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26% SPIKE IN TALLAGHT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL CANCELLATIONS IN JUST 9 MONTHS

Mark Ward TD has expressed concern at a spike in hospital appointment cancellations at Tallaght University Hospital in the first 9 months of 2023. There was over 6,500 cancellations in the first 3 quarters of 2023 compared to 5,200 in the same period in 2022, meaning 1,300 more cancellations.

plan to reduce cancellations by tackling overcrowding. He said the party would achieve this by investing in the necessary hospital bed capacity, in home care and step-down beds, in protected capacity for scheduled care, by fast-tracking elective centres, and investing in diagnostic capacity.

does not have a plan for hospital overcrowding, and this is forcing hospitals to rely on cancellations. This is shifting the problem from overcrowded emergency departments onto lengthy waiting lists. It is not a sustainable solution.

“Sinn Féin would invest in the necessary bed capacity so that patients can be admitted quickly and our healthcare professionals are working in safe environments. We need at least 2,400 hospital beds across the state over the next 5 years. “Sinn Féin would fast-track elective centres so that we can separate unscheduled, emergency care from scheduled surgeries and procedures.

This will increase surgical theatre capacity, help to reduce the number of cancellations, and free up capacity in hospitals for emergency care.

“We would also invest in home support, community step-down beds, and diagnostic capacity so that patients can be discharged home or to a supported care setting when they are ready, and to ensure that patients’ experiences are not delayed by lengthy waiting lists for scans. “We will never solve hospital overcrowding and reducing cancellations. This Government has no plan to do that, and the longer it remains in office the worse the problems get.”

Teachta Ward said that the Government’s lack of a plan for overcrowding was impacting directly on waiting lists through cancellations. He said that the Government was shifting the problem from emergency departments to waiting lists, leaving patients waiting longer for access to care. The TD for Dublin Mid-West said that Sinn Féin has a

Teachta Ward said “The Government is failing to tackle hospital overcrowding which is leading to record levels of cancellations. There was over 6,500 hospital appointments cancelled at Tallaght University Hospital in the first 9 months of 2023. That is a 26% increase on the first 9 months of 2022. It is an extremely concerning spike. “The Government

A RAMBLE ABOUT TALLAGHT



Pictured at the Castletymon Library on the occasion of the presentation of “A Ramble about Tallaght” by Albert Perris were the author with Cllrs. Lilian Gueret and Charlie O’Connor.

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SOUTH DUBLIN LIBRARIES WANT YOU TO GET LOST ... IN A GOOD BOOK

Libraries throughout South Dublin County are taking part in Ireland Reads a campaign to get the whole country reading this month in the lead up to a National Day of Reading on Saturday, February 24th. Irish libraries have teamed up with publishers, booksellers, authors, and others for the campaign, which is part of the government's Healthy Ireland programme and aims to celebrate reading and all the benefits it can have for wellbeing and enjoyment. The campaign is asking everyone to 'Get Lost in a Good Book' during

February and especially on Ireland Reads Day, Saturday, February 24.

Events for all ages to celebrate reading, books and literature are planned throughout the county. Bookstagram Live takes place at Lucan Library on Thursday 22 February at 7pm! Join book champions and Bookstagram icons Sinéad Cuddihy (Tired Mammy Book Club) and Chloe Cowman (Nurse Fancy Pants) for lively book chat and recommendations galore! At North Clondalkin Library, join the Family Poetry

treasure hunt with Juliette Saumande on Saturday 24th February from 1pm -3pm, all welcome! Follow the trail of clues, answer the questions, and help create a big poem with other treasure hunters!

At Ballyroan Library, there's more family fun with storyteller Roisín Murphy who will be telling some Revolting Rhymes at 1:30pm on Saturday 24th. All welcome! On Thursday 22nd February Clondalkin Library are hosting a very special event with author and editor Emily Hourican. Emily will share insights into her life as a writer, a mother and the real-life historical events that have inspired her books. Her best-selling novels including her most recent An Invitation to the Kennedy's inspired by the life of Kathleen 'Kick' Kennedy. Book here.

At Tallaght Library on 24th February we are launching the brand new reading campaign for adults, D24

Reads. The aim of the challenge is to read 24 books in 2024. There will be lots of prizes, incentives, and events along the way. Join us and make 2024 your most bookish yet! Join us for the launch at 11:00am where the Mayor, Cllr. Alan Edge will be in attendance,

and refreshments will be provided. All welcome!

A number of well-known campaign ambassadors are on board to help promote the campaign, including Booker Prize winner, Paul Lynch, Marian Keyes, Colm Tóibín, Rick O'Shea, Liz

Nugent and more. You can find out what reading means to them and why they support the campaign at www.irelandreads.ie. Find out about all that's happening for Ireland Reads or to get or share book recommendations at www.irelandreads.ie.



Pictured Emily Hourican



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SECOND INSTALMENT OF THE SPECTRUM EVENT SERIES

Rua Red is set to play host to the second instalment of the Spectrum event series on Saturday March 9th 2024. A

captivating late-night series of events that redefine arts and cultural engagement after hours through live music performance and visuals, Spectrum promises to push the boundaries of live art, music, and nightlife to a new level within the surroundings of Rua Red's gallery space.

Presented by Rua Red in collaboration with SoFFt Productions and NOISE Music, this unique initiative is proudly supported by The Arts Council of Ireland's Late Night Events Pilot Programme and is one of just 14 pilot projects funded across the country.

From 10pm to 3am, Rua Red Gallery will come alive with an electrifying program, spotlighting some of Ireland's most exceptional talents in electronic music and visual arts. Spectrum aims to provide an inclusive platform for underrepresented artists, celebrating the potential of Ireland's night-time economy and diversifying the ways in which audiences can engage with gallery spaces. This instalment of the Spectrum series will feature

a music lineup programmed by Dublin Modular, one of Ireland's leading electronic music collectives, with live performance & DJ sets from renowned artists such as R. Kitt, poly, DJ Egg, Tomonori, Jack Foster, Tadgh K, and dance performance artist Nick Libra. Complementing the sonic experience is newly commissioned work by sculptor and 3D-CGI artist Reuben Brown, inviting attendees to reimagine the possibilities of late-night cultural engagement.

This late-night series showcases the vibrant spectrum of electronic music and visual arts in Ireland as an all-new component of Rua Red Gallery's existing visual arts programme. Following the success of the inaugural event in November 2023, the highly anticipated second instalment of the three-part series is set to take place March 9th with the final instalment earmarked for May 2024.

Maoliosa Boyle, Director of Rua Red, said "At Rua Red, our goal is to open our space to new audiences and enhance accessibility

through dynamic late-night events that seamlessly blend visual art, music, sound, dance, and installation. The Spectrum event series, in collaboration with SoFFt Productions, NOISE music and commissioned visual artists, echoes the broader ethos of our programming which emphasises hospitality and welcome."

Natasha Duffy, Creative Director at SoFFt Productions commented "The design concept for the space draws inspiration from the atmosphere of a house party, seamlessly translated into the gallery space at Rua Red. The aim is to carve out spaces within spaces, intensifying the intimacy as the night unfolds. This approach aims to inspire young people who, due to restrictions on late-night events, may have missed out on such experiences."

Gerry Horan, Director at NOISE Music, commented "NOISE Music, in collaboration with Rua Red and SoFFt Productions, is united in a mission to provide opportunities for artists and audiences to access

innovative and impactful cultural experiences, with a particular emphasis on reaching and engaging with communities that are often marginalised or excluded. Rua Red's Gallery 1, renowned for hosting numerous iconic exhibitions and events, stands as a pivotal cultural space in South Dublin County. It allows us to collectively create and present innovative new work, further enriching the cultural landscape for the Tallaght community."

Presented by Rua Red in collaboration with SoFFt Productions, NOISE Music, and leading artist collectives in Ireland, Spectrum promises to be an unmissable cultural experience. This groundbreaking initiative is proudly supported by the Arts Council of Ireland's Late Night Events Pilot Programme.

Tickets are available from €10, with post-event transport packages to Dublin city centre available for €14.

For further information and bookings, visit <http://bit.ly/spectrum-ruared>



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TRANSFORMING COLLEGE CAMPUSES AND CONNECTING COMMUNITIES FOR A SAFER AND HEALTHIER TALLAGHT

Since the 1960s, a move towards suburban living in Dublin has increased the reliance on cars for many, with newer communities such as Tallaght suffering from a lack of amenities within walking distance, such as supermarkets, parks, and playgrounds. As Ireland moved to a more suburban design, so did many of our university campuses, resulting in challenges,

including impacts on the physical and social health of students and transport poverty due to financial costs and long commute times. To understand and address these issues, researchers at TU Dublin have commenced a project that will engage with campus users, policymakers, and planning experts to co-create an action research programme to improve the walkability and liveability of local neighbourhoods close to the University's campuses in Blanchardstown, Grangegorman and Tallaght.

Named CRAWL (Campuses Role as Actors in Walkable and Liveable Communities), the project is a partnership between TU Dublin and the Office of the Planning Regulator, which has received funding from the Science Foundation Ireland's (SFI) National Challenge Fund Sustainable Communities Challenge. The first CRAWL engagement event, a World Café, convened a range of experts, policymakers, and the community on the Blanchardstown Campus

of TU Dublin recently with Minister Jack Chambers T.D. in attendance.

"Key to an individual's decision to walk in their neighbourhood is their perception of safety, security and comfort", explains CRAWL Co-Principal Investigator and Sustainability Action Research & Innovation Lead at TU Dublin, Dr Lorraine D'Arcy. "Policymakers and planners around the world are grappling with growing demand for more liveable cities; much of the focus is on developing public transport. However, fostering walkability is essential in enhancing a locality's liveability. The CRAWL team heard from users of our campuses in Blanchardstown, Grangegorman and Tallaght on the types of safety, convenience and accessibility measures required by the community to make these environments more conducive for walking."

Commenting on how the

University will use feedback from this event, CRAWL Co-Principal Investigator TU Dublin, Dr Eoin McGillicuddy, said, "Using TU Dublin campus locations as a testbed, the research team will draw upon the findings of our engagement with the community and the expertise of an already established multidisciplinary national advisory committee

to develop an action plan to enhance our University's campus experience for all users.

It is really exciting work that has the potential to provide good practice guidelines for college campuses across Ireland and other suburban environments, such as business parks and healthcare settings."

Cllr. Charlie O'Connor PC Living in Tallaght ...Working for Tallaght

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The Fianna Fail Team is Barry Andrews M.E.P, John Lahart TD, Cllrs Yvonne Collins, Teresa Costello, Lilian Gueret, Emma Murphy & Charlie O'Connor. Local area Reps Lynda Prendergast and Adam Smyth



O'CONNOR WELCOMES COUNCIL GRANTS

Tallaght Councillor Charlie O'Connor has welcomed the decision of the February Council meeting to approve Grants to local groups. Tallaght Community Council is to receive €1000 for "Running Costs" under Community Development.

A number of Grants were approved by Councillors from the Management Support Funds as follows St Mark's Youth and Family Centre, Fettercairn Youth and Community Centre, Kingswood Community and Leisure Centre, Jobstown Community and Youth Centre, St Aengus Community Centre and Brookfield Youth and Community Centre.

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MAYOR OF SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL'S RECEPTION FOR SHAUNA BANNON

The Mayor of South Dublin County Council Cllr Alan Edge held a reception at County Hall, Tallaght on the 7th of February 2024 to celebrate world champion Shauna Bannon's recent gold medal win at the International Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Federation World Championships. Shauna emerged triumphant in the women's Master 1, purple belt, 147 lb (66kg) category.

Shauna was joined by family, friends and Tallaght Martial Arts teammates as the Mayor congratulated Shauna and presented her with a framed certificate of achievement and a bouquet of flowers on behalf of South Dublin County Council's elected members.

Speaking at the presentation Mayor Alan Edge said "It was a great pleasure to welcome

Shauna to County Hall, to celebrate her achievements. Shauna is a remarkable individual and now a local hero, who has brought pride and recognition to our community through her many achievements. Shauna's dedication has led her to become a world champion in 3 sports; kickboxing, MMA & Jiu Jitsu also holding two black belts all while juggling life as a single parent to her

son Jayce."

Shauna is a highly accomplished athlete in the world of kickboxing, MMA and Jiu Jitsu. She holds the title of seven-time World Association of Kickboxing Organisation champion and is a six-time European champion. She was signed by the UFC in June of 2023, and a month later she became the second Irish woman to fight in the UFC.

Shauna's most recent victory took place at the International Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Federation World Championships last year, where she emerged triumphant in the women's Master 1, purple belt, 147 lb (66kg) category. She competed against Jessica Claire Elizabeth Kleinbart

and secured the top position - the first ever Tallaght person to achieve this. At this competition she had three matches, with two submissions and no points awarded against her.

The Mayor, Cllr Alan Edge

closed the presentation saying "We would like to express our support for Shauna as she continues to represent Tallaght and South Dublin at the highest level of her sport. We will be cheering her on for many years to come."



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EXTENDING CHILD BENEFIT FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS MARKS A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD

Plans to extend child benefit for those up to the age of 19 in full time education is a welcome development, a local TD has said. Deputy Emer Higgins said: "Following Budget 2024, one thing I was particularly keen to see is the extension of child benefit to all full-time students up to 19-years-old. As parents know, child benefit stops once a child turns 18, but nowadays, many sixth-year students are 18 or even 19 when they're sitting their Leaving Cert.

"They're still in full-time education and at this stage in a young person's life, parents are still very much the financial providers for all their needs, and it isn't fair that child benefit stops at 18 when the majority of young people are still in secondary school. The expenses don't just stop at 18, especially when your teenager is still in school and not working. "This is something that I have raised in the past and as we look at ways to assist people to manage the cost of living, Government is now bringing forward this extension to child benefit," added Deputy Higgins.

"For a lot of hard-working families, child

benefit is the only social welfare payment that they receive and extending it up to the age of 19, providing the young person is still in full-time education, would no doubt be a help to parents and guardian. "Set to benefit families in respect of around 60,000 18-year-olds in secondary school up until their 19th birthday, this move recognises the evolving needs of families and the societal benefits of supporting education".

Deputy Higgins continued: "Any extension to a social welfare payment, obviously comes at a cost, but given the very careful management of public finances over the last number of years, I believe that this is an investment that we should be in the position to make. "This investment in our families and young people is not just a matter of financial support; it's a commitment to ensuring that students can complete their secondary education without financial strain. By extending child benefit, Fine Gael are acknowledging the importance of education and the role it plays in levelling the playing field for all our young people." concluded Deputy Higgins.

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LOCAL COUNCILLOR CONDEMNS COUNCIL FOR NOT IMPLEMENTING DERELICT SITE LEVY IN 2023

People Before Profit Councillor Madeleine Johansson has expressed anger as it was revealed that no money was collected by South Dublin County Council from the Derelict Sites Levy in 2023. The information was released as part of a question submitted by Councillor Johansson at the February council meeting. It was also revealed that there is €182,050 outstanding

in arrears. The Derelict Sites Levy is charged on properties and sites that are on the Derelict Sites Register. At the January council meeting a motion proposed by Madeleine Johansson to introduce Compulsory Purchase Orders on properties on the register was voted down. Cllr Johansson commented: "It's outrageous that no money was collected in 2023 from the Derelict Sites Levy. These properties and sites have been vacant for more than 7 years and it's blatantly clear that the owners have no interest in either using or selling these properties.

They could be used to provide much needed homes for families in the area, if they were Compulsory Purchased by South Dublin County Council."

"The Derelict Sites Levy was used as an excuse by councillors who voted against my motion, but it's obvious that the levy is not working and that owners have no intention of paying

it. It's time to take action to stop dereliction and to use existing properties to provide much needed homes." People Before Profit TD Gino Kenny said: "It's absolutely

crazy that properties are being left for years and the owners are refusing to even pay the levies. They are eyesores in the community and attract illegal dumping

and vermin. The fact that the levies aren't being paid shows that the only option is for the council to step in and Compulsory Purchase these properties."

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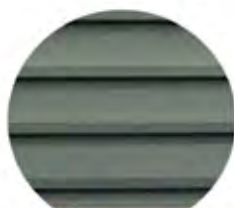
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DEPOSIT RETURN MACHINES MUST BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Retailers participating in the Deposit Return Scheme have a responsibility to ensure their recycling machines are accessible for everyone, a local Councillor has said. Councillor Vicki Casserly said people who use wheelchairs or may have mobility issues are reporting difficulties accessing and using machines

which are currently installed in a large number of major retail units, as well as smaller and independent shops.

“The return chute on these machines is simply too high for someone to reach who is in a wheelchair or may be of short stature,” Councillor

Casserly explained. “It’s extremely disappointing that as we embark on another path of progress to meet our recycling targets, people with disabilities are once again being left out in the cold,” Councillor Casserly said. “For years, we fought for wheelchair friendly changing rooms, cashier

stations and bring banks to be made accessible to people with disabilities. Yet still, with this latest rollout of deposit return machines, many cannot use them - it’s another slap in the face to those who want to embrace change and carry out their civic responsibilities like everyone else.



“I have written to all the major supermarkets operating in Ireland to ask them what their policy is regarding the new machines and how they plan to facilitate those who cannot access them. It is depressing that this was not foreseen ahead of a nationwide rollout and that once again, those with disabilities must fight to be included and to participate. Unfortunately this sector is used to battling to access the same things as everyone else, but the onus is on retailers now to rectify this glaring oversight immediately.”

ARSON ATTACKS MUST CEASE, LIVES ARE BEING PUT AT RISK

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that the string of arson attacks against properties earmarked for accommodation of refugees or asylum seekers must stop and that the perpetrators do not have the support of the Irish people. Teachta Crowe was speaking after the recent such incident, this occurring at the former St Brigid’s nursing home in Brittas, Co. Dublin.

Teachta Crowe said “The burning of St Brigid’s, a former nursing home in Brittas, Co. Dublin, is just another in a series of arson attacks on sites earmarked as possible accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers. These attacks are a pattern dating back nearly six years now and have only intensified in the past 12

months. “I had spoken to Minister Joe O’Brien recently and highlighted the threat of arson given the attacks we have seen right across the state.

“These attacks cannot be allowed to go on with impunity. It is only a matter of time until someone is caught in the blaze or a firefighter is injured or worse battling the fire. There must be consequences to this dangerous and extreme anti-social behaviour. “People who go out and set fire to these buildings do not represent the Irish people and if they believe that, they are only fooling themselves. These attacks must stop, the perpetrators must be apprehended, and no more lives should be put at risk.” “Anyone with information about this attack should go to the gardai.”

SAGGART ARMS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF VILLAGE HERITAGE

Local Councillor Shirley O’Hara has made a submission to the County Council’s Housing Department regarding the proposed change to the approved use of the former Saggart Arms Pub.

Cllr O’Hara said in her submission to South Dublin County Council “I am not in favour of removing the retail and business element of this development. I believe the plan to convert the planned ground-floor retail /business spaces into additional apartments would contradict the County Development Plan 2022-2028. The Development plan seeks to promote

well designed streets and public spaces which is generally characterised by the presence of active frontages. The Main Street and the Slade Castle Development have been planned with business and retail space on the ground floor, the same should apply to this development as was originally granted.

While I welcome the 29 new homes that this development will add to the village, the addition of these extra four apartments will not outweigh the loss of potential retail and business space. I don’t believe this change of use would be in the best interest of a

growing village like Saggart, the population of which has grown exponentially in the last 10 years and needs a thriving commercial element to support the growth. It is important to encourage new businesses which will in turn support existing businesses and bring vitality and employment to Saggart.”

The approved plans for the former pub included, “refurbishment, alteration and extension of a 2 storey existing Public House building to accommodate 1 no. commercial office unit on ground floor and 1 no. 2 bed apartment on the first floor along”. Cllr O’Hara concluded “The Saggart Arms is an important part of the village streetscape and the redevelopment of and refurbishment of this building should proceed as originally approved”

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DUBLIN SCHOOLS INVITED TO COMPETE TO REPRESENT IRELAND AT EUROPEAN MONEY QUIZ IN BRUSSELS

Banking & Payments Federation Ireland (BPFI), with the support of the Business Studies Teacher's Association of Ireland (BSTAI), have opened registration for the Irish finals of the 2024 European Money Quiz, Europe's largest financial education competition for 13 to 15-year-old students involving 28 countries.

Teachers and schools from Dublin and across Ireland are now invited to register their students at www.bpfi.ie/european-money-quiz, to take part in the Irish leg of the quiz which will see classrooms up and down the country go head-to-head in the live online final on Thursday 21st March.

Playing in teams of two, students will be tested on a series of financial questions and compete directly against each other in real time using the Kahoot! learning platform. The winning team will be flown to Brussels in April to take on students from over 28 other European countries for a chance to be crowned European Champions and share in a prize fund of €5,000 for their school.

Speaking on the opening of the registrations for this year's competition, Mairead

McGuinness, European Commissioner for Financial services, financial stability and Capital Markets Union said: "The European Money Quiz is a fantastic initiative that helps make students in Ireland and across Europe aware of the importance of understanding money and being able to manage their personal finances. The earlier in life that we build up financial awareness, the better.

It has all sorts of benefits in terms of resilience, preparing for a future career, and being able to navigate independence when you grow up. I'm a great believer in empowering young people so that they have the ability to manage their money now and, in the future, because the choices we make around money, really matter." BPFI hosts the Irish Finals of the quiz and works closely with the European Banking Federation for the European Finals. Brian Hayes, Chief Executive of BPFI stated: "The European Money Quiz is a great opportunity for students to engage in financial education in a fun and dynamic way. Last year we had almost 4,000 students registered across nearly every county in Ireland and hope to exceed that number in 2024. BPFI is delighted

to sponsor the winners of the Irish quiz to go on to Brussels in April to take part in the European Finals where Irish students have always performed exceptionally well in the past, securing a podium spot in the top three European teams on three occasions." Margaret McDonnell, representative of BSTAI added: "The European Money Quiz has been a

huge success in schools over the past few years. Understanding and learning about money and finance is really important for young people and I would strongly encourage teachers across Ireland to sign up and get their students participating. It is not only for students doing business studies - anyone between 13-15 years of age can take part. The

live competition element really brings a bit of fun and excitement to the classroom as students compete against other schools and see the scoreboard change in real-time."

The European Money Quiz is part of European Money Week (EMW), a joint initiative between the European Banking Federation and 30

banking associations across Europe - including BPFI, which aims to boost financial literacy levels and raise awareness on the benefits of financial education. This year Money Week is taking place from 18th to 24th March 2024. Further details and registration are available on the BPFI website at www.bpfi.ie/European-money-quiz.



Pictured Commissioner Mairead McGuinness with third-year students from St. Colmcille's Community School, Knocklyon Ben Connell and Ava Bradshaw, who will be taking part in this year's competition.



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LOCAL ENTERPRISE SHOWCASE AT SHOWCASE 2024

Businesses from South Dublin had the opportunity to meet buyers from all over the world recently as part of the Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024 at the RDS in Dublin. There were over 100 Local Enterprise Office supported businesses from across the country present at the event with seven in attendance from South Dublin.

Companies were all exhibiting at the Local Enterprise Showcase, part of Showcase 2024, that saw over 4,000 buyers from retailers across the globe attend the three-day event in Dublin looking to secure new sales and partners for the year ahead. Upwards of €25 million in business was expected to have been transacted across the three-day event. The businesses included Thomp2 Socks a Sock company selling a range of fun and colourful socks, Donna McGee a Landscape and abstract Artist, The Crochet Dolls making Keepsake Crochet Dolls, Bear's Little Fish selling Babies clothes and furniture, Jo Lawless A visual Artist

creating landscapes, Goose & Gander an Irish brand crafting children's fashion and Accessories4Babies a Feeding accessories and equipment for weaning babies.

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development, officially opened Showcase at the RDS, highlighting how important trade shows such as Showcase are to the design and crafts sector. One of the country's largest international trade fairs, Showcase 2024 welcomed almost 400 exhibitors and more than 4,000 buyers from Ireland and overseas. Upwards of €25 million in sales orders were expected to be transacted over the three days, with even more anticipated to be generated throughout the year due to the event.

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Social Protection and Minister for Rural and Community Development, said "I'm delighted to be here at Showcase 2024, to see some of the incredible products on display from

our craft and design sector. I'm also thrilled to welcome such a diverse group of buyers from all across the world. Ireland is globally renowned for its craft and design and Showcase truly is the international launchpad for so many Irish makers to achieve this recognition. Most craftspeople live and work in rural areas outside our capital city of Dublin.

My department is working hard to ensure that we continue to support the rural development of these areas and encourage the growth of this sector for many years to come. Craft plays an integral part in Ireland's economy, and I wish everyone the best of luck over the next couple of days."

The South Dublin companies were selected by Local Enterprise Office South Dublin to take part in this year's Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024. They have been working closely with them in recent months to ensure they are in the best possible position to maximize their appearance at the event including sales technique,

marketing materials and stand production.

Head of Local Enterprise Office, Tom Rooney believes this is an opportunity like no other for up-and-coming craft and design clients looking to make that break through. "To be exposed to this many high-quality buyers in one place is an incredible opportunity for any business starting out. If things go well at this event, a business could fill their book for the year and may well establish a partnership that could extend longer than that and help them grow. While that won't happen for every business, just to be here, see other clients, get new ideas and develop their skills in marketing and sales

will stand by them going forward."

This year saw the introduction of the Business of Craft Awards by the Local Enterprise Offices for all the craft and design companies taking part in Local Enterprise Showcase at Showcase 2024.

The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices was brought in to recognize the business behind the amazing craft and design products that are created across the country. The awards had three categories; Best Newcomer for the best craft and design business who is exhibiting for the first time, One to Watch for the best craft and design business who has excellent export

and international potential and finally Sustainability Champion for the best craft and design business who is excelling in sustainability

It was also another strong year for Local Enterprise Showcase exhibitors as part of the Showcase Awards with several Local Enterprise Office client companies securing awards and recognition through the Showcase awards.

For more information on Local Enterprise Showcase 2024 and supports available to those operating in the design and crafts sector, log on to www.LocalEnterprise.ie and for more information on Showcase 2024, log on to www.ShowcaseIreland.com





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New Citroën ë-C4 X – An Ultimate Comfort Experience



By Breda Corrigan

The all-new Citroën ë-C4 X features a unique, elegant design approach that incorporates fastback elegance with SUV attitude. This latest model sits between the C4 and C5 X in the Citroën passenger car line-up and offers notable increases in body length and boot capacity versus the traditional C4 hatchback model.

The appeal of practicality and spaciousness is evident from the striking 4-door design, generous rear legroom and impressive boot capacity on offer.

Advanced e-CMP Platform.

The Citroën brand became part of the multinational Stellantis automotive manufacturing corporation in January 2021, and Stellantis is now the fourth-largest automaker in the world. Other car brands under the Stellantis corporate umbrella in Europe include Abarth, Alfa Romeo, DS, Fiat, Jeep, Opel and Peugeot. The e-C4 X is built on the Stellantis e-CMP platform which comes equipped with a 100kW (134hp) electric motor, a 50 kWh lithium-ion battery pack and a high-performance heat pump.

There are four trim grades to choose from: Feel, Feel Pack, Flair and Flair Pack - with varying levels of generous standard equipment on

offer across the model range.

Striking Design & Impressive Range.

In terms of its exterior design, the ë-C4 X combines the front end styling of the traditional ë-C4 hatchback with a longer, lower roofline that flows graciously into a stylishly-distinctive rear-end. The high, horizontal bonnet features the trademark chrome chevrons that stretch across the width of the body, connecting with double-height front LED headlights. Distinctive new LED taillights are placed at either side of the boot opening which carry through the sculpted lines of the boot lid, pushing around the corners and along the sides of the car to complement the distinctive front headlights. The spacious boot is accessed via a traditional door - such as that offered on a saloon car - as opposed to a hatchback tailgate. Inside the wide-opening 510-litre boot, a flat floor provides a width of 1,010mm between the wheel arches and a maximum length of 1,079mm, while the rear seats fold and split in a 60:40 fashion for even greater flexibility and added practicality. Additional space under the boot floor allows for the storage of the charging cables, or other small items that need to be kept safely out of view. Thanks to its smooth, aerodynamic shape the

ë-C4 X offers an impressive WLTP range of up to 360 km from a fully-charged battery. With 136hp and 260Nm of torque on offer, a 0-100 km/h sprint can be completed in 9.5 seconds (in Sport mode) on its way to a top speed of 150 km/h (where permitted). Regenerative braking is activated by simply pressing the 'B' mode button below the 'D' drive mode selector, while three driving modes are available (Eco, Normal or Sport) to allow for a customised driving experience. The ë-C4 X can be fully charged (0-100%) at a 7.4Kw domestic wallbox charger in around 7.5 hours, while a 0-80% charge at a 100kW public charger can be completed in as little as 30 minutes.

High-Tech Infotainment & Connectivity.

Inside, the ë-C4 X gains a new level of connectivity via the intuitive next-generation 'MyCitroën Drive Plus' infotainment interface, first seen on the Citroën C5 X. The 10" HD interface is fully customised via the use of widgets and integrates seamlessly with 'My Citroën Play' (featuring Apple CarPlay and Android Auto) and 'My Citroën Drive', which provides real time traffic updates, weather information, locations and pricing for public charging stations, and speed camera alerts. Further integration is possible via the 'My

Citroën App' which updates users on the battery status of their vehicle and allows for cabin pre-conditioning. The ë-C4 X comes as standard with 'Progressive Hydraulic Cushions' suspension and 'Advanced Comfort Seats' to ensure optimal Citroën comfort, while offering up to 20 Citroën Advanced Driver Assistance Systems including Active Safety Brake and Highway Driver Assist. Additionally, the colour head-up display and 360-degree vision camera further enhance comfort and reduce stress.

Test Car Details.

My test car was a new ë-C4 X Flair Pack, which was finished in Pearl White metallic paintwork with an Anodised Blue Colour Pack and 18" Crosslight diamond-cut alloy wheels. Key standard equipment includes gloss black painted door mirrors, body-colour door handles, side windows with chrome detailing, rear privacy glass, Citroën LED Vision headlights, LED front fog lights with cornering function, LED daytime running lights in 'V' signature, Citroën Connected Nav, driver's head-up display, Citroën Smart Pad Support, heated front seats, multi-function heated deluxe leather steering wheel, remote locking with deadlocks, wireless smartphone charging, high-level acoustic insulation pack, cruise

control with speed limiter, front & side & rear parking sensors, rear camera with top rear vision, anti-theft alarm, and automatic dual-zone air-conditioning, along with a suite of advanced driver assistance systems and cutting-edge in-car entertainment technology. The electric motor is extremely smooth and very refined in its operation, while road noise is impressively suppressed. The steering is very light at low speeds and it firms up slightly at higher speeds, providing excellent feedback to the driver at all times. The large windscreen provides excellent outward visibility and it also makes the high-quality cabin feel bright and airy.

Verdict, Pricing & Warranty.

The new Citroën ë-C4 X is a very relaxing car to drive thanks to its comfortable ride quality, effortless steering and ergonomically-designed driver cockpit. Its smooth power delivery, intuitive touchscreen system and large boot make the new ë-C4 X a worthy contender for class honours, as does its amazing value-for-money starting price of just €33,418.

My range-topping test car specification is priced from just €35,376 (Pricing is inclusive of current Government EV incentives - terms & conditions apply).

JOINT OIREACHTAS DISABILITY MATTERS COMMITTEE MEMBERS WITNESS TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF NATIONAL LEARNING NETWORK

Members of the Joint Oireachtas Disability Matters Committee visited National Learning Network (NLN) Ballyfermot on the 14th of February as part of a campaign by the specialist training provider to access funds and support to safeguard its future. NLN, the education and training division of the Rehab Group, provides life-changing education and training. Each year, NLN empowers thousands of people with disabilities and mental health challenges across communities in Ireland to achieve qualifications, develop resilience skills, progress to further and higher education, and secure jobs.

Since last year, National Learning Network students have been writing to their local public representatives to highlight the positive impact that NLN has had on so many people's lives and to ask for support to sustain this life-changing education and training service into the future. This campaign, 'Letters for Learning', saw students presenting their letters to public

representatives at Leinster House in December.

Recently, members of the Joint Oireachtas Disability Matters Committee, including Deputy Michael Moynihan, Deputy Pauline Tully, Deputy Dessie Ellis, Senator Mary Seery Kearney, Senator Eileen Flynn, and Senator Tom Clonan, convened with NLN Ballyfermot students. The students shared their journeys and experiences, underscoring the critical role that NLN plays in their lives. NLN's impact extends far beyond individual success stories; it fosters higher earning capabilities, tax contributions, and reduced reliance on social welfare, benefiting individuals and society. NLN specialises in catering to diverse needs, including those of autistic individuals or those who struggle in conventional educational settings.

Since 2020, over 1,653 NLN students have progressed to further and higher education, while an additional 950 have secured employment, including placements in esteemed companies such

as Meta, Cook Medical, and Mr. Price. NLN's personalised approach continues to break barriers, enabling thousands to participate actively in society, access education, and secure meaningful employment.

Despite its invaluable contributions, NLN faces funding shortfalls, with core funding remaining stagnant since 2011. The urgent need for a sustainable funding model to cover essential costs and address the diverse needs of students is paramount. NLN advocates for a multi-annual funding approach to ensure the continuity of its transformative services.

Lucianne Bird, Director of Learning at the Rehab Group, emphasised NLN's holistic approach, empowering each student to overcome limitations and embrace opportunities for inclusion in society. "The visit of the Committee to NLN Ballyfermot underscores the significance of NLN's mission and the pressing need for adequate funding to continue its life-changing work. We are delighted Committee

members took the time this week to visit one of our centres and to hear first-hand the impact NLN makes on people's lives every day. NLN remains committed to its core philosophy of leaving no one behind, but the

looming funding challenges threaten its ability to fulfil this commitment.

A robust funding model is imperative to sustain NLN's invaluable services and ensure accessibility for

those who need it most." National Learning Network has multiple locations across Dublin, including Tallaght, Stillorgan, Swords, Phibsboro, Mulhuddart, Ballyfermot, and the city centre.



Pictured Members of Oireachtas Joint Committee on Disability Matters visit students and staff of National Learning Network Ballyfermot centre on the 14th of February.

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DAILY PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH FOR EMPLOYMENT Dear St. Joseph, You were yourself once faced with the responsibility of providing the necessities of life for Jesus and Mary. Look down with Fatherly compassion upon me in my anxiety over my present inability to support my family.

Please help me to find gainful employment very soon, so that this heavy burden of concern will be lifted from my heart, and that I am soon able to provide for those whom God has entrusted to my care. Help us to guard against bitterness and discouragement so that we may emerge from this trial spiritually enriched and with even greater blessing from God. Amen P.M

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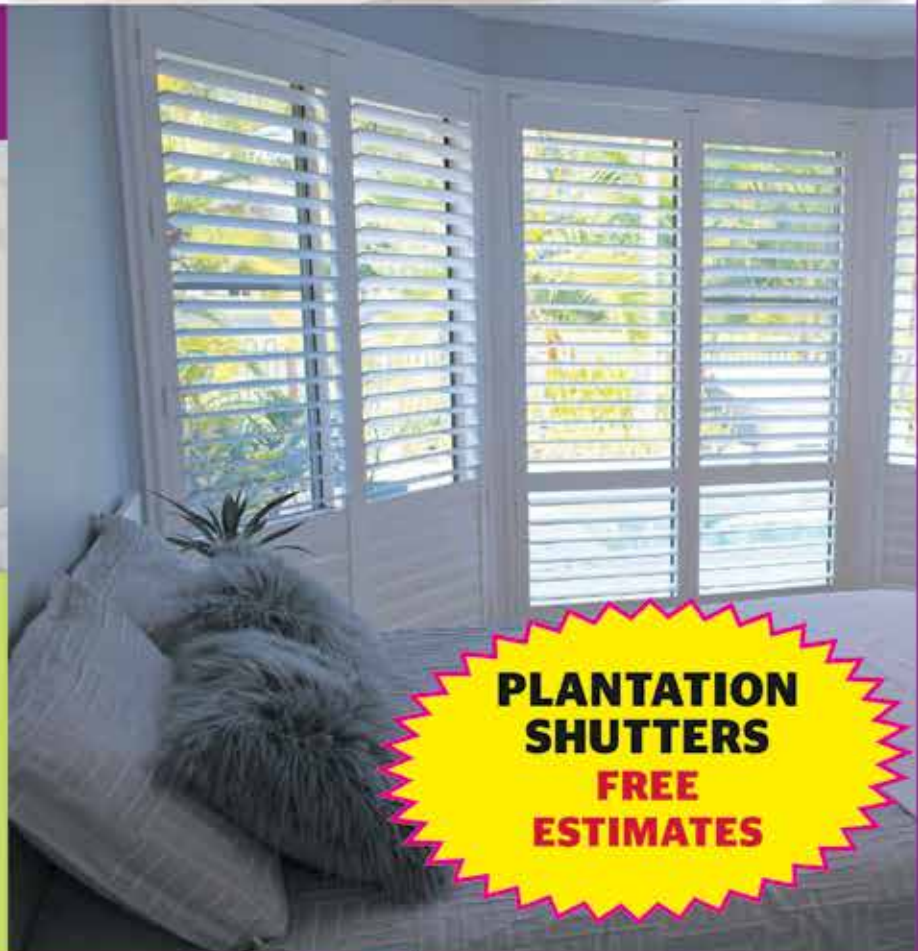
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