



2024 ISSUE 5

# IRISH MOTOR MANAGEMENT

THE SOCIETY OF THE IRISH MOTOR INDUSTRY



## Charging up for 2025

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**AFTERMARKET:  
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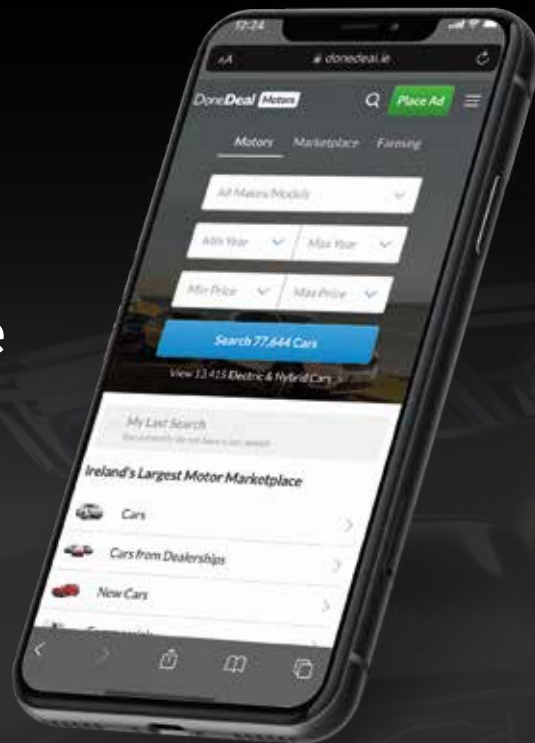
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## Charging up for 2025



As we approach the end of 2024, we reflect on the past year and plans for the upcoming year. In SIMI's recent sentiment survey, 2024 has been described by over half of our members as an 'OK' year, while the balance of respondents called it 'a good year'. With the economy performing well, employment at record levels, tax revenues strong and inflation coming down, it's fair to say that it has been an ok year. The year, of course, has not been without its challenges too: consumer spending was slower, cost of living increases, increases in the costs of doing business, the reduction in appetite for EVs among consumers, and recruitment challenges have all had an influence on business.

New car sales have been challenging throughout the course of the year, with total registrations to the end of November down 1% (120,783) on the same period last year (122,055). Demand for electric vehicles (EVs) has been disappointing for much of this year, a trend also reflected in many other European markets. In the commercial sector, both light and heavy commercial vehicle registrations saw a mixed performance of sales throughout the year, but activity year to date remains ahead for the commercial fleets, reflecting the overall growth in the Irish economy.

At a global level, the political landscape is changing rapidly, with elections and new leaders: the economic and political impact of these changes is yet to be seen. Only this month the fall of the Syrian regime brings further uncertainty, and with a Trump Presidency in the US imminent, now is not a time to be complacent. Following Ireland's general election, we await the formation of the new Government, which in all likelihood will only be finalised in the new year.

As we have emphasised on numerous occasions, Government policy must support the EV transition with ways to incentivise the market for both private and company car buyers. Reinstating supports and extending consumer incentives and Benefit-In-Kind support (BIK), along with investment in charging infrastructure now, will build consumer and business confidence to encourage uptake if we are to meet our 2025 target. The reduction (home charging grant, SEAI purchase grant) and removal of incentives (toll discount) not only have a monetary impact on consumers but also sends a negative message to Irish consumers about the Government's view of the transition to EVs.

A new programme for Government now has an opportunity to take decisive actions to regain the lost momentum; increase investment in EVs and not increase taxes on other vehicles if we want to support consumers in trading up to a newer lower emitting vehicle. Our Industry continues to remain fully committed in helping to achieve the Government's ambitious climate targets, which is evident with a greater range of EV models to the market in 2025. The supply of EVs is there, the Industry is making more and more of them. But Governments must do more. It is more than just EVs, of course. If Ireland is genuine about optimising emission reductions, then we must also look at taxation policy pertaining to ICE vehicles, as for the majority of motorists this is their only real choice.

(continued overleaf)



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Publishers: IFP Media Limited Irish Motor Management, Castlecourt, Monkstown Farm, Glenageary, Co Dublin. Tel: +353 1 709 6900 Email: joegriffin@ifpmedia.com

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(continued from page 3)

Since the last publication, SIMI held our annual VTN Conference/AGM, with presentations from the guest speakers and the RSA on progress and developments to date. The Society has held numerous events throughout the year, and I would like to thank our members and all our sponsors for their continued support. Our next big event will take place in February 2025 'The Irish Motor Industry Award' and we would encourage members to consider entering (see the details outlined in this publication).

The New Year brings uncertainty, but also opportunities for businesses. It is time for businesses to take stock, reset, plan,

and make improvements to tackle the year ahead.

On behalf of the SIMI Management Board and team, I would like to thank you for your support throughout the year. We wish all who work within the Motor Industry and their families a happy Christmas and a safe, healthy, positive, and prosperous New Year.

**Brian Cooke**  
**Director General,**  
**SIMI**

## NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS

SIMI has released the official 242 new vehicle registrations statistics for November, showing that new car registrations for the month of November were up 22% (1,123) when compared to November 2023 (921).

Registrations, year-to-date, are down 1% (120,783) on the same period last year (122,055). Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) declined by 30% (537) compared to November last year (767). Year-to-date LCVs are up 6.9% (30,700).

HGVs (Heavy Goods Vehicles) registrations are down 20% (96) in comparison to November 2023 (120). Year-to-date HGVs are up 8.8% (2,849). Imported Used Cars have seen a 2.4% (4,964) rise in November 2024, when compared to November 2023 (4,846). Year-to-date imports are up 23.5% (58,410) on 2023 (47,307).

In November 516 new electric cars were registered, which was 59.3% increase on the 324 registrations in November 2023. So far this year, 17,168 new electric cars have been registered representing a 24.2% decrease compared to the same period in 2023 when 22,653 electric cars were registered.

In the new car market share by engine type for 2024, Petrol cars continue to lead the new car market at 30.38% followed by Diesel at 22.86%, then Hybrid (Petrol Electric) at 20.95%,

Electric at 14.21%, and Plug-in Electric Hybrid at 10.05%.

Brian Cooke, SIMI Director General commented: "In November new car registrations increased by 22% when compared to the same month last year. Despite this increase, year-to-date registrations are down by 1%. Both light and heavy commercial vehicle registrations saw a decline in sales for November, but activity year to date remains ahead for the commercial fleets. The new electric car market, following nine months of decline, saw some improvement in November, with 516 new electric cars registered, representing a 59% increase from November 2023. However, year to date EV registrations are 24% lower than 2023. Hopefully, we are starting to turn a corner for Electric Vehicles following a very challenging year. With this in mind, the new Programme for Government must include increased support for the EV project, strong investment in incentives and in the charging infrastructure. As we approach the final few weeks of 2024, the Industry's focus is now firmly on its key selling period at the start of 2025 with generous incentives for customers to buy new cars across all brands and all market segments, members are hopeful for the busy start to 2025".

For more stats information: Visit the members portal [members.simi.ie](https://members.simi.ie)





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## IRISH CAR OF THE YEAR



The Renault Scenic E-Tech Electric was recently named as the 2025 Irish Car of the Year in association with Continental Tyres.

Members of the Motoring Media Association of Ireland (MMAI) hosted the awards event attended by Ireland's leading car brands, importers and distributors. The awards are voted on by the members of the MMAI who individually assess each new car model that is launched in Ireland each year. It is the fifth year in a row that an all-electric vehicle has been voted the Irish Car of the Year.

Chairman of the MMAI, Daragh Keany said: "Well done to Renault. This latest model is the fifth generation Scenic and the first full electric version. Our jurors were very impressed with the driving dynamics of the vehicle, the stylish design and the very generous 430km or long range 625km model with 220 horsepower, definitely a very worthy winner of the Irish Car of the Year title."

Tom Dennigan of awards sponsor, Continental Tyres said: "There was a high number of really excellent models in the hunt for our Irish Car of the Year award this year, but the Renault Scenic E-Tech Electric had what it takes to come out on top. The latest version of the Scenic is a stand-out design and with all the benefits of a zero emissions vehicle. What a great boost for the brand entering the busy January vehicle sales market with the Irish Car of the Year title under their belt."

The field of eligible cars for this year's awards were broken down into eight categories and then the overall winner was drawn from those eight models.

The Irish Car of the Year 2025 category winners:

- Irish Compact Car of the Year: Suzuki Swift
- Irish Compact SUV of the Year: Fiat 600
- Irish Medium SUV of the Year: Renault Scenic E-Tech Electric
- Irish Large Car of the Year: BYD Seal
- Irish Large SUV of the Year: Kia EV9
- Irish Executive Car of the Year: Mercedes Benz E-Class
- Irish Premium SUV / MPV: Polestar 3
- Irish Performance Car of the Year: Smart #3 Brabus

In the Irish Van of the Year awards programme for 2025, the overall Irish Van of the Year title was awarded to the Mercedes Benz Vito at the same event.

## STATIC IN MOTION EVENT

Bradys Castleknock CUPRA showroom was recently transformed into an electrifying hub of art, culture, and community spirit for the launch of "Static in Motion", a stunning art exhibition in collaboration with the talented William Kwaku Amo. According to the staff at Brady's, the event exceeded all expectations, with a fantastic turnout. Jack Chambers, TD and Minister for Finance, officially opened the exhibition alongside CUPRA Ireland's Head, Gaspar Alcaide. Their words perfectly captured the synergy between creativity and innovation that embodies William's artwork, Bradys Castleknock and the CUPRA brand.

Adding to the excitement, the launch coincided with the arrival of two exceptional new CUPRA models, the Terramar and the all-electric Tavascan. These vehicles, embodying bold design and cutting-edge technology, provided a spectacular backdrop to the evening, seamlessly tying art and automotive together.

Guests were treated to a vibrant atmosphere and there were many familiar faces, from local supporters to celebrities in attendance. Comedian and podcaster Mark Mehigan and Olympian Darragh Greene, both proud Bradys Brand Ambassadors, added an extra sparkle to the night. William Kwaku Amo was the star of the evening and he shared insights into his creative process: his passion and enthusiasm were contagious, making the event truly special for everyone present.

According to Brady's, the overwhelming positivity of the evening highlighted the power of working together and was a testament to how partnerships can inspire, uplift, and create something truly memorable.



**William Kwaku Amo at "Static in Motion" Bradys CUPRA Castleknock.**

## DRIVING INNOVATION IN WATERFORD



Auto Boland marked a significant milestone on Wednesday, December 11th, with the grand opening of their state-of-the-art Fiat, Jeep, and Alfa Romeo dealership, located at the Cork Road Roundabout, Butlerstown, Waterford.

The event, attended by automotive industry leaders and local dignitaries, was a memorable celebration of innovation and community. The evening featured inspiring addresses from guest speakers. Sean Connick, a former Fianna Fáil Minister of State, captivated the audience with stories about his father, John Connick, who worked in a Fiat Dealership in Ballybricken before opening his own Fiat dealership in New Ross in the late 1970s. Sean shared fond memories of working alongside his father at the New Ross dealership. He also noted that John Connick collaborated with Auto Boland later in his career during the early 1990s, until his unexpected passing. Reflecting on his time in government, Sean also shared insights into the evolution of the motor industry in Ireland.

Meanwhile, Anthony Boland Jnr., General Manager of the

dealership, thanked the numerous people who made the new dealership a reality and expressed his excitement for the future of Fiat, Jeep, and Alfa Romeo in Waterford. Adding a personal touch, he joked that now the dealership is complete, he might finally have something different to talk about at the dinner table.

Also speaking at the event was John Saunders, Managing Director of FCA Brands at Gowan Auto, who commented on the bright future of the three brands, not just in Waterford but across Ireland. Saunders noted the long history of collaboration between the Gowan Group and Auto Boland and expressed excitement about the next chapter in their partnership. With a touch of humor, he acknowledged that Auto Boland had proven to be tough businesspeople at times. Hugo Semichon, a representative from Stellantis, spoke passionately about the future of Fiat, Jeep, and Alfa Romeo in Ireland and Europe. Semichon highlighted Stellantis's commitment to providing innovative products to face the challenges of the new electric era of motoring. Adding a humorous anecdote, he recalled meeting Anthony Boland Jnr. years ago in Turin, where after a few drinks, he promised he would personally come to Ireland to open the dealership — an amusing pledge that had now become a reality.

In a symbolic moment, Hugo Semichon officially cut the ribbon, declaring the dealership open.

The new dealership boasts dedicated spaces for Fiat, Jeep, and Alfa Romeo, as well as exceptional customer facilities, reinforcing Auto Boland's commitment to delivering the best possible experience for their customers. This event marks the beginning of an exciting chapter for Auto Boland, building on over 100 years of automotive expertise and their dedication to the Waterford community.

## CONTACT-AFTER-RETIREMENT

Contact-After-Retirement (C.A.R) members recently had a fantastic visit to the Croke Park Skyline Walk: an hour-long exhilarating tour viewing Dublin city and surrounding counties. The group (pictured) initially met with their GAA guide under the Cusack Stand for the safety briefing and harness fitting before starting the climb over the top of the Cusack, Davin and Hogan stands. A unique feature of the tour timing was that members also saw the incredible logistics effort involved in dismantling all of the vast sound rigs and pitch protection required for the multiple mega concerts (AC/DC and Coldplay) over the previous few days. The significant truck and crane synchronisation was incredible to watch from the bird's eye view, and the playing pitch-surface replacement exercise was also explained in great detail – truly a marvel of project planning. The visit included an optional visit to the Croke Park Museum and an onsite lunch was also hosted for C.A.R. members.

Contact-After-Retirement "C.A.R" is a free to join association



for retirees of the Irish Motor Industry. New members are very welcome to join at any stage, please email: [naoise.car@gmail.com](mailto:naoise.car@gmail.com)



## PETER PEDLOW JOINS CLOSE BROTHERS MOTOR FINANCE



Close Brothers Motor Finance is delighted to announce the significant appointment of Peter Pedlow as Director of Sales, bringing over 25 years of automotive experience to the leadership team. Peter will spearhead the company's sales strategy across the Republic of Ireland, supporting dealer partners in their mission to sell more vehicles, more often, while enhancing profitability.

With a distinguished career that includes 13 years in dealerships, five years with an automotive manufacturer, and seven years in financial services, Peter brings a unique blend of hands-on industry experience. His most recent role was as Head of Sales at Volkswagen Financial Services, and he has previously worked within Close Brothers Motor Finance, Renault UK, and some of the largest dealer groups in Northern Ireland.

Peter's proven ability to drive commercial success, combined with his deep understanding of Close Brothers Motor Finance's objectives, will ensure he's well-positioned to lead the company's efforts in delivering outstanding value to its dealer partners and their customers.

"It's an honour to re-join Close Brothers Motor Finance, particularly at a time when our industry is evolving rapidly. I'm excited to lead a talented team of Business Development Managers and work closely with our dealer partners to help them grow their businesses. My focus is on continuing to provide the excellent service Close Brothers is known for, while looking ahead to new opportunities in the market," Peter commented.

Donal Murphy, Managing Director, Close Brothers Motor Finance said: "We are thrilled to welcome Peter back to the team. This is a significant appointment following the rebrand earlier this year and highlights our commitment to our dealer partners and the Irish motor industry. Peter's extensive experience in the motor finance sector, coupled with his first-hand knowledge of our business and his personable nature, aligns perfectly with our company's ethos as 'The Motor Finance People.' Peter's leadership will help us further strengthen our partnerships and continue to deliver innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of the market."

## TRANSITION YEAR (TY) ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION TRAINING

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is proud to announce that it has far exceeded an initial target of delivering training to teachers for Transition Year (TY) road safety education. The Road Safety Matters programme, which was launched in September, aimed to deliver training to teachers from 30 schools in phase 1. However, due to overwhelming demand and positive feedback, the RSA has successfully delivered training to teachers from almost 140 schools nationwide representing over 12,700 students. The programme is an innovative teacher-led programme developed by the RSA in partnership with IPB, the Department of Education and the Department of Transport.

The RSA have so far delivered in-person training sessions in six locations across the country, including Swinford, Athlone, Portlaoise, Dublin, Cork, Galway, and Letterkenny, allowing educators from all corners of Ireland to participate. According to the RSA, feedback from schools and teachers has been immensely positive, highlighting the vital importance of equipping young people with essential road safety knowledge.

Sarah O'Connor, Director of Partnerships and External Affairs with the RSA commented: "We are delighted to see such a high level of enthusiasm from schools and teachers across the country. The interest in the programme reflects a clear understanding of the importance of road safety education, and we look forward to continuing this momentum in the coming phases. We also want to thank our team and all the teachers and principals who facilitated in this in-person training which has received such tremendous feedback on how it's been delivered."

Mary Madden, Director of Schools from the Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim (MSL) Education and Training Board (ETB) stated: "As soon as I saw the quality and impact of the RSA's road safety training programme, I knew it would be of immense value to our schools. It equips teachers with the tools to effectively educate students on the importance of road safety, and the feedback from both staff and students has been overwhelmingly positive. I'm proud to have all our MSL ETB schools engaged in this vital initiative."

This programme is part of the RSA's ongoing efforts to promote road safety and empower the next generation of drivers and road users with the knowledge and skills they need to stay safe on the roads.





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## MAHA IRELAND NAMED CV EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR AT IRISH AUTO TRADE AWARDS

MAHA Ireland was crowned CV Equipment Supplier of the Year during the Irish Auto Trade and CV Workshop Awards. The prestigious honour was awarded to MAHA Ireland Managing Director, Eoin Mallon, by Automotive Publications Publisher, Padraic Deane, and he was understandably delighted at beating the illustrious competition and industry colleagues in earning the accolade.

Eoin said: "This is a wonderful achievement and recognition for all the hard work and dedication of the entire MAHA Ireland team. Winning this award reflects our commitment to excellence and to providing the best equipment and support for our customers. We're honoured to be recognised alongside esteemed industry peers and will continue to set the highest standards."

Padraic added: "Congratulations on winning your award. This is important recognition of your business in the combined automotive and transport industries throughout the island of Ireland, with a unique strong emphasis on the aftermarket."



The Irish Auto Trade and CV Workshop Awards were introduced in 2014, yet this year's awards were the first since the COVID-19 pandemic.

## AMCC PARTNERS WITH NEXTGEAR CAPITAL



**Cóilín Garvey, (AMCC Sales Manager); Áine Cantwell (AMCC Business Manager); Anthony O'Neill (Account Manager, NextGear Capital); and Peter Molloy, (Ireland Manager, NextGear Capital) at the announcement of the partnership between the two companies at the amcc.ie premises in Lusk, Co. Dublin.**

Ireland's leading importer of quality Japanese second-hand cars, the Automatic Motor Car Centre (AMCC.ie) based in Lusk, Co. Dublin, says that a 'perfect storm' of Brexit, ever-increasing new car prices across Europe and Irish consumers' more stringent demands for value for money are all contributing to the phenomenal growth in sales of

second-hand cars imported here from Japan. According to AMCC, since 2018, when 2,621 vehicles were imported from Japan, that figure has grown to 22,482 vehicles year-to-date for 2024, meaning we are on course to finish the year with well in excess of 10 times the 2018 total.

According to Colín Garvey, AMCC Sales Manager, Japan is now the number one source for second-hand imports in Ireland, displacing the UK which in the last 20 years saw huge increases in imported vehicles here. However, that all changed in 2019 when the number of UK imports peaked and then witnessed a sustained decline ever since, in large part, he says, due to Brexit rules kicking in.

Garvey says: "Approximately 25% of the cars we sell go to retail customers and the majority find a home at second-hand car dealers across the island of Ireland. For our trade customers, we are thrilled to announce our exclusive partnership with NextGear Capital, the largest provider of stock funding facilities for used vehicle dealers".

Ireland Manager of NextGear Capital, Peter Molloy said: "We are delighted to be partnering with and the team at AMCC. ie to bring our expertise and tried and tested stock funding models for the benefit of AMCC's car dealer customers. Our exclusive deal with AMCC.ie marks a significant milestone for the Irish market, as we are the first vehicle stock funder in Ireland to allow both registered and non-registered Japanese imports to be added to dealers' stocking plans. We provide a cost effective, flexible and simple way for our car dealer customers to buy and manage their stock with 100% of the purchase price or market value funded. Ultimately, with a NextGear Capital Stocking Plan, our car dealer customers can increase, upgrade or diversify their stock, helping them to grow their business in a profitable and sustainable way".



# New vehicles

The latest models on the way to forecourts.



## FIRST NEW LAND CRUISER IN 15 YEARS

**Engine:** 2.8L diesel

**Pricing:** starts at €69,990 (commercial version) or €140,830 (passenger version)



## MINI COOPER CONVERTIBLE

Deliveries of the two versions, the Convertible C and Convertible S, are due in early 2025

**Engines:** two advanced petrol options – the S's engine boasts a power output of 150 kW/204 hp

**Pricing:** from €36,730



## MERCEDES-BENZ T-CLASS

Mercedes says this five-seat passenger carrier is for families and leisure enthusiasts with active lifestyles

**Engines:** Four-cylinder diesel in T160 and a T180 petrol option

**Pricing:** from €42,530



## DACIA BIGSTER

An SUV that goes big on load capacity, tech and comfort, according to Dacia

**Engines/battery:** Options include a three-cylinder petrol, a hybrid that matches a four-cylinder petrol with a 1.4 kWh battery and a dual-fuel petrol/LPG mild hybrid

**Pricing:** To be announced



## CITROËN C3

Citroën's new hatchback is available in electric, petrol and hybrid versions

**Engines/battery:** a 44kWh battery pack in the EV version, a 1.2-litre turbo petrol option and a hybrid version offering Hybrid 48V technology

**Pricing:** from €23,400





# MOTOR INDUSTRY AWARDS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

# 2025



## Elevate Your Achievements in the Motor Industry!

Have you made a mark in the motor industry this year? Has your hard work, dedication, or innovation stood out? If so, it's time to get the recognition you deserve! Enter the Irish Motor Industry Awards, presented in partnership with Bank of Ireland.

These prestigious awards celebrate excellence in the motor industry. Our awards recognise the hard work, dedication and innovation of individuals and organisations across the sector. Winning an award could be the perfect way to raise your profile and gain recognition for your business or organisation. Each winner will receive a trophy, certificate and a free feature in *Irish Motor Management*.

## Join Us at the Event!

The awards ceremony will be held at the Clayton Hotel, Burlington Road, Dublin, in conjunction with the SIMI Annual Dinner on Thursday, February 20th, 2025. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate your achievements with the best in the industry.

## Enter the Irish Motor Industry Awards

For more information and to submit your entry, visit our website. We look forward to receiving your entry!

## THE AWARD CATEGORIES

- Franchise Sales Operation of the Year
- Franchise Aftersales Operation of the Year
- Independent Sales Operation of the Year
- Independent Aftersales Operation of the Year
- Vehicle Recovery Operator of the Year
- Bodyshop of the Year
- Special Recognition Award

## HOW TO ENTER

### YOU CAN ENTER NOW AT

<https://members.simi.ie/training-and-events/events>

The Awards entry forms are available on our website and entries can be submitted now.

**DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS JANUARY 6TH 2025**

## IRISH MOTOR INDUSTRY AWARDS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BANK OF IRELAND



The award winners, adjudicated by an independent panel, operate across all sectors of the Irish Motor Industry. The winners all demonstrated an award-worthy level of excellence and best practice.



Bodyshop of the Year: Denning's Cars Ltd, Dublin.



Vehicle Recovery Operator of the Year: Hamill Rental Ltd, Co. Westmeath.



Independent Retailer Operation of the Year: Autopoint Motor Group, Co. Kerry.



Franchised Aftersales Operation of the Year: Toyota Naas, Co. Kildare.



Franchise Sales Operation of the Year: Western Motors Drogheda, Co. Louth.

# SIMI/VTN Annual Conference 2024

The SIMI/VTN Annual Conference took place on Thursday 28th November 2024 in the Killashee Hotel Co. Kildare. Brian Cooke, Director General, SIMI, opened the Conference, this year, welcoming, guest speakers, the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and Test Sector Members who travel countrywide to attend this popular event.

He commended test centre members who are currently undertaking significant investments to ensure standardisation and uniformity across the Network as part of the current CVRT upgrade plan and which will underpin the quality and consistency of testing for the next authorisation period up to 2034.

Yvonne Sliney, SIMI, acting as MC for the day, got the formal program underway.

Jim Power, leading Irish Economist, delivered a though provoking economic outlook on the current performance of the Global and Irish economy and what the Motor Industry might expect going forward into 2025. The geo-political background has been very uncertain in recent times and therefore economic risks must always be considered.

Despite the challenges, the Irish economy is still doing well. Interest rates have fallen in recent times and inflation has now receded once again to more normal levels. The cost of doing business is still a concern and with the lowest unemployment figures in the history of the State, sourcing and retaining experienced staff is likely to continue to be challenging going forward. Nevertheless, 2025 will continue to reflect the overall steady growth in the vehicle parc and the outlook for the test sector should be positive.

Tony O'Brien from Elite Risk Services shared critical insights on Cyber Security. Many SMEs often think this is the problem that will never happen to them but in fact "small businesses" are often targeted in such attacks. Tony gave a very good overview of the way businesses needs to protect from such events.

Matthew Austin, Hayes Solicitors keeping on the I.T. theme, gave an engaging talk on the legal considerations surrounding the rapidly growing and emerging AI technologies and how members should be aware of all such factors if they intend to use this technology in their business's going forward.

The RSA's provided a series of presentations where they provided several updates for the Network. Brendan Walsh, Chief Operations Officer of the RSA delivered a very detailed overview of the current system and indicated how he wanted to make sure that all test operators are ready for future developments. He outlined future requirements and what members could expect going forward.

This was followed by Ramona Lavelle, RSA who gave a very detailed update on how the CVRT upgrade plan was progressing and the current status of CVR Test Operator Authorisations. She reminded members that the deadline for having work completed in relation to the current upgrade of Premises & Equipment was 18/12/26 and encouraged Operators to push ahead with plans to avoid any unforeseen events which were always possible to arise. Again, she



**Brian Cooke, Director General SIMI.**

mentioned the aim of the plan, which is to improve premises, lane efficiency and further standardise how CVR Testing is conducted. Ramona Lavelle also provided, members with an overview of test centres "in house" quality systems and how the RSA intended to review and work closely with the Network in keeping the quality and consistency of testing to the highest possible standard.

Graham Brennan, Head of Vehicle Standards, presented on how OBD Testing would be introduced for LCV's in 2025. Graham worked through a very detailed presentation on upcoming EU legislation and how it will impact on the test system. He also provided an update on the latest EU roadworthiness package which is likely to be ready in early 2026.

Michael Stephens gave an interesting presentation on faults encountered on roadside checks and also the support and guidance that the RSA provide to testers on an ongoing basis. The final RSA presentation from Peter Hanlon informed on the latest consistency check on network equipment and the importance of maintaining it to a high standard.

All in all, there was a positivity that the CVRT Network was working well in delivering good customer service and were building on achieving and maintaining the best possible quality and consistency within the current test system.

In the afternoon, the SIMI Vehicle Test Operators AGM was chaired by Michael Nolan, M & N Nolan Motor Co. Ltd with Charlie Rogers, SIMI, looking at future developments in vehicle testing and hosting a Q & A session for members. Charlie thanked Michael Nolan and the VTN Committee for their work and commitment in developing CVRT and the members for their ongoing support of SIMI and the Conference.





(L-R) Michael Nolan, VTN Committee Chairman, Nolan Motors; Jim Power, Jim Power Economics; Yvonne Sliney, VTN & Accounts Manager SIMI; Tony O'Brien, Elite Risk; Charlie Rogers Director Commercial Vehicle Sector & VTN SIMI, Brian Cooke, Director General SIMI.



(L-R) Yvonne Sliney, VTN & Accounts Manager, SIMI; Caroline Kenny, Somers Commercial; Kathleen Dempsey, Windmill Autos Ltd.



Guest Speaker Jim Power, Jim Power Economics.



Guest Speaker Tony O'Brien, Elite Risk.



(L-R) Joe Robinson, National Vehicle Distribution and Liam Carroll M3 Van Centre.



(L-R) Ramona Lavelle, RSA and Michael Stephens, RSA.

# SIMI Award Winners: Hamills Motoring Services



**Understanding the importance of the EV market has helped the company to become a market leader in the space**

SIMI membership holds significant value for Hamills Motoring Services, as Director Peter Hamill explains. "We've been proud members for many years, and the recognition we've received as winners of the 'Vehicle Recovery Operator Award' in 2018, 2020, and now 2024 is a tremendous honour. Beyond the accolades, being part of SIMI means we are aligned with a professional body that upholds the highest industry standards. We strongly believe that this alignment helps maintain the high-quality service we provide to our customers. The ongoing relationship with other SIMI members also allows us to stay ahead of industry trends, ensuring we are always at the forefront of innovation and customer service." The last 12 months have been both challenging and rewarding with growth in operations, a rise in customer demand and the expansion of the company's second base in Athlone. "There have been challenges, particularly in the evolving landscape of electric vehicles (EVs) and rising operation costs such as fuel. However, we've worked hard to adapt, invested in EV training, and ensured we don't compromise on maintaining our high service standards. Looking back, it's been a year of resilience and progress, and we're excited for what's to come next year. We wouldn't have been able to get this far without our incredible staff and we are very lucky to have such a dedicated team."

Recognising the growing importance of the EV market early on was crucial for continued success. "Over the past few years, we've made significant investments in EV-specific training for our staff and upgraded our fleet to accommodate electric vehicles. This preparation has paid

off as we're now able to efficiently handle EV callouts to the highest standards, which has become a key part of our business. Our clients appreciate that we are ahead of the curve, and it's positioned us as leaders in a rapidly evolving industry."

Exceeding callout projections for 2023 was a pleasant surprise, Peter says. "We believe this happened due to an increase in demand for our services; a more diversified fleet that allowed us to respond to a wider range of vehicles including EVs, and more heavy recovery of trucks and coaches, along with our reputation for reliable service. Additionally, we've put a lot of effort into improving operational efficiency and response times which all contributed to the increased callouts in the last 12 months."

## Evolution and expansion

Hamills Motoring Services has continuously adapted to meet the changing needs of the motoring industry.







"We started with cars and light commercial vehicles and have gradually expanded our services to include all vehicles, ranging from motorcycles to artic trucks and buses, reflecting market demand and technological advancements.

"We have invested heavily in specialised equipment such as our heavy under-lift fitted with a Boniface, maxi-reach, low-lying 4.2-meter under-lift which gives us the upper hand over our competitors in dealing with heavy recovery operations. Combined with the skillset of our staff, we can carry out the most complex of heavy recoveries, safely and efficiently, outperforming our closest competitors on all heavy recovery calls.

"We also invested heavily in technology, installing the most up-to-date IT systems that allows us to run our dispatch / accounts and recovery operations more efficiently and effectively. All trucks are equipped with telematics systems and surround vehicle CCTV, both to allow us to keep our customers updated with real-time information, as well as ensuring the upmost safety and security of our employees, customers, and their vehicles. Our upgraded telephone systems allow us to hold multiple call lines simultaneously to ensure our customers calls are answered without delay enhancing our customer service."

### Always on

There are both challenges and opportunities when operating a business around the clock, according to Peter. "The main challenge is maintaining staff motivation and ensuring we always have the right number of trained personnel on call. It requires careful scheduling, contingency planning, and ensuring our team is well-rested. On the flip side, it gives us a competitive edge—customers appreciate the reliability and rapid response times, and it builds strong loyalty. Our reputation for quick, efficient service is something we pride ourselves on."

The company invests in staff training and development. "All of our staff is trained to the highest Institute of Vehicle Recovery standards along with continuous training, including courses in first aid and manual handling. With the rise of electric vehicles, training in EV recovery has become a top priority."

This level of professionalism and expertise was evident during the Dublin riots in October, when the company was called on to assist Kelly Recovery with the removal of several hybrid electric buses that had been damaged by fire. "This was a particularly challenging operation due to the extensive damage to the buses and the volatile situation in the city. However, our team was well-equipped and trained to handle such an operation. We worked efficiently, safely removing the buses with the right equipment and expertise, all while ensuring the safety of our staff and the public. This incident showcased our ability to respond quickly to complex recovery situations under pressure, and it was a proud moment for our team."





## SIMI Award Winners: Toyota Naas



**Innovation, specialisation and a customer-centric approach have led to 70 years of success for Toyota Naas**

Winning the SIMI Franchised Aftersales Operations Award reflects the hard work, dedication, and passion of the Toyota Naas team, says Liam Fitzpatrick, Dealer Principal. "This recognition means even more when you consider our history: My family has been in the motoring and agricultural machinery business since 1954, marking 70 years in the motor industry this year. This long-standing history shapes how we operate, blending tradition with innovation.

"We firmly believe in following processes and procedures in a human, customer-centred way, and this award is proof that our approach works. For our customers, it's a clear signal of the quality and care they can expect when choosing us, and it motivates us to continue raising the bar."

### **Innovation and specialisation**

The past year has been both challenging and transformative, he says, with a tightening in customer spending that required the company to adapt quickly. "To combat this, we focused on growing our customer base. It's a continuous challenge, as what worked last year may not work this year. This requires us to remain agile and innovative, constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of our customers.

"Despite these challenges, we have seen growth in our Aftersales department, which has been made possible by streamlining our processes and investing in digital tools and customer-centric solutions. The year has proved that resilience and adaptability are essential to success in today's market."



Liam Fitzpatrick (pictured) believes that the company's differentiation comes down to three main pillars: customer-centricity, innovation, and expertise. "One of the unique aspects of our operations is our singular focus on Toyota and its products. This ensures our team is highly skilled and continuously updated on every aspect of the brand. Our resources and expertise remain concentrated on delivering unparalleled service to Toyota customers. It's this specialisation and focus that set us apart."

"Innovation is about finding ways to make our customers' experiences smoother, faster, and more transparent. For instance, we've embraced Vehicle Health Checks (VHC) and video communication tools to keep our customers fully informed about their vehicle's status.

These tools provide complete transparency and speed, allowing customers to approve work or ask questions quickly and conveniently. Additionally, we're continually exploring new communication channels to ensure we meet our customers where they are and on their terms."

### Consistency in the face of Brexit

"Brexit has impacted everyone, and we're no exception. We've had to contend with fluctuations in costs and valuations, as well as supply chain difficulties. To address these challenges, we've developed strong relationships with suppliers and adopted strategic stock management. This proactive approach ensures our customers continue to receive consistent and reliable service despite external uncertainties."

### The importance of upskilling

Ongoing staff training has been fundamental to the company's success, Liam says, with investment across all departments. "We take full advantage of SIMI's exceptional training and programmes, which provide detailed and market-relevant resources at a fraction of the cost it would take to run similar programmes in-house."

"Additionally, we utilise Local Enterprise training opportunities and Toyota-specific initiatives, including

Tailored Training Programmes (TTP). These programmes are designed to address the specific needs of each department, ensuring that our staff, whether in Aftersales, Sales, or Finance, are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel. This comprehensive approach ensures a consistent and exceptional level of service across all areas of the dealership."

### Going mobile

This customer-centric approach is shaping the company's approach to marketing and finance. "Our marketing strategy has undergone a significant transformation, with a strong focus on digital platforms. Customers today expect personalised and accessible interactions, so we've adapted by emphasising social media, email marketing, and targeted online advertising. Our campaigns showcase the value and trust associated with Toyota, particularly in areas like hybrid technology and sustainability. By incorporating customer testimonials and highlighting our award-winning service, we've been able to foster stronger connections with both new and returning customers. "The success of our finance department stems from a customer-focused approach and strategic planning. We've made financing more accessible, transparent, and tailored to individual needs, which resonates with today's customers. Looking forward, however, the finance department will evolve into what we call a 'mobility department.' This reflects customers' future needs and preferences, which will extend beyond traditional financing into areas like leasing and subscription models. While this concept may seem hard to grasp today, we are preparing for the changes ahead to ensure we remain ahead of the curve."

### Sustainable success

The association with Toyota is the cornerstone of our business, Liam tells us. "It's a partnership built on shared goals and ambitions, underpinned by Toyota's commitment to excellence and innovation. Toyota's philosophy of Kaizen—continuous improvement—resonates deeply with our own values. This shared commitment drives us to constantly seek ways to enhance our operations, improve customer experiences, and remain at the forefront of the industry. The trust and reliability associated with the Toyota name make this partnership invaluable to us and our customers."

"Looking ahead, we are focused on developing the Toyota brand in Kildare and expanding our customer base in the region. We aim to grow our customer numbers by providing an unrivalled customer experience that reflects the high standards associated with Toyota."

Sustainability will also play a key role in the company's future plans. "We intend to further integrate green practices into our operations and support Toyota's electrified vehicle range. Innovation, customer engagement, and community involvement will remain at the heart of everything we do as we strive to lead the way in the Irish motor industry."

# Tax Management for 2025



Michael Neary, Deals Advisory Partner at Grant Thornton, offers some advice in relation to tax management and planning for the next 12 months.



Michael Neary,  
Deals Advisory  
Partner.

As the 2024 year comes to a close and a new one is on the horizon, it is now an ideal time particularly for businesses with a December year-end to engage in tax planning and tax reviews by revisiting your statutory accounts and tax returns. This should be done with an aim to identify potential optimisations for your business that can be implemented which could lead to a reduction of tax liabilities or increase losses / increase capital allowances that can be carried forward for future utilisation against profits of the business. Below are several key areas to consider, as these are common examples for business that, if misapplied, could lead to missed opportunities to decrease the company's annual tax liability. These are also areas of expenditure that can potentially attract attention from Revenue either through aspect queries or through a Revenue audit.

## Utilisation of tax-deductible expenses

In order to reduce the amount of taxable profits within a company, it is crucial that expenses are accurately categorised and detailed in the company accounts to ensure that the maximum amount of tax-deductible expenses are offset against the profit of the company. Companies in the motor industry typically hold a large volume of stock which may be eligible for capital allowances, which can be a very generous deduction depending on the value and type of the assets owned and used for the purposes for the trade and should be maximised. An incentive also applies for accelerated capital allowances on energy efficient equipment, if any such equipment is owned by a business the entire cost can be deducted against profits in the one year. Additional expenses which should be carefully documented





included staff business expenses and client entertainment expenses. Client entertainment expenses are specifically non-deductible for tax purposes and therefore all staff entertainment expenses, which are deductible, should be kept clearly separate in annual accounts in order to ensure that the correct deductions are being taken. It is important to note that pension payments are also only deductible in the year that they are incurred and paid. Therefore, all pension payments related to a particular financial year should be made in advance of that year-end if desired to minimise the tax liability arising in that year.

### Compliance Obligations

Recently, there has been a significant increase in Revenue queries and interventions, in particular with regard to employee expenditure and perceived employee benefits. Revenue have sought to apply their existing guidance more stringently and have introduced processes like Enhanced Reporting Requirements (ERR) to facilitate real-time reporting of certain employee-related expenses while simultaneously providing Revenue with a tool with which to apply their guidance and regulations against. Additionally, PAYE Settlement Agreements (PSA) were also introduced to enable employers to make voluntary payments on behalf of their employees on benefits that are minor and irregular in one annual payment. The deadline for submission of the PSAs is the 31st December 2024 but provides the employer with the opportunity to disclose and pay any liabilities they deem due with no additional penalty levied by Revenue. In particular, Revenue have been focusing on staff parties, gifts and meals and have been seeking to apply payroll taxes to anything they deem to be a benefit for the employee. With the small benefit exemption increasing to €1,500 in 2025 which can consist

of five separate non-monetary gifts, care should be taken to ensure that all benefits are clearly documented and any gift outside of these parameters should have payroll taxes applied accordingly.

### Optimisation of structure

The type of business structure can have a significant impact on the tax liabilities of a company. Given that the Irish corporation tax rate is 12.5%, compared to the higher personal income tax rate applied to the profits of a sole trader, it may be worthwhile considering whether an alternative business structure could be more advantageous. Thus, a thorough evaluation of the current business structure should be performed to include any commercial or future plans of the individual and/or company to ascertain whether the implementation of an alternative structure could result in significant tax savings. It should be noted that there are also potential tax reliefs available on the incorporation of a business into a limited company.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, effective tax management and planning are essential for businesses in the Motor industry to navigate the complexities of the coming year. By understanding and leveraging tax-deductible expenses, staying up to date with evolving compliance requirements and utilising tax efficient structures, businesses can optimise their financial position while mitigating any potential risks. Companies that invest in or engage with tax planning and management will be better positioned to face challenges, capitalise on opportunities and achieve financial growth in an increasingly dynamic environment.

## TOP 10 SELLING CARS 2024

Hyundai Tucson **5,265** 4.4%Škoda Octavia **4,431** 3.7%Kia Sportage **3,863** 3.2%Toyota Rav **3,535** 2.9%Toyota Yaris Cross **3,413** 2.8%Volkswagen Tiguan **2,851** 2.4%Toyota Corolla **2,844** 2.4%Hyundai Kona **2,536** 2.1%Škoda Kodiaq **2,510** 2.1%Toyota Yaris **2,408** 2.0%

## NEW PASSENGER CAR REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11/24 - 30/11/24	01/01/24 - 30/11/24	Market share 2024 %
Alfa Romeo	0	43	0.04%
Alpine	0	2	0.00%
Audi	73	5448	4.51%
BMW	92	4591	3.80%
BYD	25	1461	1.21%
Citroën	24	1149	0.95%
Cupra	13	1372	1.14%
Dacia	43	3979	3.29%
DS	0	138	0.11%
Fiat	3	572	0.47%
Ford	15	4329	3.58%
GWM	0	46	0.04%
Honda	1	245	0.20%
Hyundai	32	11402	9.44%
Ineos	0	3	0.00%
Jaguar	0	60	0.05%
Jeep	2	123	0.10%
Kia	67	9150	7.58%
Land Rover	2	947	0.78%
Lexus	9	1004	0.83%
Mazda	2	1356	1.12%
Mercedes-Benz	22	3022	2.50%
MG	22	1089	0.90%
Mitsubishi	0	0	0.00%
Nissan	29	4892	4.05%
Opel	2	2448	2.03%
Peugeot	22	4238	3.51%
Polestar	43	299	0.25%
Porsche	18	407	0.34%
Private Import	8	158	0.13%
Mini	11	561	0.46%
Renault	7	3541	2.93%
Seat	6	2883	2.39%
Skoda	71	12178	10.08%
Ssangyong	0	49	0.04%
Subaru	1	23	0.02%
Suzuki	18	2060	1.71%
Tesla	236	2692	2.23%
Toyota	149	17487	14.48%
Volkswagen	45	13507	11.18%
Volvo	10	1792	1.48%
Other	0	37	0.03%

Total November 2024	1123	120783
Total November 2023	921	122055
Change 2024 - 2023	202	-1272
% Change 2024 - 2023	21.93%	-1.04%

## TOP SELLING CARS NOVEMBER 2024

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
1	Tesla Model 3	171	15.2
2	Tesla Model Y	65	5.8
3	Škoda Octavia	51	4.5
4	Toyota Yaris Cross	51	4.5
5	Dacia Duster	31	2.8

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
6	Nissan Leaf	28	2.5
7	Polestar 2	26	2.3
8	Toyota Bz4x	23	2.1
9	BMW 2 Series	22	2.0
10	Audi A3	21	1.9

## NEW LIGHT COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11 - 30/11	01/01 - 30/11	% Share
Audi	0	5	0.02%
Citroën	28	2386	7.77%
Dacia	1	86	0.28%
Fiat	9	798	2.60%
Ford	189	6580	21.43%
Fuso	5	147	0.48%
Hyundai	2	369	1.20%
Isuzu	3	222	0.72%
Iveco	28	223	0.73%
Kia	1	177	0.58%
Land Rover	6	410	1.34%
Ldv	0	9	0.03%
Man	7	233	0.76%
Maxus	12	505	1.64%
Mercedes-Benz	52	1195	3.89%
Mitsubishi	0	0	0.00%
Nissan	9	701	2.28%
Opel	42	2481	8.08%
Peugeot	24	2401	7.82%
Renault	54	5231	17.04%
Ssangyong	2	102	0.33%
Subaru	0	0	0.00%
Toyota	27	2498	8.14%
Volkswagen	26	3456	11.26%
Private Import	1	71	0.23%
Other	9	414	1.35%
<b>Total November 2024</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>30700</b>	
<b>Total November 2023</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>28706</b>	
<b>Change 2024 - 2023</b>	<b>-230</b>	<b>1994</b>	
<b>% Change 2024 - 2023</b>	<b>-29.99%</b>	<b>6.95%</b>	

Current statistics available at time of print.  
The latest statistics are available online at:  
<https://stats.beepbeep.ie>

## BUSES/COACHES REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11 - 30/11	01/01 - 30/11	% Share
DAF	0	48	8.33%
Higer	0	12	2.08%
Iveco	0	23	3.99%
MAN	0	4	0.69%
Scania	3	25	4.34%
Tekaydinlar	0	7	1.22%
VDL DAF	0	32	5.56%
Volvo	0	54	9.38%
Wrightbus	0	177	30.73%
Private Import	6	194	33.68%
<b>Total November 2024</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>576</b>	
<b>Total November 2023</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>317</b>	
<b>Change 2024 - 2023</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>259</b>	
<b>% Change 2024 - 2023</b>	<b>28.57%</b>	<b>81.70%</b>	

## NEW HEAVY COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11 - 30/11	01/01 - 30/11	% Share
DAF	22	423	14.85%
Dennis Eagle	0	42	1.47%
Fuso	6	44	1.54%
Isuzu	5	124	4.35%
Iveco	5	72	2.53%
MAN	6	169	5.93%
Mercedes-Benz	6	238	8.35%
Renault	22	341	11.97%
Scania	5	714	25.06%
Volvo	19	645	22.64%
Private Import	0	37	1.30%
<b>Total November 2024</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>2849</b>	
<b>Total November 2023</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>2618</b>	
<b>Change 2024 - 2023</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>231</b>	
<b>% Change 2023 - 2022</b>	<b>-20.00%</b>	<b>8.82%</b>	



# SIMI Training

On behalf of members, SIMI secured substantial funding from Skillnet Ireland, the business support agency of the Government of Ireland for 2023 – 2025.

As we are coming to a close of the second year of the renewed funding, we take a look back at how SIMI Skillnet has implemented this significant training funding into the training and upskilling of those within the Motor Industry. This funding has allowed us to significantly subsidise the cost of close to 80 separate training events in 2024. In the past, the bulk of SIMI short courses and training courses were classroom and workshop based. However, since Covid-19, we have worked with our Industry training provider partners to successfully convert the majority of our training programmes into online learning events.

This year, the most popular technical upskilling training programme was the three-day certified SIMI Skillnet Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems course. In addition, the Network, with input from the steering group, designed and developed a new programme in 2023 which we continued to offer in 2024 – Electric Vehicle Sales, to upskill the sales department by enhancing their selling techniques of EVs specifically, to inspire consumer confidence and meet customers' expectations when they are purchasing an EV, as we continue to see this increase in EV market. As the Motor Industry continues on the journey towards electrification, with investments nationally by local retailers in their premises and their employees, it will be important that SIMI Skillnet continues to provide support in this area to meet the training needs of Members.

The Automotive Retail Management Programme 2024/2025

is currently taking place with

Navigate Solutions Ireland

delivering Phase 1 Motor

Management Skills and Optimum

Ltd delivering Phase 2 Core Management Skills. Features of the programme include:

- classroom-based modules;
- online, interactive group sessions;
- one-to-one online coaching sessions;
- an onsite visit by the trainer for further mentoring, to evaluate the impact of learning and to review measures implemented in the business;
- successful completion of Phase 2 will lead to a QQI Level 6 Award in Managing People.

Skillnet Ireland recently welcomed additional funding announced in budget 2025 which will see an allocation to Skillnet Ireland from the Department of Further & Higher Education, Innovation, Research & Science of €62.97M, an uplift of €11M versus 2024. This brings Skillnet Ireland Government funding to a record level in this its 25th anniversary year.

We look forward to working with the Skillnet Ireland team in 2025 to support Members who face the challenges of upskilling their employees in order to remain competitive, by promoting life-long learning; management development programmes; technical upskilling and by ensuring that tailored SIMI Skillnet Motor Industry training courses are effective, relevant, delivered efficiently and offer value for money.

Keep an eye on SIMI.IE for details of all new courses coming in 2025.



**It is extremely encouraging to witness the ongoing commitment of SIMI Members towards the development and upskilling of their employees through attendance at SIMI training events (listed) in 2024, and we look forward to continued growth and success in 2025.**

## Technical Upskilling

- Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems Training Combined Level 2 & 3
- New Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems Training Level 4
- VSE1 - Essential Test Procedures
- Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)
- Oscilloscope Operation and Signal Test Methods
- Diagnosis of Universal Components
- Estimating Systems Online Certification (Audatex)

## Management Development

- Automotive Retail Management
- Used Vehicle Sales Management
- New Managing the Aftersales Department
- Parts Management
- Time Management

## Aftersales Training

- Aftersales Profitability Workshops
- Service Advisor Training
- Workshop Supervisor/Management

## Sales & Customer Focused

- Adapting Vehicle Sales to the Online Environment
- Customer Service Excellence
- Improving Customer Retention
- Effective Telephone Sales Techniques
- Introduction to Vehicle Sales
- New Electric Vehicle Sales
- Consumer Law Training

## Marketing Training

- Introduction to Digital Marketing
- Facebook Training for Beginners & Advanced
- New Social Media for your Business
- Making a Marketing/Sales Video for your Business

## Finance and Administration

- Understanding VAT & VRT Training
- SIMI (Consumer Credit) CPD



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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or call + 353 1 6761690

# AFTERMARKET

- ▶ BATTERY REPORT
- ▶ BRAKING SYSTEMS

# Clarios Invests €200m in the Production of Advanced Battery Technologies in Europe

The battery manufacturer Clarios announced an investment of approximately €200 million in 2022 in its European plants and, since then, has been continuously expanding its production capacities for advanced adsorbent glass mat (AGM) vehicle batteries.

As of 2026, around 50% more units will be produced each year. In Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), Clarios is operating 13 production sites including two recycling centres. These investments are a part of Clarios' strategy to invest globally in projects specifically focused on AGM production in the short-term which allows Clarios in EMEA and its aftermarket brand VARTA Automotive to strengthen the leading position in this region by driving our ability to deliver to customers even quicker than before. The expansion creates around 150 attractive jobs in modern plants in Germany, Spain, Czech Republic and France enabling the building of production clusters bringing the "in-the region for-the region strategy" in EMEA to life.

## Essential for sustainable mobility

The automotive industry is changing fundamentally, driven by the trends of electrification, digitalisation, and circularity. As platforms become increasingly complex and power-hungry, the need for developing advanced low-voltage systems capable of providing the energy needed for performance and safety, becomes even more crucial. According to Clarios, it is expected that the global demand for advanced low-voltage systems will grow by 7% per year till 2030.

In Europe, Clarios is the undisputed market leader with its advanced battery solutions, which include the vehicle battery brand VARTA Automotive: in seven out of ten new vehicles with start-stop technology, it is the AGM batteries from Clarios that start the engine reliably after every stop. Furthermore, the xEV batteries for electric vehicles, which were launched by VARTA Automotive last year, already account for 90 percent of electrified vehicles on European roads and are also suitable for future models.

## Focus on central Europe

The largest expansion of AGM capacity will be at the Hanover plant in Germany, which is also home to the European headquarters of Clarios. The company uses most of the investment to finance new assets and is also optimizing processes and shifting the entire site, including case production, to advanced battery technologies. "Through extensive automation, we are increasing productivity at the site and, at the same time, securing the existing jobs there", highlighted Dr. Werner Benade, President EMEA at Clarios. To create the necessary space, a significant part of the production of conventional batteries and the advanced EFB batteries for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) has



been relocated from Hanover to Česká Lípa in the Czech Republic. In Zwickau, Germany, Clarios already operates the largest production plant for AGM batteries worldwide. The annual capacity here has increased significantly, which is based on an investment volume of several millions. Since the start of AGM production in 2002, more than 80 million batteries have been supplied from Zwickau.

The recycling operation in Krautscheid, Germany, supports the AGM expansion with increased recycling of lead alloys for the grids used in AGM batteries. The Krautscheid site thus complements the capacity expansion in the production network for Central Europe, which secures the supply to vehicle manufacturers in the region and in the aftermarket. "All these investments in our leading AGM technology ensure that our customers in the OEM and aftermarket business receive the best and most efficient batteries", explained Benade. "We will thus continue to support all electric and safety-relevant functions for all vehicle types for a long time to come. We are pushing forward with our solutions for transforming the automotive industry by implementing the trends of electrification, digitalization and circular economy."

## VARTA® Automotive launches refreshed product portfolio

VARTA Automotive, with support from parent company Clarios, recently launched an updated product portfolio at Automechanika. The new lineup is intended to help simplify the battery selection process and expand product offerings for growing market segments. The effort is backed by Clarios, the world leader in low-voltage solutions for the automotive industry. The new VARTA product portfolio is organised by technology, making it easier for IAM partners to navigate the growing complexity of vehicle types. Each technology within the portfolio is now identified by a distinct label colour across all applications: SLI batteries (traditional flooded batteries; Starter, Lights, Ignition) are colour coded blue; EFB batteries (Enhanced Flooded Battery) silver and AGM batteries (Absorbent Glass Mat) feature a gold label. The new portfolio is a customer-focused solution that simplifies choices and saves valuable workshop time.



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# GS offers widest selection of superior performing batteries with latest promotion

Distributed in Ireland by Serfac Limited, GS Yuasa offers the widest selection of batteries from any manufacturer, providing hassle-free solutions for all market needs. A trusted global leader in lead acid and lithium-ion battery technology, GS Yuasa provides the OE quality that manufacturers and professionals rely on, with products designed to meet the demands of diverse applications — from automotive and CV to motorcycle and leisure. More GS Yuasa batteries are sold in the UK and Ireland than any other brand.

GS Yuasa's commitment to excellence is evident in their

supply chain, customer service, and technical support. As a market leader, GS Yuasa combines global manufacturing strength with local expertise. Their six European sales and distribution centres, staffed with regional teams, offer tailored support. With 31 factories worldwide, including one in the UK, they deliver award-winning products and services that set industry standards. Choosing GS Yuasa means partnering with a brand dedicated to driving success and boosting business.

The GS range is specifically designed to meet the needs

of modern vehicles. Featuring attractive battery case designs, its SMF, EFB and AGM batteries all provide superior performance at competitive prices, offering motor factors an attractive and profitable business opportunity.

The brand has also just unveiled its latest promotion which is aimed at reducing the stress associated with battery replacement. From now until the end of January, every qualifying purchase of a GS battery will include a free stress battery. There are 3 different types up for grabs, each of which is a perfect 30% scale replica of the real model. Furthermore, each battery is a ticket to enter exclusive GS competitions over the next 12 months. Featuring a range of prizes, including Amazon and Booking.com vouchers, each time-limited competition offers multiple chances to win. Simply sign up to a mailing list via a QR code on the stress battery to enter.

GS Yuasa Battery Europe has also recently achieved a certification for Cyber Essentials Plus, underscoring the company's commitment to cyber security and protecting customer data across its operations in Europe. The certification translates to several tangible benefits, not least of which is a reduced risk of service disruptions caused by cyber-attacks, ensuring more reliable customer access to products and services.



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# Comprehensive braking programme from Serfac

Serfac Limited offers an extensive range of quality braking components from top brands at great prices, providing motor factors and garages with a wide choice and an extremely competitive sales proposition. A distributor of leading braking brands Borg & Beck and Brembo, Serfac also offers a wide range of braking from Blue Print and Febi, and is well-positioned to cover any braking order.

Although predominantly known in the aftermarket for its clutch components and kits, Borg & Beck's braking programme further enhances the brand's reputation and provides aftermarket professionals with a comprehensive range of matching original equipment (OE) quality braking products.

Borg & Beck automotive components are manufactured to the highest of standards. Rigorous testing procedures and a strict material control program ensure premium quality at all times. With a complete range of OE specified product designed to the highest standards, the Borg & Beck braking programme contains over 4000 part numbers and provides comprehensive coverage of the European car parc.

"Borg & Beck's braking programme provides installers with a range of products that are fully 'fit for purpose', says Gillian Fanning of Serfac. "For example, brake pads are manufactured to match the OE fitment and can be fully relied upon to deliver OE quality performance. This applies to all the products within the range, including the matching OE quality discs, which provide optimum coverage for the Irish car parc."

Braking brand Brembo is the outright leader in the international market for the production of brake discs, calipers and complete braking systems. Based on its unique know-how, Brembo spans a wide market range, from the production of brake discs for the most popular vehicles in the European, American and Japanese markets, to discs for the more prestigious, exclusive models. "Brembo supplies most of the main international manufacturers of motor vehicles,

motorcycles and commercial vehicles and the high level of technology and reliability offered by the brand means that it is always in demand by our customers", said Gillian.

Brembo has recently launched its new solution dedicated to electric vehicles: the exclusive Beyond EV Kit, a new family of discs with a special protective coating and innovative brake pads which supplement Brembo's product range dedicated to drivers for whom vehicle care is essential. The latest solutions by Brembo are directly derived from the brand's know-how and experience in OE and have been designed specifically to combine a smaller environmental impact with maximum performance and safety, thanks to innovative materials and latest-generation technologies used during the development process.



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# PORTMARNOCK LINKS HOSTS IMCTGA FINAL OUTING OF 2024

Portmarnock Resort and Jameson Golf Links on Friday 22nd November was again the venue for the final outing of the year for the Irish Motor & Cycle Trades Golfing Association. The outing was again very generously sponsored and supported by Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing and represented on the day by Managing Director Ray Murphy together with many of his colleagues.

Although a bitterly cold and chilly day all competitors enjoyed participating on what turned out to be a dry sunny day. Even the short delay to the start of the shotgun competition it did not dampen the enthusiasm of all in attendance. The event format for the day was a four-person team event based on a Stableford System with two best scores on each hole to count. This competition was also run in conjunction with the Brendan Cross Memorial Cup 18 holes Singles Competition and Ernie Mooney Memorial Cup back 9 singles for the IMCTGA members in attendance. The team competition winners on the day with an excellent score of 94 points were Paul Carroll, Eamonn Keane, Brian

Fallon and Joe O'Grady. The winner of the Brendan Cross Memorial Cup singles competition for IMCTGA Members was Joe O'Grady with an excellent score of 42 points playing off a handicap of 19 while the runner up was Jason McCabe with a score of 39 points playing off a handicap of 20. The Ernie Mooney Memorial Cup back nine competition winner was Scott Brennan with a score of 22 points playing off a handicap of 17. The 2024 golfer of the year was Pat Gavin a popular winner representing Finance Ireland. During the Dinner and prize presentation, IMCTGA President John

O'Hanlon addressed the members and thanked everyone for turning out in such great numbers. He particularly thanked Finance Ireland for their very generous sponsorship once again and invited Ray Murphy to say a few words. Ray confirmed that Finance Ireland will be delighted to once again sponsor this event in 2025. He is very much looking forward to continuing their support for this very popular end of season golfing event in the IMCTGA calendar again next year. IMCTGA Secretary Con Dalton acknowledged the support of all members and thanked them for their support and loyalty to the Golfing Association.



Left to right: The Drogheda Boys, Alex Smith, Nick Smith, John Delaney and Sean Holcroft all set for the start of the Competition.



Left to right: Louis O'Hanlon and Brian Murphy driving out to the 1st Tee Box, well wrapped up for the chilly morning competition start.



Left to right: Dave McLoughlin, Paul Tobin, Ray Murphy ( Finance Ireland Event Sponsors) and Frank Donnellan waiting to Tee off on the 1st Tee Box.



Left to right: Ray Murphy, Managing Director, Finance Ireland, Pat Gavin 2024 Golfer of the Year and John O'Hanlon President IMCTGA.



Left to right: Ray Murphy, Managing Director Finance Ireland, John O'Hanlon President IMCTGA and Sean Kearns Gowan Auto.



Scott Brennan receiving The Ernie Mooney Memorial Cup from IMCTGA President John O'Hanlon in the company of Ray Murphy Finance Ireland.



Con Dalton, Secretary, Irish Motor & Cycle Trades Golfing Association announcing the results of the various Competitions.

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