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NEW DRIVING TEST CENTRE MUST BE A PRIORITY FOR NEW GOVERNMENT

TD for Dublin South West Seán Crowe has said that the opening of a new driving test centre in South Dublin must be a priority for the new Transport Minister when they are named. Teachta Crowe's comments came as RSA figures revealed that over 17,000 people were on the waiting list in Tallaght testing centre at the start of November.

This represented 10% of the total backlog out 60 testing centres, demonstrating that Tallaght is far and away the

most oversubscribed centre in the state.

Teachta Crowe said "For several years now, I have been highlighting the need for a new driving test centre in south Dublin to cope with the massive backlog in driving test applications. People are waiting six months for a test in Tallaght if they're lucky and it is simply not good enough.

"RSA figures reveal that over 17,000 people were on the waiting list in Tallaght

testing centre at the start of November. This represented 10% of the total backlog out 60 testing centres, demonstrating that Tallaght is far and away the most oversubscribed centre in the state.

"Tallaght and Dún Laoghaire are first and third when it comes to the sheer number of people waiting on a test. Additional testers in centres has only stemmed the problem, but it is not a solution. We must have a new testing centre to

alleviate the pressure on Tallaght and allow people to complete their driving test.

"While we should always look to public transport as or first option, that is not always a practical solution for people who are working or taking care of children. We are forcing some to put their lives on hold for want of a simple driving test. Whoever is named the new Transport Minister and whatever form the Department takes, a new driving test centre in south Dublin must be a priority."

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GREENSHINE TO PLAY ÁRAS CHRÓNÁIN

"The Sound of a Family immersed in music, tight in harmony, in love with song. Shine on Greenshine" - Christy Moore

Cork Playlist 'Band of the Year', Greenshine is an RTE Folk Awards nominated trio, consisting of Mary Greene, Noel Shine and their daughter Ellie who will perform at the beautiful Áras Chrónáin in Clondalkin on Saturday 8th of February.

Greenshine's music straddles the boundaries of Folk, Indie and Americana with outstanding harmonies, skillful stringwork and critically acclaimed

songwriting. RTE's John Creedon said of the band: "They have produced one great track after the next over the last few years." Their latest album **NEW MOON ON FRIDAY** was awarded "Album of the Week" on many radio stations including BBC Scotland & BBC Ulster while six singles from the collection were included on the RTE Radio 1 Recommends Lists with 'Sweet Dreams' reaching the #1 spot in the station's Airplay Chart.

Greenshine's beautiful 'The Girl in the Lavender Dress' went on to be 2nd most played Irish track in the year

of its release on RTE Radio 1, launching the trio into the consciousness of music lovers far and wide. Noel and Mary have leant their talents to the recordings of other artists such as Christy Moore,

The Republic of Loose, John Spillane and many more. Listen out for Ellie's voice on TG4's cartoon show 'Gus, An Ridire Beag Bideach'! The trio's latest single 'CORK', has received extensive

airplay on many stations up and down the country, along with RTE Radio 1, BBC Radio Scotland and WRFG Atlanta Georgia - surprising for a song that was composed to celebrate a particular city!

People have responded to the Universal love of place all people have for their home of choice.

Tickets on sale now from Eventbrite.



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REGULATION OF CAMHS MUST BE IN THE PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Mark Ward TD, has called on the incoming government to include the regulation of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in the programme for government. Deputy Ward has called on the regulation of CAMHS to be prioritised within the first 100 days of the new government. Teachta Ward said "Reports are emerging that a programme for government has essentially been agreed between Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and some Independent TDs. "This Programme for government must include the regulation of CAMHS. "The outgoing Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael government failed to prioritise our young

people following multiple reviews and reports into CAMHS which highlighted the need for regulation. They left CAMHS unregulated under the Mental Health Act 2001.

"The Mental Health Act 2001 is outdated, it has long been called for to be reformed and it seems like it was a false promise to do so in the last programme for government over 4 years ago. "There are real life consequences to this not passing. CAMHS is still unregulated under the Mental Health Act 2001, and following the Maskey report and the Mental Health Commission's review into CAMHS, the concern is that

there still is no independent insight or regulation. "The recommendations made by the Mental Health Commission were brought about because children were being misdiagnosed, over medicated, falling off that cliff edge at 18. We also have children with a dual diagnosis of autism and mental health, falling through the cracks. "CAMHS needs to be a safe place for children to get help, and the vast majority of staff are working to their best of their ability.

"There are no guarantees to families and young people that issues highlighted in these reports will not happen again. "I introduced legislation that would regulate CAMHS but the government kicked this down the road in favour of their own Bill which they failed to pass in time. Their gamble with young people's mental health has not paid off, and young people will lose out as a result.

"I will be reintroducing my legislation to ensure that the new government does the

right thing and that they do regulate CAMHS within their first 100 days. "Young people

and their families cannot wait any longer for this to happen. We now need a

government that will finally do the right thing for young people's mental health."

WELLBEING RESET 2025 AT THE CIVIC THEATRE

On Sunday, February 2nd, 2025, the Civic Theatre will host Wellbeing Reset 2025: Transform Your Mindset and Embrace Growth. This event is designed to inspire personal growth, promote wellness, and provide practical tools to help attendees reset their mindset and enhance their lives.

The event will feature three exceptional speakers, including myself, delivering thought-provoking talks on wellness, personal development, and mental health. The program includes an interactive self-reflection session and opportunities for audience engagement, making it a truly immersive experience.

Importantly, all proceeds from the event will be

donated to Jigsaw Dublin community. South West, a charity dedicated to supporting youth mental health in our community. For more details, please visit www.civictheatre.ie.

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The programme was officially launched at a reception at Rathfarnham Castle this morning. Cllr. Baby Pereppadan, Mayor of South Dublin said, "This year is a special year for two reasons; One, Tradfest celebrates its 20th anniversary of showcasing the best established, and emerging

musical talent, and two, the music festival is coming to South Dublin County for the first time. This will mean that local audiences, and visitors to our county, can experience world class music from Irish and international artists in South Dublin at the largest music festival of its kind to ever take place in our county.

The promoters of TradFest have brought together a wonderful selection of artists such as Peggy Seegar, Ralph McTell, Phelim Drew, and Systir, amongst others, to perform in an array of historic, and atmospheric buildings in South Dublin, from the likes of Áras Chrónáin, and the Round Tower Visitor Centre in Clondalkin, to St Maelruains' Church in Tallaght, to the recently renovated Court of Petty Sessions in Rathcoole, and to the brand new Glenasmole Community Centre in the heart of the Dublin mountains. Furthermore, I would like to note that South Dublin

County Council has worked with local organisations and businesses to programme an exciting range of fringe events which will bring that festival feel to Rathcoole, Tallaght and Clondalkin villages, and provide a performance outlet for local talent."

The exciting line up of events taking place in South Dublin will include: Two in conversation events with the legend that is Peggy Seeger (23rd Jan), and a familiar face to TradFest audiences Ralph McTell (24th Jan). An exciting line up of unmissable performances including renowned fiddler Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh (25th Jan), acclaimed harpist Laoise Kelly (24th Jan), Dublin-born singer and bouzouki player Daorí Farrell (25th Jan), rising trad stars Cuas and gaelic singer Pdraig Jack (25th Jan), new and eclectic musical voice group SYSTIR (24th Jan), son of legendary Dubliner Ronnie Drew, actor and musician Phelim Drew on the songs

and stories of Ronnie and The Dubliners (26th Jan) and many more. Try your hand at bodhrán workshops for adults and children. Get your toes tapping at an open Trad session for all to join at Tallaght Library (25th Jan). A Trad Trail of music and ballad sessions across six local venues and pubs across

Clondalkin in late afternoon and early evening (23rd - 25th Jan). And Glenasmole Community Centre Family Fun Céilí (25th Jan - 2.30pm) Full details of all TradFest events taking place in South Dublin as part of TradFest 2025 as well as dates / times / ticket prices (where

applicable) go to Tradfest.com. TradFest is produced by The Temple Bar Company with support from The Arts Council, Diageo, Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Ireland, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County Council, Dublin City Council, Culture Ireland, The OPW and RTE Supporting the Arts.



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AOIFE'S SLIMMING WORLD JOURNEY

Aoife who has recently opened a new Slimming World group at the Plaza Hotel in Tallaght talks about her Slimming World journey over the last three years "For many years I have struggled with my weight, trying many different diets where I would restrict myself and hope for a quick fix. However, in January 2022 I decided to

change that and make what was going to be the best decision of my life. I joined Slimming World".

The Tallaght Mam commented "As a Mam to seven-year-old twins at the time, I wanted to be able to run around with them, but this was not something I could do. They would ask me to join them

in the playground, I was too embarrassed to do this, but I couldn't tell them that, so I just said not today girls! When they went to bed, I often ordered a takeaway for myself, it would have been enough for the three of us, but it was all for me. I was tired and this is what I would tell myself when I was ordering. I needed to become healthier for them".

The new Tallaght consultant continued "When I joined Slimming World in January 2022, it wasn't my first rodeo, I had joined Slimming World before, but this time was different. I was nervous going back, but as I walked through the doors, I was met with a big smile from my consultant Christine, and I felt right at home. She talked me through the healthy eating plan, Food Optimising, food planner and body magic. Now instead of ordering a takeaway when the girls went to bed, I was making a fakeaway.

As a busy, working Mam I had to learn how to juggle life and following the Slimming World plan. Little changes

like planning my meals for the week ahead and doing the shopping list from those meals helped, it meant that we had the ingredients in that were needed but we also knew what we were having each evening".

In 2023, Aoife found out she was expecting a baby but she just adapted her Slimming World plan, she said "Fast forward to May 2023 and I found out I was pregnant. I knew that Slimming World had a pregnancy plan that I could follow, and that's exactly what I did. After I had my son in December 2023, I couldn't wait to get back to group - the 6 weeks wait postpartum felt longer than my pregnancy!"

Aoife concluded "Before I started, I was insecure and hid behind my clothes. Today, thanks to my six stone weight loss with Slimming World, I am confident. I no longer hide under my clothes; I wear them with confidence. I run around with the twins in the playground, and I'm not embarrassed anymore, I love to join in with them on the swings and

even the zipline. Join Aoife in the new Slimming World group at The Plaza Hotel,

Belgard Square, Tallaght on Tuesdays at 7.00pm. Call/group at The Plaza Hotel, text 085 229 4182.



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TU DUBLIN EMPOWERS WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS WITH NEW TRAILBLAZHER FIRST STEPS PROGRAMME



Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) is breaking new ground in championing women entrepreneurs with the launch of its TrailblazHER™ First Steps Programme, a community-based initiative designed to empower women in the Dublin region to explore entrepreneurship and turn their business ideas into reality. TrailblazHER™, has received generous support from Intel Ireland, ESB, Fidelity Investments, Jones Engineering, Workday, Enterprise Mobility and PwC with this latest programme also supported by Enterprise Ireland and Local Enterprise Offices.

The launch event was attended by Emma Blain, Lord Mayor of Dublin; Emer Higgins, TD, Minister of State for Business, Employment, and Retail ; Emer Currie, TD for Dublin West; and Sinéad Gibney, TD for Dublin Rathdown. Attending the launch, Minister Higgins highlighted “I am really pleased to see the TrailblazHER™ First Steps Programme take centre stage in providing early-stage support for women considering entrepreneurship, self-employment and return to the workforce. Ireland is ambitious to be a leader in Europe when it comes to supporting women in employment and business, and initiatives like TrailblazHER™ further solidify our position as a progressive, forward-thinking nation.”

The programme is free of charge and open to women aged 18 and over, ensuring accessibility for those with limited means, no prior business experience, or those transitioning back into the workforce. This initiative builds on TU Dublin’s successful track record in supporting female-led businesses. In 2024, 53% of companies backed through Enterprise Ireland’s New Frontiers Programme at TU Dublin were women-led, a record for the university.

“At TU Dublin, we are committed to fostering an inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. The TrailblazHER™ First Steps Programme reflects our dedication to empowering women from all walks of life. With only 19% of Irish businesses currently women-led, this initiative aims to significantly increase that figure, paving the way for a more balanced

and diverse business landscape,” said Claire Mac Namee, Director of TrailblazHER™ and Head of Enterprise Engagement at TU Dublin.

Programme Highlights: **Free Access:** The programme is free of charge to all participants, thanks to generous financial support from TrailblazHER™ partner companies, including Intel Ireland, ESB, Fidelity Investments, Jones Engineering, Workday, Enterprise Mobility and PwC. **Tailored Support:** Designed for women at the critical early stages of entrepreneurship, the programme provides step-by-step guidance and connects participants with Ireland’s enterprise ecosystem. And **Progression Opportunities:** Participants gain access to pathways including TU Dublin’s incubation services, Enterprise Ireland’s supports, and Local Enterprise Offices.

The launch of the TrailblazHER™ First Steps Programme also showcased the success of women entrepreneurs supported by TU Dublin. Derya Sousa, CEO of Kianda, grew her tech company, supported by the New Frontiers Programme in 2017, to employ over 15 people at TU Dublin’s Blanchardstown incubator. Nicola Lyons, co-founder of Bánór, recently completed New Frontiers and is scaling her sustainable skincare business. Judy Ehiguese, CEO of SkynCap, is advancing her innovative reusable bald cap start-up through the New Frontiers Accelerate Programme. These entrepreneurs highlight TU Dublin’s pivotal role in empowering women-led ventures. Information sessions about the TrailblazHER™ First Steps will be held in four locations across Dublin during the last week of January. Attendees can choose the time and location that best suits them from the following options:

Locally on Wednesday 29th January 2025 at Rua Red, South Dublin Arts Centre, Tallaght, Dublin, D24 KV8N, 2pm to 5pm. Following these information sessions, Step 2 of the programme will commence on the 10th February comprising six half-day workshops taking place at TU Dublin’s Aungier Street. For more information or to register for the TrailblazHER™ First Steps Programme, visit www.TUDublin.ie/First-Steps.

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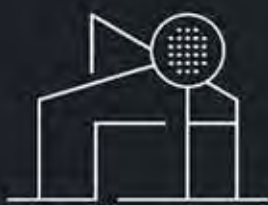
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16'8" x 12'6"	€3,900	N/A	+€510
20' x 9'6"	€3,900	N/A	+€510
20' x 12'6"	€4,550	N/A	+€590
23'3" x 12'6"	€5,840	N/A	+€630
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29'9" x 12'6"	€6,700	N/A	+€770



Shed Size	Price	+ Timber Floor	+Wood Grain
6'9" x 4'6"	€1350	+ €175	+ €175
6'9" x 6'6"	€1450	+€175	+ €175
8' x 4'6"	€1500	+€175	+ €175
8' x 6'6"	€1550	+ €250	+ €225
8' x 8'	€1700	+ €250	+ €250

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DEARBHLA TOAL FROM BELLE AZZURE FRONTS DENIM DAY FOR DEMENTIA FOR THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND

Online Content Creator, Digital Marketer & Mum of two Dearbhla Toal from Belle Azzure calls on people to get involved with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (The ASI)'s 8th annual Denim Day for Dementia fundraising campaign on Friday, 28th February and raise vital funds for dementia supports and services. Dearbhla, The ASI's newest ambassador is asking everyone to come together and wear denim - at your school, office, creche, the choice is yours -

to support the 64,000 people living with dementia and their families in Ireland.

The cause is very close to Dearbhla's heart, making this campaign especially meaningful to her. Dearbhla said Speaking ahead of the launch of the campaign, Dearbhla said: "There are over half a million people across the country whose families have been affected by dementia; it's a reality that many of us will know someone living with this

condition, or we will know their families. This figure is going to continue to rise into the future and that's why I'm getting behind Denim Day for Dementia. The work The Alzheimer Society of Ireland does in supporting those living with the condition and their families is absolutely vital and fully deserving of all our efforts to back them in their incredible work - please sign up for Denim Day now on alzheimer.ie."

The ASI needs to raise €4 million in 2025 to maintain much needed supports and services, including National Helpline, Day Care, Day Care at Home, Home Care, Family Carer Training, Social Clubs, and Alzheimer's Cafes.

Nikki Keegan, Interim Head of Fundraising at The ASI said: "We're so excited to have Dearbhla from Belle Azzure front our campaign. She has such a passion for our work, and we are so

grateful for her support in raising funds and awareness for vital dementia services. Denim Day is a fun and easy campaign for people to get involved with - it is essential to help us maintain the standards of care that

we provide. I encourage anyone who can to thread themselves in denim and get together on the 28th of February for people affected by dementia in Ireland."

To get involved, members of

the public are encouraged to order their free Denim Day for Dementia pack by registering online at www.alzheimer.ie or by contacting The ASI's Fundraising Team at fundraising@alzheimer.ie or (01) 207 3800.



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The Course

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LUKE CLERKIN TO RELEASE DEBUT ALBUM ON JANUARY 31ST

Renowned Dublin Singer Songwriter, Luke Clerkin, is set to release his much anticipated debut album 'Orpheus' on January 31st. The album was recorded over a period of time between 2023 and 2024 and it was produced by Clerkin's close friend and frequent collaborator, Gavin Doyle. It was recorded between Doyle's home studio in Clondalkin, North Clondalkin Library and Block C Studios, with additional piano being recorded remotely in Iceland. It was mastered by Martin Quinn in Jam Studios in Kells. The album explores themes such as mental health, love, heartbreak, healing, and grief. The title comes from the Greek tale of Orpheus and Eurydice which Clerkin relates back to his own experience of love and heartbreak.

Talking about recording the album, Luke said 'We spent a lot of time recording this album and trying to get it perfect but sometimes that's what got in the way of things. It's ironic because the theme of the album for me is about

getting out of your own way, and honestly, if I kept trying to get it perfect, I probably wouldn't be releasing it! We faced so many other hurdles trying to get it over the line, one of them being a repetitive strain injury that I picked up, which put me out of action for two months. Gav also had some personal issues occur in his life, so I'm very grateful that we got it

done and finished.'

On the album itself Luke said 'When I was planning the album, I wanted it to have two halves, and I feel that's the way it should be listened to. The first half has some of my oldest songs as well as some new ones written since Covid. The second half is almost like a concept piece as it

explores my journey from an almost love, to something that never was, to the beginning of my first proper relationship and everything that comes with that, two songs for each person and situation. I'm very proud of this body of work and I think it really displays the kind of songwriter and singer that I am, more than anything that I've released before.'



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NCI'S SAMI LAB TEAM MEMBERS PROUDLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE IRISH JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND OTHER TECH NEWS OUTLETS

A dedicated team of researchers at National College of Ireland's SAMI Lab have proudly contributed to the Educational Research Centre's Irish Journal of Education.

The Irish Journal of Education (IJE) is a peer-reviewed, open access journal that is published by the Educational Research Centre (ERC). Usually, there are just six articles published per year. First established in 1966 in St. Patrick's College in Drumcondra, the ERC is recognized internationally as a centre of excellence in research, assessment and evaluation in education. In 2025, it was established as a designated statutory body of the Department of Education.

The study entitled "Mental Health Among Third-Level Students in Ireland During COVID-19," presented by Dr David Mothersill, Dr Gerard Loughnane, Dr April Hargreaves, and Hau Nguyen aimed to examine levels of mental ill-health and predictive factors of mental ill-health in third-level students in Ireland during COVID-19. Many factors were considered in this study such as relationship status, LGBTI status, pre-existing mental health conditions, and various life factors

to assess whether these variables predicted probable diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD), depression, or anxiety.

"Working in academia I am very aware of the various difficulties that our students face. We have already seen a steady decline in the mental health of young people globally over the past 20 years; from a mental illness prevalence of approximately 15% to a prevalence closer to 50%. The worry was that the COVID pandemic and its resultant loss of the important social networks that students spoke of, would exacerbate this mental health decline." - Dr April Hargreaves, Associate Professor of Psychology at NCI.

The mental health of 268 third-level students during COVID-19 were examined in this study through logistic regression analysis. This study found that, given prior evidence that social isolation predicts negative mental health outcomes, and the association between negative change in social life and probable negative mental health outcomes observed in our study, future research should examine ways of increasing

opportunities for social engagement among students attending online and blended third-level courses in Ireland. A key finding to this study is that students who reported a negative change to their social life experienced greater levels of mental ill health than their peers who reported either no social change or a positive social change. This is important as it suggests that it is not the change in social interaction itself that causes difficulty for a person's mental health, it is the perception that the change in social interaction is negative.

"Having seen the stress third-level students were under during the pandemic, we are really proud of our new study examining mental health in students during this time. We are delighted to see this work published in the Irish Journal of Education, which is internationally recognized." - Dr David Mothersill, Assistant Professor, Programme Director of Psychology at NCI.

There is also the potential for a broader scope of studies to be undertaken as more research is needed to examine mental health in a larger population of third-level students to have results that can be used

more broadly. The findings of this study highlight the need to promote community engagement and social opportunities for third-level students, particularly noting a need to develop online student services such as online counselling services for students doing online courses.

Dr April Hargreaves further stated "I am delighted to see this research published in the Irish Journal of Education - a perfect platform for our findings due to the readership

it attracts. Deepening our understanding of the nuances of student needs is the first step in creating a learning environment that fosters positive outcomes for all. Our students need space not only to learn but also to grow and connect where they feel safe and supported."

Following this publication, Dr David Mothersill, Dr April Hargreaves shared further insights into their research and its significance on SiliconRepublic.com.

Since going online in 2001, SiliconRepublic.com has gone from being Ireland's number one resource for science and technology news with countless awards to its name, to one of the leading online publications in Europe with 250,000 sessions each month.

It is fantastic that they were able to utilise this impressive platform to discuss their academic journeys to date as well as illustrating their current and future research goals in further detail.



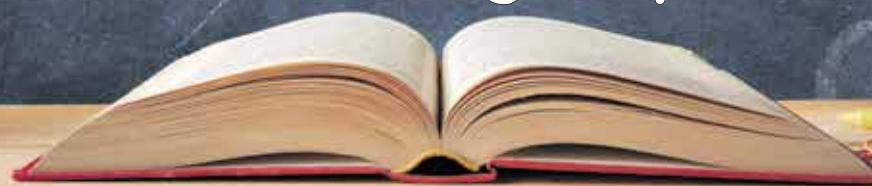
Pictured from left to right: Dr David Mothersill, Dr April Hargreaves, and Dr Gerard Loughnane from National College of Ireland's SAMI Lab.

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SCHOOLS INVITED TO REGISTER FOR FREE LAW SOCIETY LEGAL AMBITIONS PROGRAMME FOR TRANSITION YEAR

Schools are encouraged to sign up to Law Society Legal Ambitions, an innovative Transition Year (TY) module, to give students the opportunity to learn about the law and explore a future career as a solicitor.

Over 1,000 students from schools across Dublin participated in the course in 2024 as part of the Law Society's continued work to widen access to legal training. Over the course of a dynamic four-week online programme, participants are immersed in interactive online lessons where they learn about interesting areas of law such as Criminal Law, Employment Law, Human Rights, Climate Justice, Juvenile Justice, and the Children Court.

The success of Law Society Legal Ambitions is largely attributed to its accessibility and flexibility, and a curriculum that meets the highest standards of content delivery. Teachers can access

video lessons and information booklets released over four weeks, fitting into the school timetable. Students also benefit from the ability to study alone or in groups, offering flexibility to accommodate different learning styles. Student feedback has shown that the programme content is engaging and easy to understand, with many now considering a career as a solicitor as a result. President of the Law Society Eamon Harrington said, "Each year, thousands of students across the country take part in the Law Society's school outreach programmes to learn about the legal and justice system, their rights, and how the law helps shape our society.

The Law Society is proud to build on its longstanding commitment to widening access to legal training through tailor-made, complementary initiatives including Law Society Legal Ambitions. "In response to

exceptional demand and feedback each year, the Law Society delivers a range of programmes to engage young people with the law, the importance of access to justice, and the role every person can play to protect the rights of all in our communities. Increasing early access to legal education is a priority for the Law Society because we believe that a diverse legal profession is fundamental to a progressive, modern Ireland. "Popular with students and teachers alike, Legal Ambitions is just one of the Law Society's school outreach programmes aimed at expanding access to the law for young people. Schools can also engage with other Law Society student initiatives including Solicitors of the Future, Street Law, and the Gráinne O'Neill National Legal Essay Competition.

"We encourage all schools to sign up to Law Society Legal Ambitions to experience

first-hand how the law impacts every aspect of life and to inspire students to pursue a rewarding career in the legal profession."

details are available on the Law Society website www.lawsociety.ie/public/Public-Legal-Education/TY

Applications close on 17 January 2025. Registration

LUCAN STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM DCU

Twelve separate ceremonies took place in the Mahony Hall in The Helix on DCU's Glasnevin campus recently, featuring students from the university's five faculties; the DCU Business School, the Institute of Education, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Science & Health, and the Faculty of Engineering & Computing.



Pictured Stanko Lazarevic, Lucan, Dublin with Sean Maraveles, Carrigallen, Leitrim and Evan Martin, Lucan, Dublin who received a BA in Aviation Management in during DCU's Autumn Graduation ceremony. Pic credit: Kyran O'Brien / DCU Communications



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VW TOUAREG 'R' EHYBRID IS FAST & FRUGAL



By Breda Corrigan

The new Touareg 'R' eHybrid is the hottest version of Volkswagen's large, all-wheel drive SUV, and it is currently the most powerful Volkswagen ever made. Producing a hefty 462bhp and 700Nm of torque, it is capable of sprinting from 0-100km/h in just 5.2-seconds, on its way to a top speed of 250km/h (where permitted).

By selecting 'E mode', drivers can experience all-electric driving at speeds of up to 140km/h with a sufficiently-charged battery, and the 14.3kWh battery provides the electric motor with enough power to cover up to 50km on electric power alone. Now in its third-generation, the new version of VW's high-tech flagship SUV represents the continuation of a now tried, tested and proven concept, and it represents the symbiosis of high performance and electric efficiency.

Sporty, Understated Design.

The new Touareg R eHybrid version takes the elegant look of its predecessor and enhances it even further, as the iconic appearance of the new model is extended with carefully selected design elements. Additionally, the standard 'Black Style' design package affords the Touareg a stylish presence in a premium, understated look. Exterior highlights include IQ.Light HD matrix headlights in a new 6-lens design with a new signature light element, a new front grille with a horizontal light strip, new boot lid with LED

light design with dynamic indicators, an illuminated rear Volkswagen logo, R-specific blue brake callipers with 'R' logo, a 'Black Style' exterior package, and the choice of two new colours: Chili Red and Silicone Grey Matt. Cabin occupants will appreciate the upgraded interior equipment with R-specific differentiation, along with soft door trims for a higher quality look and feel, atmospheric ambient light with individual lighting options, and an Innovision Cockpit with a large 15-inch display that features a new infotainment system as standard.

The navigation system has also been updated with more detailed maps and more conversational voice control. The most obvious change inside the cabin is the new steering wheel, complete with touch-sensitive controls. The high-quality cabin is refined and reassuringly solid, with lots of soft-touch materials used throughout. There is plenty of room for front and rear seat passengers, and the boot has a cargo capacity of 665-litres behind the rear seats, with this figure increasing to 1,675-litres with the rear seats folded.

Five-Star Safety.

The new Touareg gets more standard safety systems than any other VW product, with cutting-edge sensors and safety features ready to protect occupants in the event of a crash, as well as systems designed to stop a crash happening in the first place. The

regular Volkswagen Touareg achieved a full five-star safety rating when it was tested by Euro NCAP.

Test Car Details.

My test car was a Touareg 'R' eHybrid, which was finished in Grenadilla Black Metallic paintwork, with optional 21-inch 'Leeds' diamond-turned black alloy wheels, and it looked stunning in the Autumnal sunshine. The mighty 3.0-litre V6 petrol engine works in conjunction with the electric motor and battery pack to produce outstanding performance and, whether driving around town or cruising along a motorway, driver enjoyment is guaranteed. When driving on electric power alone, the result is smooth and silent progression and, even when the petrol engine cuts in, the silence isn't spoiled. However, under harsh acceleration, the engine becomes vaguely vocal, but the beautiful sound of the 3.0-litre engine is pleasingly addictive. The Touareg 'R' eHybrid comes with self-levelling, height-adjustable air suspension, and it proves truly beneficial when it comes to overall ride comfort. Road surface imperfections and speed ramps can be tackled with ease, and even larger potholes are isolated with incredible composure. Tight body control ensures minimal body roll through sharp bends, and the nicely-weighted steering is accurate and responsive. For such a large SUV, the Touareg handles neatly and it feels well connected to the road at all times.

The high-set driving position (with multiple electric-adjustment options) provides terrific all-round visibility, and the standard front and rear parking sensors, along with front and rear cameras, make parking a doddle. The 3.0-litre TFSI petrol engine in union with the Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV) system has a combined emission figure of 48g/km, and this results in annual road tax of just €140. Similarly impressive is the official combined fuel consumption figure of 2.3l/100km, but this greatly depends on a number of factors, such as whether every journey is undertaken with a fully-charged battery, along with road conditions, weather conditions and individual driving style. As the flagship model in Volkswagen's passenger car line-up, the regular Touareg literally wants for nothing in terms of comfort, convenience, safety, security, connectivity and infotainment features, but the additional sporty design elements and standard equipment found in the 'R' eHybrid make it extra-special in every way.

Verdict & Pricing.

The new Volkswagen Touareg 'R' eHybrid is a highly commendable large SUV that provides drivers with sports car-rivalling performance, impressive cabin and boot space, an outstanding array of standard features, and the realistic running costs associated with an advanced petrol/electric hybrid powertrain. The Touareg 'R' eHybrid is priced from €103,050 (ex-delivery).

APPLICATIONS OPENING FOR 90 TWO-BED COST RENTAL HOMES IN TALLAGHT AT MORE THAN 25% BELOW MARKET VALUE

Clúid Housing, Ireland's leading Approved Housing Body (AHB), is re-opening applications for 90 of the two-bed Cost Rental apartments at its new development at Airtón Plaza, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Applications for new Cost Rental homes at Airtón Plaza, Tallaght, Dublin 24, opened on Wednesday 15th of January and will close at 5pm on Wednesday 29th of January. Interested applicants will be able to register their interest for one of the 90 brand new, A-rated two-bed apartments, with a rent of €1,715 per month.

This rent is a 27% discount

on comparable homes in the area. In addition to the low cost to run these brand-new homes, Cost Rental residents will also benefit from secure, life-long tenancies and high-quality, responsive management and maintenance.

The homes within the Airtón Plaza development are spread across two main blocks connected by a central landscaped courtyard. The scheme will feature commercial spaces, retail units, a creche and outdoor communal space, including a children's play area.

Airtón Plaza is close to many

amenities, including Tallaght Hospital, TU Dublin Tallaght campus, and shopping and leisure amenities such as the Belgard Retail Park and The Square shopping centre. The homes benefit from excellent transport links and are close to bus and Luas routes.

These beautiful new homes are ready to be occupied. The one-bed, three-bed and many of the two-bed apartments have already been allocated, following an initial application period in November. Residents will begin to move into these apartments in the coming weeks.

Brian O'Gorman, Chief Executive Officer, Clúid Housing, said "These fabulous homes in Airtón Plaza, Tallaght, are proving very popular. We are re-opening applications to complete the letting of 90 two-bed apartments. This will give 90 households who missed out on applying last time the opportunity for a high-quality, secure, long-term home at a fair rent. We urge anyone who is interested in living in one of these homes to check their eligibility and apply online at www.cluid.ie"

Cost Rental is a new, secure form of rental housing

tenure in Ireland, designed for people whose income means they don't qualify for social housing or other support, such as HAP, but who still struggle to rent on the open market.

All Cost Rental homes have their rents set at a minimum level of 25% below the local market rents. The rents in Cost Rental homes are set to cover the cost of construction, maintenance, and operation of the development, ensuring long-term affordability for residents.

To be eligible to rent one of these new Cost Rental homes, applicants must be able to prove:

Their net household income is below €66,000 per year

They are not receiving any social housing supports, such as HAP or Rent Supplement

They can afford the rent

They don't own a property

The household is the correct size for the home

These new Cost Rental homes were delivered by Clúid in partnership with South Dublin County Council, and with the support of the Department of

Housing, Heritage and Local Government, The Housing Agency and the Housing Finance Agency. They were

developed by Mableground Ltd with Glenbrier Construction as the main contractor.

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MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. H.B

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your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. P.R

MIRACLE PRAYER Dear Heart of Jesus in the past I have asked for many favours. This time I ask you for a very special one. Take it, dear Heart of Jesus, and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in His merciful eyes it will become your favour and not mine. Amen. Say this prayer for three days. Promise publication and favour will be granted no matter how impossible. Never known to fail. B.F

O Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and earth, I humbly beseech thee, from the bottom of my heart, to succor me in this necessity; there are none that can withstand thy power. Oh, show me in this that thou art my Mother! O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. D.D

If you would like a Novena published please send a postal order or cheque (Minimum of €10 per prayer) made out to Laura Lynn Children's Hospice, along with your Novena to: NEWSGROUP, Unit 3 Floor 2 St Dominics Shopping Centre, St Dominics Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24. If you require any further information please call 01 45 19 000 or email: info@newsgroup.ie.



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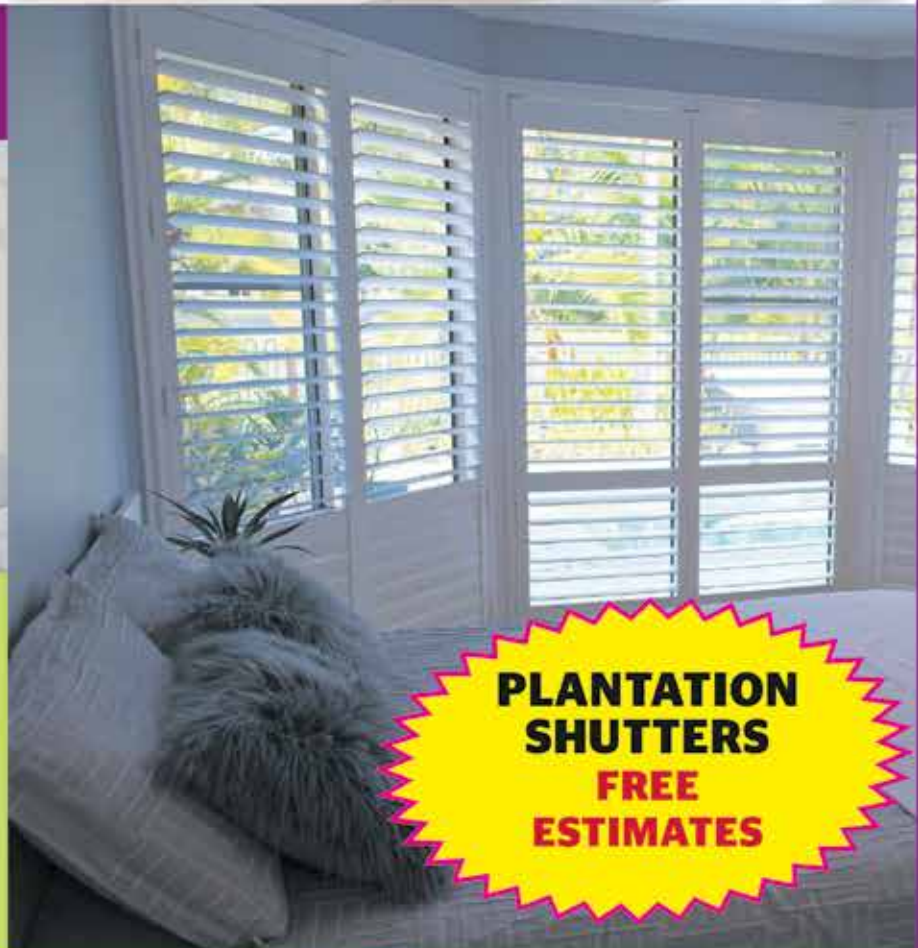
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