:** Automakers will continue to prioritize sustainable practices, incorporating recycled materials and eco-friendly production processes. Expect to see more innovative materials derived from plants and other renewable sources used in vehicle interiors.

**Connected Car Technology:**



Vehicles will become increasingly integrated with our digital lives, offering seamless connectivity to smartphones, smart homes, and other devices. Automakers will leverage over-the-air updates to improve vehicle performance and add new features remotely.

**Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles (FCEVs):** FCEVs, offering longer ranges and faster refueling times than battery-electric

vehicles, may emerge as a viable alternative in certain segments. Governments and energy companies will invest in hydrogen fueling infrastructure to support the growth of FCEVs.

**Autonomous Delivery Vehicles:** Self-driving delivery vehicles will become more common, revolutionizing the logistics industry and improving efficiency.

**Cybersecurity Concerns:** As

vehicles become more connected, cybersecurity will be a top priority for automakers, with robust measures to protect against hacking and data breaches.

These are just a few of the major trends likely to shape the automotive landscape in 2025.

The industry is undergoing rapid transformation, and the year ahead promises exciting innovations and challenges.

# New Cars to Watch Out for in 2025

2025 is shaping up to be an exciting year for car enthusiasts in the UK, with a number of highly anticipated new models set to hit the roads. Here are five of the most promising new cars coming out in 2025.

**Renault 5**  
The Renault 5 is a highly anticipated electric revival of a classic French hatchback. It promises a fun, retro-inspired design with modern electric powertrain technology. The Renault 5 is expected to offer a range of up to 248 miles and a starting price of around £20,000.

**Mini Aceman**  
The Mini Aceman is a brand-new model that will slot into the Mini lineup as a small SUV. It will offer a stylish, retro-inspired design with Mini's characteristic quirky touches. The Aceman is expected to be priced from around £25,000.

**MG2**  
The MG2 is an upcoming budget-friendly electric supermini that aims to take on the likes of the Volkswagen ID.2 and Citroen e-C3. It promises affordable electric motoring with a range of around 200



miles and a starting price of under £20,000.

**Renault Twingo**  
The Renault Twingo is another iconic French model that is set to be revived as an electric city car. It will offer a fun, quirky design with a focus on practicality and affordability. The

Twingo is expected to be priced from around £15,000.

**Suzuki eVX**  
The Suzuki eVX is the Japanese brand's first fully-electric car. It promises a stylish, SUV-inspired design with a range of up to 250 miles. The eVX is

expected to be priced from around £30,000.

These are just a few of the exciting new cars that are set to be released in the UK in 2025. With a wide range of options to choose from, there is sure to be something to suit everyone's needs and budgets.

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# EX-COP'S TOP DRIVING TIPS FOR THE SNOW

**A former long-serving police officer who is now Chief Riding Examiner for advanced driving and motorcycling at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), has shared advice to keep the public safe when travelling in difficult weather.**

With over 30 years of experience, Andy Nixon has seen firsthand the pitfalls that drivers often face in disruptive weather.

**Andy's Top Five Tips**

1. Be ready for anything. "Brace yourself and pack for the worst. Just in case you get held up in the cold, pack extra layers of clothing, a shovel to help you dig yourself out of sticky situations and sustenance, such as warm drinks or soup to keep you going."

2. Take your time.

"Don't accelerate too hard or fast - stopping distance in ice and snow is around 10 times longer than it is in dry conditions. Take it steady and drive at

a gradual, measured speed so it gives yourself time to react.

"When stopping, brake gently, and avoid sudden or harsh braking as this may cause the vehicle to skid.

If possible, pull away in second gear by slowly releasing the clutch; this will stop the wheels from spinning. Nowadays, some automatic vehicles are fitted with a winter mode for starting off.

3. Check car components.

"A decent tyre depth of at least 1.6mm (Legal limit) is vital to reduce the risk of skidding, and clean, functioning lights are essential - even one headlight not working can



dramatically increase the chance of a collision.

"It is important to make

sure your wiper blades are not split and clear the screen properly -

sometimes wipers may be frozen to the windscreen which may cause them

to split if turned on so make sure you free them from the glass first before using them. "Finally, don't take off if you don't have enough fuel for your journey, as you don't want to break down in wintry conditions."

4. Keep windows clear.

"Make sure ALL windows are completely free from snow and ice before you start your journey; don't just clear a peephole! Leave the house slightly earlier if necessary to make sure this is done. Remember: it is illegal if you are not able to clearly see out of your front windows. Always keep a scraper in your vehicle

in case a frost buildup returns."

5. Is it urgent?

"The most important thing is to ask yourself whether you need to make the journey - is it worth

the risk of driving in ice or snow? Sometimes trips are unavoidable, but if it can wait or if you're concerned about whether you feel confident to drive, delay the trip if possible."

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# The Advantages of Professional Oven Cleaning

A clean oven is not just about aesthetics; it's about safety, efficiency, and overall kitchen hygiene. While DIY cleaning can be effective, professional oven cleaning offers several significant advantages.

Deep and Thorough Cleaning have the tools and expertise to access Professional cleaners and clean hard-to-

reach areas, such as nooks and crannies, that are often missed during regular cleaning. They use specialized cleaning agents and techniques to effectively remove stubborn grease and grime, leaving your oven spotless. Improved Oven Performance A clean oven can cook food more evenly and efficiently, reducing energy consumption. Regular professional cleaning



can also help extend the lifespan of your oven by preventing damage caused by accumulated grease and grime. Health and Safety Benefits A buildup of grease and grime in your oven can pose a fire hazard.

Professional cleaning can help mitigate this risk. Additionally, a clean oven can improve indoor air quality by reducing the release of harmful particles and fumes. Peace of Mind When you hire a professional oven cleaning service, you can rest assured that your oven is being cleaned by experts who know what they're doing. Many professional cleaners offer guarantees on their work, ensuring your satisfaction. While DIY cleaning can be a cost-effective option, it may not always provide the same level of cleanliness and efficiency as professional cleaning. By investing in a professional oven cleaning service, you can enjoy a cleaner, healthier, and more efficient kitchen.

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# HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM LEAKS AND BURSTS

With recent low temperatures falling to lows of up to -7 degrees, NI Water would like to remind customers of some small things they can do to protect their pipes and properties from leaks and bursts.

Keep your home heated with a thermostat, insulate your pipes, open doors to allow warm air to circulate to unheated areas of your home and know where your stop valve is located in the event of a leak.

NI Water education officer Anna Killen said: "When a pipe bursts in freezing weather, it's similar to a frozen bottle of water cracking because the water expands as it freezes, putting pressure on the pipe and causing it to break. This might lead to a burst and possible flooding inside your home which can have a devastating impact on your property and belongings. A few simple steps can go a long way to help avoid this."

NI Water's top tips include:

- Check your inside stop valve - Check to ensure it can be opened and closed easily in the event of a leak. Most can be found under your kitchen sink but could also be located under the stairs or in the downstairs toilet. Also check everyone in the house knows where the stop valve is located and how to turn it off. Receive



a free stop tap tag by completing NI Water's online water audit at [www.getwaterfit.co.uk](http://www.getwaterfit.co.uk)

- Keep your home warm - Leave heating on for longer periods at lower settings, even while away. Doing this allows warm air to circulate, and will help prevent pipes and tanks from freezing in the cold weather

- Circulate warm air to unheated areas - Opening doors to unheated areas of your home (e.g. attics) occasionally to allow warm air to circulate can prevent pipes and tanks from freezing in the cold weather

- Insulate water tanks and pipes - All exposed pipes, including attic pipes should be adequately insulated. Insulate or wrap a towel around outside taps to help prevent them from freezing over
- Check you have home

insurance - check your insurance company offers you protection from the large scale damage that mother nature can sometimes cause

- Keep the name of a plumber handy - type in your postcode at [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk) to find your nearest accredited plumbing business

- Protect outdoor taps - consider using an insulated tap cover to add an extra layer of protection to outdoor taps. Receive a free outdoor tap cover

by completing NI Water's online water audit at [www.getwaterfit.co.uk](http://www.getwaterfit.co.uk)

More helpful advice

and tips are available on NI Water's website at [www.niwater.com/winter-proof-your-home/](http://www.niwater.com/winter-proof-your-home/)

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