



2024 ISSUE 3

IRISH MOTOR MANAGEMENT

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Need to recapture momentum



New car registrations for the first six months of the year stand at 78,942 units, a marginal increase of 1.7% on 2023 (77,602). While the 242-registration period is now well underway – and, as always, there is plenty of activity during July – indications are that the second registration period will be softer than we had hoped. In particular, electric vehicle sales remain challenged with five consecutive months of a decline in registrations, a trend replicated in other European countries. Consumers appear to be more hesitant and concerned, with the momentum behind sales and EV sales somewhat lost, not helped by negative discourse surrounding EVs.

The Industry continues to bring a greater range of EV models to the market, but the Government needs to do more. SIMI in our messaging, to Government and media, highlight the need for Government to support the EV transition, with ways to incentivise the market for both private and company car buyers. Since July 2023, some incentives (home charging grant, SEAI purchase grant) have been reduced or removed (toll discount) sending a negative message to Irish consumers about the Government's view of the transition to EVs. Extending consumer incentives and Benefit-In-Kind support (BIK), along with investment in charging infrastructure, which will build consumer and business confidence and encourage uptake. This phasing out of EV supports should be reversed; it, along with the threat of new and increased taxes on motoring, only confuses potential EV buyers, both private and business customers, as to whether the Government is only serious about its ambition, and not serious about actually supporting the transition at a practical level. With Budget 2025 been brought forward a week, the Government needs to act decisively if it wants to regain the lost momentum; increase investment in EVs and don't increase taxes on other vehicles if we want to support consumers in trading up to a newer lower emitting vehicle.

The Climate Action Advisory Council, in their recent Annual Review of the Transport Sector, highlighted the need for urgent measures to drive the uptake of more efficient vehicles in the sector. "Without increased electric vehicle uptake, Ireland is at risk of being further locked into a carbon intensive transport system, while consumers may be left with carbon intensive combustion engine vehicles." They also have called for a full review of transport related tax by the end of 2025, and the re-allocation of road space for sustainable forms of transport among other recommendations. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have also published provisional greenhouse gas emissions data showing some positive results across the sectors but overall, it is increasingly unlikely that the first carbon budget will be achieved. For Transport, emissions increased marginally by 0.3 per cent, "an increase in electric vehicles and biofuel use partly offset a 3 per cent increase in the vehicle fleet." EVs can contribute substantially to emissions reductions and there is a clear need to invest now. This is not just the Industry's message, the Government's own Climate Action Plan underlines the importance of EVs in reducing emissions, with the largest abatement potential from transport coming from the electrification of the national fleet.

(continued overleaf)



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(continued from page 3)

Since our last edition geopolitics has dominated headlines, with the European Parliamentary elections in June, France's snap parliamentary election and the UK election in July, while the US election will take place in November. Added to this melting pot, we now have an assassination attempt on a US Presidential candidate. Within our own Government there has been resignations and new appointments and speculation around the date of the general election, which must be held no later than the 25th of March 2025, with nearly all political commentators expecting a General Election before the end of this year.

Globally, the economy can be described as reasonable positive, helped by inflation and interest rates coming down, however the geo-political environment is volatile. There is still a lot of uncertainty, and countries at war, the political landscape and events will have economic consequences. Ireland's own economy is performing reasonably well, we are still seeing strong record employment numbers, inflation coming down, strong tax revenues, although consumer spending has slowed, impacted by high cost of living. Household deposits continue to remain strong, however consumer confidence is fragile. The SME sectors remains pressurised, with costs of doing business and various legislative measures coming into effect, along with challenges in recruitment and retention of workers across all sectors.

Budget 2025 will have to continue to boost growth and support economic activity. SIMI will soon be submitting our Pre-Budget Submission and commencing our Budget lobby, which members will become actively a part of in due time, in advance of the October 1st Budget. Our submission emphasizes the importance of maintaining and extending the current EV incentives, such as the current BIK benefit for EVs, and looking at the potential for business incentives.

In September WorldSkills Ireland will coincide again with Higher Options at the RDS Dublin, running from 25th to the 27th of September. The Motor Industry recorded a 22% increase in apprentice registrations in 2023 and this increase highlights the growing interest and positive impact of having industry representatives at events like WorldSkills Ireland. SIMI will be present, and I would encourage all Distributors and Retailers members to get involved (details of which have been circulated to members) as this is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our Industry and the wide career opportunities that are available for the next generation.

Brian Cooke
Director General,
SIMI

NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS DOWN 50% IN JUNE 2024

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) released their official 241 new vehicle registrations statistics for June. New car registrations for June were down 50% (1,499) when compared to June 2023 (2,990). Registrations year to date are up 1.7% (78,942) on the same period last year (77,602). Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) declined by 35.8% (688) compared to June last year (1,072). Year to date LCVs are up 17.8% (20,229). HGVs (Heavy Goods Vehicles) registrations are down 1.6% (127) in comparison to June 2023 (129). Year to date HGVs are up 17.9% (1,826). Imported Used Cars have seen a 22.2% (5,165) rise in June 2024, when compared to June 2023 (4,228). Year to date imports are up 25.4% (31,372) on 2023 (25,025). In June 692 new electric cars were registered, which was 52% lower than the 1,432 registrations in June 2023. So far this year, 10,747 new electric cars have been registered which is a 25% decrease compared to the same period in 2023 when 14,307 electric cars were registered. In the new car market share by engine type for 2024, Petrol cars lead the new car market at 32.96% followed by Diesel at 22.89%, then Hybrid (Petrol Electric) at 20.11%, Electric at 13.61%, and Plug-in Electric Hybrid at 8.83%.

Brian Cooke, SIMI Director General, said: "In June new

car registrations declined by 50% on the same month last year. Following four consecutive months of decline, new car registrations for the first half of the year stand at 78,942 units, a marginal increase on 2023. Both light and heavy commercial vehicles registrations saw a decline in sales for the month of June, but the activity remains strong in the commercial fleet. New electric car registrations continue to experience a decline in sales, with June registrations falling by 52% to 692 units. From January to June, a total of 10,747 new electric cars were registered, marking a 25% decrease from the same period the previous year.

"The decline in the new EV car market continues to highlight the need for Government to support the EV transition, with ways to incentivise the market for both private and company car buyers. Extending consumer incentives and Benefit-in-Kind support, along with investment in charging infrastructure will build consumer and business confidence and encourage uptake. Retailers remain optimistic as we enter the 242-registration plate sales period, and with new models coming to the market along with variety of attractive offers are positive that this will help to boost sales activity in July, the second busiest month for new car sales."



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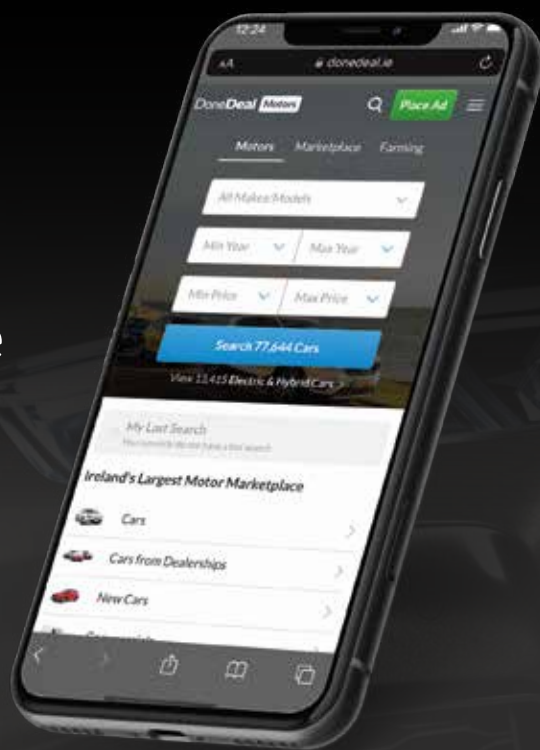
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CERTA AWARDED GUARANTEED IRISH SYMBOL



Pictured celebrating the award were Laura Byrne, Head of Sustainable Fuels; Orla Stevens, Managing Director; and Grace Cunningham, Interim Head of Retail Unmanned at Certa. Photo by Sean Brosnan Photography.

Ireland's largest fuel supplier Certa, which is part of DCC plc, has been awarded the Guaranteed Irish symbol in recognition of its commitment to creating sustainable jobs, supporting local communities and promoting Irish provenance.

Certa has qualified to become a member of the Guaranteed Irish organisation as a homegrown Irish company that employs over 370 people in communities all over Ireland through its network of 49 pay@pump forecourts and 29 home heating depots.

The Certa brand developed through the amalgamation of the Emo Oil, Campus Oil, Jones Oil and DCC Lubricants brands that have been part of the fabric of cities, towns and villages throughout Ireland for more than 35 years.

Certa's support for local communities goes beyond job creation and extends to volunteering, sponsorship, donations and fundraising, all of which was examined as part of the qualifying criteria for the Guaranteed Irish symbol.

It is continuing to invest in the service it provides to customers and is now the leading supplier of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in Ireland. The renewable biofuel helps motorists and businesses to make greener, sustainable choices that reduce their carbon emissions and lower their energy costs.

Certa opened Ireland's first HVO biofuel station in Liffey Valley last year and is currently upgrading its network of 49 pay@pump forecourts to offer HVO at all sites alongside other fuels. Solar PV panels are also being installed to enable its forecourts to generate their own power.

Orla Stevens, Managing Director, Certa Ireland said: "Certa is very proud to be a homegrown Irish brand that operates at the heart of local communities. We are delighted to be awarded the Guaranteed Irish symbol which helps consumers and businesses to identify products and services that are an altogether better choice for the life of their community."

KERRIDGE COMMERCIAL SYSTEMS ACQUIRES RAIN DATA

Kerridge Commercial Systems (KCS), the global provider of enterprise resource planning (ERP) and business management software provider for distribution, servicing and rental businesses has completed the acquisition of Rain Data. This acquisition promises a step forward in KCS's commitment to delivering enhanced product information and data solutions. Rain Data provides innovative product information management (PIM) and data solutions to automotive aftermarket companies of all sizes, from independent garages, globally recognised OEM to leading aftermarket brands. The solutions enable businesses across the automotive supply chain to achieve greater operational efficiency through efficient sourcing of the right components significantly enhancing the client experience.

The acquisition of Rain Data further complements KCS' set of cloud based solutions for the auto parts, auto servicing, tire and vertical distribution sectors globally, which include parts catalogues, point of sale, payments, bookings, inventory management, purchasing, reporting, data and ecommerce. Syd Coxon, Managing Director and Founder of Rain Data said: "Since our founding, we have had one clear vision: to bring world-class data solutions to replacement parts suppliers of all sizes. Today, we are excited to be joining our longtime partner, KCS, to bring our capabilities to a wider global audience."

Ian Bendelow, CEO of KCS added: "We are excited to welcome Rain Data to KCS. This acquisition represents a significant milestone in our journey to empower businesses to achieve significant improvements with enhanced product information and data solutions. This acquisition underlines KCS' commitment to innovation, best in class industry specific functionality and providing market leading solutions for the automotive aftermarket globally."

MATT GALVIN APPOINTED AS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF POLESTAR UK & IRELAND

Matt Galvin has been appointed to lead the Polestar brand in the UK and Ireland effective 1st July 2024. With an automotive career spanning 20 years, Galvin has held senior roles in Mercedes Benz UK, Volvo UK, Nio UK, and most recently a Polestar global sales role.

The appointment of Matt Galvin follows Jonathan Goodman's announcement that he will retire after seven years in various senior management roles with the Swedish performance EV brand.

"I am delighted to be taking on the role of Managing Director of Polestar UK and Ireland at such a pivotal time for the brand. As we move from a single car line-up to a three-car brand, and with bold plans for growth over the next few years, it couldn't be more exciting time to be assuming the role. "I very much look forward to working with the existing Polestar UK and Ireland teams and we wish Jonathan a long and healthy retirement."

EV INSIGHTS FROM AA IRELAND'S LATEST CUSTOMER SURVEY

AA Ireland's most recent customer survey provides an overview of electric vehicle (EV) and hybrid usage, highlighting ownership trends, charging habits, cost perceptions, and infrastructure needs. The survey comes in the wake of a notable decline in new electric car registrations, with 10,739 registered so far this year, a 31.6% decrease compared to the 15,702 registered during the same period in 2023. Hybrid and PHEV registrations are also down 6.8% compared to last year.

When EV and Hybrid drivers were asked to rate the availability and ease of using public charging networks, over 30% said that they did not use public charging units. Experiences with public charging networks varied, with 30.19% finding them very unsatisfactory and 4.40% rating them very satisfactory.

56.54% of respondents said they have a dedicated charging device installed at their home, and only 6% said they were planning to install one. Of the drivers that charge at home, 63% said they find the process easy, with the majority charging overnight, indicating a preference for off-peak charging rates.

Some respondents (30%) claim that they only charge when it is necessary, regardless of time or location, and a savvy 8.33% charge while they are at work.

Looking at the cost perception and compared the overall cost of EV ownership to that of a traditional petrol or diesel vehicle, 40% of respondents found EVs to be much cheaper, while 13.33% perceived them as much more expensive. Regarding electricity prices for charging, 18.28% found their charging rates very reasonable, whereas 8.60% considered them very expensive. Jennifer Kilduff, Head of Marketing & PR for the AA (Ireland), said: "The survey reveals that positive environmental factors and a smoother, quieter driving experience are the primary motivators for choosing to drive an EV."

The survey demonstrates a general preference for home charging but also highlights a clear demand for improved public charging infrastructure and better cost management. Respondents specifically suggest the need for more widespread and reliable public charging stations. Kilduff added: "Addressing these concerns could significantly enhance customer satisfaction and promote further adoption of electric vehicles in Ireland. It's evident that while many drivers appreciate the benefits of electric vehicles, the current infrastructure and cost perceptions are barriers that need to be addressed to make EVs a more carefully considered option for everyone."

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AOIFE RAFTERY UNVEILS ALL-NEW PEUGEOT E-3008

Galway rally driver Aoife Raftery unveiled the all-new Peugeot E-3008 at the annual Peugeot Dealers Conference at the Druids Glen Hotel and Golf Resort recently.

Peugeot Ireland revealed the new all-electric E-3008, featuring an aerodynamic fastback SUV design, a new electric powertrain offering up to 527km of range and Peugeot's latest Panoramic i-Cockpit at the special event at the county Wicklow venue. It was the first time the Peugeot E-3008 was presented to the Irish Peugeot dealer network.

The new E-3008, which has just gone on sale in Ireland, will replace the best-selling Peugeot 3008, a car that has impressed more than 1,320,000 customers in 130 countries for seven years. By 2025, Peugeot will offer a complete battery electric line-up, and by 2030, 100% of the brand's sales in Europe will be electric. Raftery, from Craughwell, is competing in the FIA Junior European Rally Championship, at the wheel of a Peugeot 208 Rally4, this year.

Following a successful debut season in 2023, she returned to the Junior FIA European Rally Championship this season in a PCRS Rallysport-prepared Peugeot 208 Rally4.

The first and so far, only female driver to be selected by the Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy, put in strong performances in Hungary and the Canary Islands already this season. She is currently third in the championship and is looking forward to round three, the Royal Rally of Scandinavia in Sweden in mid-June.

Raftery said: "I was very impressed with the all-new E-3008, the unique Panoramic i-Cockpit is something special, and the driving position feels very good. The best advice I can give after driving this amazing car is to get down to your local Peugeot dealer and book a test drive as soon as possible. You won't be disappointed."



VGIE ANNOUNCES MOVE TO 'FUTURE SALES' MODEL



Volkswagen Group Ireland (VGIE) has announced the introduction of a new sales model from 2026. It will be geared towards customer needs, allowing for the move towards seamless online, physical and blended purchasing experiences. This combination of a digital customer journey and a competent retail network is intended to enhance consumer satisfaction and deliver a best-in-class retail experience. VGIE will sell new vehicles direct to customers across all six brands – Volkswagen Passenger Cars, Škoda, SEAT, CUPRA, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles and Audi. The change in the business model will enable the entire purchase process to be digitalised, allowing customers to choose between physical purchases in a car showroom, digital purchases online and a blend of the two.

When implemented, customers will be able to opt for a fully digital, online buying experience. Those who prefer a hands-on approach can still visit their local showroom or choose a blend of online and physical purchasing journeys.

The Future Sales model promises a host of advantages. By digitalising the purchasing process, customers are offered convenience while maintaining access to Volkswagen Group's nationwide network of retailers. The new sales model allows the Volkswagen Group to establish a direct interface with its customers, ensuring all their needs are met. Ultimately, the goal is to enhance customer satisfaction.

Alicia O'Connor, Director of Sales Transformation and Customer Experience, says: "In every aspect of life, customers want faster, more convenient and transparent transactions. Irish customers are comfortable buying online. However, many still want the tactile experience of going to a showroom, getting into a vehicle and taking it for a test drive. With the Future Sales model they have the best of both worlds."

Pierre Boutin, Group Managing Director and CEO, Volkswagen Group, Ireland added: "I want to express my gratitude to all of our retailers for their dedication and partnership in serving their customers. Moving forward, our future retailers will remain a cornerstone of the business. At Volkswagen Group Ireland, we recognise the importance of digitalisation in the consumer experience. As Ireland's premier automotive and mobility organisation, we are committed to delivering increased value, convenience and satisfaction to our customers. This direction is vital for taking our business to new heights."

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A HIGHER PROPORTION OF MOTORCYCLIST DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES OCCUR DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Jack Chambers, the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and An Garda Síochána are reminding all road users to share the roads safely, as the high-risk summer period commences for motorcyclists.

The newly published RSA 'Motorcyclist spotlight report: fatalities and serious injuries 2019-2023' reveals the peak time for serious injuries among motorcyclists over the last five years (2019-2023) is between May and September, with the highest number of serious injuries taking place in June and the highest number of fatalities taking place in the month of July.

Eight in ten motorcycle casualties were injured in daylight, with one third (34%) of casualties injured between 4pm and 8pm. Sunday was highlighted as the most dangerous day with 20% of casualties occurring on that day.

Males accounted for all fatalities, while nine in 10 of those seriously injured were also male. Almost a third (31%) of motorcyclist fatalities occurred at a junction, with 58% of these deaths occurring at a T-junction. High proportions of fatalities (72%) and serious injuries (70%) occurred on a straight road.

Multiple vehicle collisions accounted for over two thirds (67%) of casualties with failure to observe reported as the most frequently noted action for both the motorcyclist and the other driver involved.

The report also highlights the upward trend of motorcyclist fatalities, with numbers increasing from 16 in 2019 to 27 in 2023. In this five-year period, 105 motorcyclists were killed and 921 were seriously injured.



Sam Waide, Chief Executive of the RSA, said: "Staying alert and aware of those you share the road with is vitally important, especially as our research found that failure to observe was the most frequently noted action for the motorcyclist and other driver involved in multi-vehicle collisions. All drivers need to be aware of motorcyclists, particularly in their blind spots – when turning, overtaking, at junctions and when driving on straight roads."

An Garda Síochána Assistant Commissioner Roads Policing and Community Engagement, Paula Hilman said: "Motorcyclists are especially vulnerable road users, this vulnerability increases during spring and summer months when we see more motorcycles on our roads. So far this year there has been 10 motorcyclists killed on Irish roads. We would appeal to all road users to look out for motorcycles on the roads and we would encourage motorcyclists to ensure that their bikes are properly maintained, regularly serviced and that they travel within the appropriate speed limits."

GOPLUGABLE CHOOSES OHME AS ITS SMART CHARGER PARTNER



GoPlugable has chosen Cork-based dynamic EV charging company Ohme as its official home charger partner in Ireland. GoPlugable is Ireland's platform for locating, reserving and sharing home charging points for EV drivers. The company was established in 2023 to solve the problem of Irish EV drivers who don't have easy access to home-charging. Owners of Ohme chargers in Ireland can become a GoPlugable host and earn money by sharing their home EV charger when it's not in use.

"We are delighted to announce Ohme as our official home

charging partner," said GoPlugable CEO, Maebh Reynolds. "With Ohme the fastest-growing smart EV charging company in Ireland, it's great for us to be working with them to help with the transition to greater EV adoption in all forms." "GoPlugable is a really exciting new company for Ireland, helping to grow EV adoption and make it easier for drivers to make the switch," said David Watson, Ohme CEO. "This collaboration will help Ohme customers not only to get paid from renting their charger out to other EV users, but to help play a part in growing the EV public charging network." Ohme's range of smart chargers can connect seamlessly with all of Ireland's electricity suppliers and automatically adjust an EV's charging for drivers to take advantage of off-peak tariffs. Ohme is the official EV charger provider for the Volkswagen Group, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo Cars and Polestar in Ireland and has worked with a number of other partners including Donegal County Council and Iarnród Éireann. Ohme has also been named as Fast Track Company of the Year in the 2023 UK Green Business Awards as well as Best Chargepoint Manufacturer in the 2024 Irish EV awards.

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🇪🇺 The New General Safety Regulation (EU) 2019/2144 safety
🚗 features apply from 7 July 2024 for newly manufactured vehicles



All newly manufactured vehicles sold in Ireland must come equipped with a range of advanced safety systems. The move comes with the implementation of an EU regulation which aims to significantly reduce deaths and serious injuries on roads by mandating certain Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) in new vehicles.

The second General Safety Regulation, GSR2, applies to cars, vans, buses and trucks. Its primary aim is to reduce collisions by deploying advanced safety systems to help protect the occupants of the vehicle, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

Sam Waide, chief executive of the Road Safety Authority (RSA), welcomed the move: "ADAS uses sensors and other electronic systems to assist drivers in various driving tasks and help prevent collisions. It has the potential to significantly improve road safety in Ireland."

The regulation covers the introduction of a wide range of technologies, including drowsiness detection, blind spot information systems, advanced emergency braking, alcohol interlock installation facilitation and intelligent speed assistance.

Intelligent speed assistance is a key feature that alerts drivers when they are speeding. This technology is expected to help drivers keep within the speed limit by issuing an

audible warning or vibrating alert when the driver exceeds the limit or when the speed limit changes. It operates using a front-facing camera that reads speed limit signs. This data can be combined with GPS mapping in the vehicle's software, enabling the car to know the current speed limits along its route.

Advanced emergency braking is a system that monitors the road ahead, alerting the driver if a potential collision is about to occur. The system automatically applies the brakes if the driver fails to brake in an emergency. An alcohol interlock interface allows the installation of aftermarket breathalysers on newly manufactured vehicles. Where aftermarket devices are fitted, the driver must pass a breath alcohol content test to enable the vehicle to start.

According to research published by the University of Limerick (UL) in November 2022, installing ADAS on cars could result in a significant reduction in crashes.

The RSA, in association with the Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI), is running a campaign to raise awareness of the changes among consumers and the motor industry. The campaign is running across press, digital display and social media platforms. SIMI members are invited to share GSR content on their own social media, with assets available to download on the members portal <https://members.simi.ie/>



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9TH ANNUAL WOMEN@SIMI EVENT CELEBRATES WOMEN ACROSS THE IRISH MOTOR INDUSTRY



The Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) recently hosted its 9th Annual Women@SIMI event in conjunction with its sponsor Bank of Ireland, in the Alex Hotel, Dublin.

The event brought together over 170 professional women from various sectors to celebrate the extensive contributions made by women across the Motor Industry in Ireland.

SIMI President Jonathan Meade addressed the audience at his first official event in his capacity as SIMI President, saying: "Women@SIMI shines a positive light on women working within the Motor Industry, serving as an example for others who may wish to join." He highlighted the exciting opportunities within the industry and expressed gratitude to its sponsor Bank of Ireland for their continued support of the event since its inception.

Mary Kennedy, Master of Ceremonies welcomed guest speakers Sharon O'Buachalla, Managing Director of Ayvens, whose leadership has played a pivotal role in guiding and developing the strategic direction of the company at the forefront of fleet management and innovative mobility solutions in Ireland, along with Aoife O'Grady, Head of Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI), who is championing and guiding the Motor Industry in the systemic transformation of the national vehicle fleet to electrification. Guest speakers shared their insights on leadership and innovation in the industry.



Pictured L to R: Sharon O'Buachalla, Ayvens, John Feeney, Bank of Ireland, Mary Kennedy, Jonathan Meade, SIMI President and Aoife O'Grady, ZEVI.

Guest speaker Sharon O'Buachalla, speaking about what she has learnt as a leader, said: "Surround yourself with very good people because the success of our company are the people. And for those thinking of entering the Industry, you have to be passionate about what you do. There are many challenges facing our Industry, every day is different, you must work hard and just go for it."

Guest speaker Aoife O'Grady remarked: "The Irish Motor industry is constantly evolving, you need to be prepared to be flexible and adaptable. Every job is interesting in its own way, you need to find what works for you."

John Feeney, Head of Property, Project, and Asset-backed Finance, Corporate and Commercial Banking addressed the attendees: "Bank of Ireland is delighted to sponsor the Women@SIMI event again this year. This platform offers a great opportunity for women in the industry to network and gain leadership insights from esteemed industry leaders. At Bank of Ireland, we have a strong conviction that organisations and industries that harness talent thrive. We're proud to be making significant steps to embodying this in our Group."

SIMI remains committed to promoting inclusion and empowerment within the motor industry.



Martina Clinton, Zoe Bradley, Roisin Walsh, Alex Lunch, Sara Woulfe, Toyota Ireland.



Amanda Tavares, Rachel Fogarty, Megan Barry, Niamh Chinnen, Aisling McCabe, Amy O'Brien, Tara Byrne, Aoife Darby, Niamh Donovan, Tegan O'Reilly, Enterprise.



Caroline Heathcote, Carol Ivers, Debbie Gleeson, Lynn Mchugh, Kim Kilduff, Michaela Cullen, Natasha Byrne, Volkswagen Group Ireland.



Patricia Fanning, Gillian Fanning, Serfac.



Jill Corbally, Service Stop Ltd and Nadia Adan, Ashford Motors.



Deeksha Pathak, Meghashree Rao, Motion.



Caroline Whelan, Paula Murray, Dearbhla Havelin, Bernie Clare, Roisin Welsh, Mooney's Hyundai and Koping Motors.



Nicola Dandy, Valerie Leonard, Grainne Donnelly, Michele O'Brien, LKQ UK and Ireland.



Sabrina Forsyth, Jane O'Sullivan, Ami Fox, Emma Mitchell, SIMI.



Michele Smith, Nicole Smith, Sharon O'Buachalla, Madeline McGovern, Ayvens.

END OF AN ERA AS FRANK DONNELLAN RETIRES FROM FINANCE IRELAND MOTOR

On the July 31, we will see the end of an era, not just for Finance Ireland Motor and Leasing but for the wider motor Industry, when the legendary Frank Donnellan retires from his role as Managing Director of Ireland's largest independent motor finance provider. Frank, a hugely popular and highly regarded 40-year plus industry veteran, is renowned for his innovative and customer centric approach to motor finance. His mantra of putting the customers' needs first and providing his dealers with a class-leading service has been key to the company's phenomenal success.

Frank's innovative approach is best demonstrated by the business he retires from, one he established in 2011 when almost all motor finance providers had fled the Irish market. At its launch, Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing (then First Auto Finance) was welcomed by every Irish motor dealer and more importantly by their customers, the hard-pressed Irish motorist, who had been starved of credit and car buying options in the previous years. Frank's unique ability to provide products and services that consumers needed as well as building great teams around him, quickly led to the establishment of the company as Ireland's largest independent motor finance provider. Innovating to the end Frank, together with Finance Ireland Motor & Leasing, continues to develop the market leading digital journey for its dealers, partners and customers.

Integrating their class-leading platform with these business partners has played a huge part in the company's rapid growth. This strategy has led to impressive collaborations with digital providers like Tesla, Polestar and all of Ireland's digital publishers.

With almost 150,000 customers already funded, Frank leaves FIML in rude health and on track for another record year. Asked to sum up his years in the industry and the future of Finance Ireland Frank said: "Having spent 47 years in motor finance and the last 14 at the helm of Finance Ireland's auto business, the time has come for me to pass on the baton. I have thoroughly enjoyed my entire working life and am extremely grateful to all who supported me throughout my career. I have many cherished memories and have made lifelong friendships along the way, with dealers and colleagues alike and am looking forward to keeping in contact as I look forward to my retirement.

"I'm delighted that my successor, Ray Murphy will shortly take the reins. Ray has been with the company for many years and his contribution to its success, immense. Joining Ray as recently promoted Sales Director will be Graham McLoughlin, who also has been a stalworth of the business over many years. Ray and Graham will lead a team of highly motivated and professional individuals and I am confident that they will take this fantastic company to new heights. I wish them and all at Finance Ireland continued success."

MICHAEL GRANT MOTOR APPOINTED KGM MAIN DEALER

KGM Ireland (formerly Ssangyong) are delighted to announce the appointment of Michael Grant Motors as a new main dealer for the brand. Commenting on the appointment Michael Grant says: "We are really excited about taking on this new brand, now the third biggest manufacturer in Korea. There are six new models coming in the next 12 months and we see a bright future ahead for KGM. It's a great fit for our company, and the timing is right"



Pictured left to right: Mark Creevey (KGM Ireland), Michael Grant and Robert Gugles (Michael Grant Motors).

BRIDGESTONE TO SUPPORT OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

Bridgestone Corporation is contributing a variety of tyres, services and performance products at the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2024.

The company's contributions to Paris 2024 operations and activities are designed to showcase how it is creating social and customer value through safety, sustainability, inclusivity and innovation, according to the company.

These efforts include:

- Advanced tyres and automotive service for Paris 2024 fleet vehicles;
- Road safety education for Paris 2024 drivers;
- Collaboration with fellow Paris 2024 partners to advance inclusive and sustainable transportation options at the event; and
- High-performance golf products and adaptive sports equipment for Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

"The Olympic and Paralympic Games are powerful platforms that unite and inspire people around the world through emotion and performance," said Laurent Dartoux, Management Board Chair and Group President, Bridgestone Europe Middle East and Africa (BSEMEA).

RENAULT LAUNCHES 242 OFFERS

Renault has announced its finance offers for 242 with 0% APR or a €1,500 trade-in bonus available across Clio, Captur, Arkana, and Austral E-Tech full hybrid models.

The 0% HP APR finance offer with Mobilize Financial Services (MFS) is based on a maximum finance amount of €25,000 and a maximum term of 48 months, saving customers over €3,000 in interest versus high street banks. This offer is available up to the 31st of July.

For 242 customers looking to experience The Car of the Year 2024 the Scenic E-Tech electric, a 4.9% APR HP offer is available from MFS. Renault has also announced an exclusive offer of a €500 'Go Anywhere' hotel gift card to the first 100 customers ordering their new Scenic before the 31st of August. The 100% electric Scenic E-Tech boasts a WLTP range of 610km and quick charging of up to 150 kW, with a 545-litre boot, and the innovative Solarbay opacifying sunroof and 'ingenious' rear armrest completing the cabin's 'all-comfort' package.

Rafale E-Tech full hybrid, Renault's new flagship model will also be available with 4.9% APR HP offer offer as will the Megane E-Tech electric. The Rafale hybrid



SUV coupe is available to order now. With its generous interior space and wide range of high-tech features, Rafale promises an exceptional onboard experience and will be available in the 200 hp E-Tech hybrid powertrain with its proven performance/efficiency ratio, already available with Austral.

Renault will also continue to offer a No Deposit on PCP for all new and existing customers across all Renault models.

BANK OF IRELAND FINANCE IS EXCLUSIVE FINANCE PARTNER OF ALL-ELECTRIC SMART VEHICLES IN IRELAND



Pictured recently at the MSL dealership in Cabinteely, Co Dublin at the launch of the partnership are: Karen Kennedy, Franchise Retention and Innovation, Bank of Ireland Finance; Paddy Finnegan, CEO of MDL; John Feeney, Head of Property, Project and Asset-backed Finance, Bank of Ireland; Derek McDermott, Managing Director, Bank of Ireland Finance.

Bank of Ireland Finance has been announced as the exclusive finance partner of the all-electric motor franchise Smart – with two new Smart electric vehicles (EVs) now available on the Irish market. Both new cars, the Smart#1 and Smart#3, feature a premium design fitted with advanced technology with a range of both four-door and five-seater models available. The new Smart cars are exclusively distributed in Ireland by Motor Distributors Limited (MDL) and sold nationwide through their Smart dealer network. Following a period of steady (rather than spectacular) EV sales performance over the past couple of years during market reconfiguration, interest in EVs and applications for EV financing are trending higher again with the latest Bank of Ireland figures revealing:

- Used EV purchase applications up 125% in Q1 2024 compared to Q1 2023
- New EV purchase applications up 41% in Q1 2024 compared to Q1 2023
- Overall, 56% increase in EV purchase funding in Q1 2024 compared to Q1 2023
- 9 out of 10 EV drivers move into another EV after their original PCP contract ends

Bank of Ireland Finance, which works with 23 motor franchises nationwide to provide low-rate APR offers for EVs, is the largest provider of wholesale finance for both battery electric and plug-in hybrid EV purchases. The EV market continues to evolve as the number of owners with range anxiety falls due to improved charging infrastructure, and awareness levels surrounding EV choice and value rise as motorists become more environmentally conscious. John Feeney, Head of Property, Project and Asset-backed Finance, Bank of Ireland said: "It's an exciting time for Smart to introduce these two new models to the Irish market, and Bank of Ireland Finance has an extensive range of flexible finance options available to customers looking to purchase a Smart car."

"The switch to EVs is an important part of Ireland's overall green transition, and with more than €11 billion in sustainable lending already extended, and a target to reach €30 billion by the end of the decade, our focus is on helping consumers and businesses on their green journey. We look forward to supporting customers in making a plug-in or hybrid EV purchase as the market develops further and the sustainable motoring transition gathers speed."



ELVES MEETS AND EXCEEDS IRELAND'S REUSE, RECYCLING AND RECOVERY TARGETS FOR A FIFTH YEAR IN A ROW

ELVES, the producer compliance scheme for End-of-Life Vehicles (ELVs) in Ireland, has successfully ensured that the challenging ELV reuse and recovery targets of 85% and 95% are yet again being met nationally.

ELVES does this by funding additional recycling of ELV material that would not normally occur otherwise. In 2022, ELVES achieved a national reuse and recycling rate of 88.5% and an overall combined reuse and recovery rate of 95.5%. According to Fiacra Quinn, CEO of ELVES: "The ELVES Authorised Treatment Facility (ATF) Network has met its targets from the inception of this scheme in 2017, meeting national targets from 2018 onwards. To see national target achievement at over 95% again for 2022, is great to see, and is a reflection of ELVES' work in this area."

In addition to continuously working to meet and exceed the national targets, ELVES works to improve the reprocessing of ELVs through raising awareness about the correct way to scrap a vehicle, promoting its Network of ATFs so that the public know where they can take their vehicle for recycling, and highlighting the importance of getting a Certificate of Destruction when disposing of an End-of-Life Vehicle. ELVES also works on targeted interventions to aid ATFs including the provision of Autogas decommissioning equipment and Air Conditioning gas (F-Gas) removal guidance and training.

To help prepare for the future, ELVES established the Electric ELVES programme in 2018 to support all ATFs in the management of electric and hybrid vehicles when they reach end-of-life. For all ATFs in Ireland, the programme has provided free collection and recycling of electric



vehicle batteries, information on their handling, and has also given 1,400 hours of training for dismantlers to-date. ELVES' most recent initiative in this area was an EPA funded project called Electric Loops, which investigated the reuse, remanufacturing and recycling potential of electric vehicles.

MINISTER O'DONOVAN LAUNCHES WORLDSKILLS IRELAND 2024

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Patrick O'Donovan TD recently launched WorldSkills Ireland 2024. "Once again, WorldSkills Ireland will celebrate the best of Irish skills opportunities, with competitors from up to 30 disciplines showcasing the best of their skills and professions. It is a brilliant opportunity for young people from all over the country to explore the variety of skills-based career paths available to them, from traditional fields, like construction and mechanics, to newer areas, such as financial services, green skills and retrofitting. I hear consistent messages from employers in areas of skills demand, so it's great to see events like WorldSkills returning, benefitting both students and employers from across Ireland." The free-to-attend WorldSkills Ireland event will run concurrently with The Irish Times Higher Options event at RDS, Simmonscourt, Dublin, from September 25-27. WorldSkills Ireland is the largest coming together event of

second-level students across the country, with a central focus to highlight the power of skills competitions as a promotional instrument for a skilled future, and the innovative nature of further and higher education programmes. Chair of WorldSkills Ireland, Ray English, says: "We are delighted again to present to 30,000 students and visitors the chance to see the full range of career and educational opportunities at Ireland's largest skills show. Employers will get the chance to attract career seekers to their sectors, whilst all education and training providers are showcasing the many and varied routes through education to a lifelong career."

WorldSkills aims at changing negative perceptions around apprenticeships and a skills-based career, educating everyone about the variety of opportunities available to young people in Ireland. Those wishing to attend can register at: worldskillsireland.ie

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Meet the President



Jonathan Meade of Hutton and Meade is a 40-plus year veteran of the Irish Motor Industry. Here, he tells us about his company's beginnings, opportunities with EVs and the value of SIMI.

Processes

Jonathan is a longstanding figure in both motoring and SIMI, having worked for over four decades in the Motor Industry. He believes in SIMI as a representative for disparate corners of the industry, speaking in "one voice".

"One of the really good things about SIMI is that they represent all sectors of the Motor Industry," he says.

"When we go to talk to Government or other institutions or departments, we talk with one voice. So, whether you deal in new cars, used cars, independents, people who service cars, those who supply fuels, and the aftermarket...the SIMI represents everybody."

"So," he continues, "when we go to talk, the Government will listen to us, as opposed to three or four different factions fighting for different things and ending up in 'no man's land'. So as one body, we're much stronger and more successful. "It's an honour to be selected as President this year. There's work to be done and, with the assistance and support of the members and the SIMI Executive Team, we can deliver for the Industry."

Opportunities with Government

Jonathan sees opportunities when it comes to Electric Vehicles (EVs) reducing emissions and highlights the importance of the Government's contributions. "We have a number of challenges," he says, "but the biggest one we have at the moment clearly is the EV project. We need certainty and stability. As a business, we look in short, medium, and long-term plans. And if the Government wants to be part

of the EV project, we need to have certainty that grant support will be sustained, investment in infrastructure will be meaningful and for company car buyers, benefit in kind [BIK] supports will be extended. Any motorist considering purchasing an EV needs to know where they stand, and how long the benefits are for, so they can be confident in making the change to an EV. The BIK incentive is due to reduce next year and be eliminated over the next three years; this doesn't give anybody confidence, either the Industry or potential customers. As a country, while we have exceeded expectations on the private EV customer, we are under-performing in the business sector. We need to extend the BIK support, not reduce it. Evidence from other markets is that the best place to get EVs on the road is corporate businesses, as they will renew their fleets every couple of years. Their employees will choose EVs if they know that BIK is reduced for driving an EV not just this year, but for a number of years. That means supporting the corporate market over a three-to-five year period to generate confidence to buy." And speaking of electric vehicles...

The move to EV

Jonathan has a long history with EVs, more so than many in the Industry. As a Nissan dealership over a decade ago, Hutton & Meade were there at the start of the roll-out of EVs in Ireland. "We sold Nissan LEAFs back in 2012," he says, "so we've grown up with EVs. And the EV market has only really started to become very prominent in the last four years. So, in terms of selling EVs, we're well aware of how to sell them, of the customer base.

We're at a transition stage now, going from early adopters, who buy from a place of curiosity, to more mainstream buyers who require more assurances. We need to show them that it's the real deal, that this is where the value is. Charging can be very easily done, and living with an EV is pleasant.

"And the reality is that every used car we sell has come from an EV driver who's traded that car in for a new EV. So, people who already drive EVs are convinced, we just need to take that journey on. I think nudging EVs into the mainstream will take continuing the conversation. There's been a lot of negative press and people who don't know the true facts, and maybe hear stories about what they think might be relevant. And, in reality, most of the negative stories are not quite true. So, people will talk about the charging infrastructure [for example]. Well, 90% of charging is done at home, at night-rate of electricity, which is very inexpensive. Other charging can be done on highways and motorways. The reality is that these cars are not for everyone...yet. But we know that they're coming. Anybody who's in the franchise retail industry knows that manufacturers are bringing more and more EVs to the market. As that develops, and people see them more on the road, neighbours are going to talk more about EVs. The best people we have to promote EVs are the evangelists who drive them already and will tell people the story of how nice they are to drive."

The past year for Hutton & Meade

Jonathan admits that it's been an eventful few years for the Industry. He compares the past year to 2019, in other words, pre-pandemic.

"The past 12 months have been different," he says. "So, we're dealing with what I refer to as 'back to normal' business. We're back to having cars available, including used cars. There's a challenge in terms of pricing and in terms of the margins, and in terms of trying to find customers. So, we see customers visiting dealerships once or twice more than they used to, so we find the competition is healthy. But in reality it's how we were in 2019. Our business is a normal business in many ways: our cost base has grown a bit, so we must find new ways of dealing with that."

Recruitment and skills

Of course, every Industry needs new blood, and Jonathan is a strong believer in upskilling and communication when it comes to attracting new talent. "We would have really good employment practices within the Industry," he says, "from apprenticeships upwards. We go to meet people in schools, Colin Walsh and Sabrina Forsyth of SIMI do fantastic work in promoting apprentices and careers. At my inauguration, I talked about bringing new blood in, but not only with apprenticeships. So bringing people from outside the Industry in, encouraging

new skills, and also bringing fresh ideas into the business. The market is changing. There are new ways of retailing, and we need to embrace them because they're coming. And we need to find a way to maximise them.

"We need to recruit at all levels. I began my career as an apprentice salesman. There are opportunities available for apprentice salespeople, and career progression can lead to becoming sales managers or brand managers, even business owners. We need to upskill our technical staff also. The technology coming with batteries that we've seen in the last 10 years means that it's a new Industry, it's a cleaner business and workshop environment. Gone are the days of oily rags around the place. Business procedures have changed.

New people coming in are the lifeblood of any business, and we need to focus on that."

History of Hutton and Meade



"Joe Hutton and I worked together for many years," says Jonathan. "We worked with Paraic Mooney on the Long Mile Road. I went out into banking for a year, and within that year, I found out about an opportunity to open a Nissan dealership. That was in 1994, so 30 years ago. Joe Hutton and I built what I think is a very good business. We're assisted by Nigel Brennan, who's our general manager. We have 42 staff, a lot of people working with us for many years. It's a good business with great camaraderie. You can see customers returning and returning. That's the lifeblood of our business. We've got to find new customers all the time, and new product helps. We are seeing our customers' adult children often come in to buy cars. In the case of one family, the third generation has come in recently, which is really heartening."

Jonathan at home

Jonathan has been married for 38 years, and has two daughters and a grandson. He's been in the motor trade for 43 years and, when he's not in the office or showroom, he likes music (playing guitar with a trad session band), cycling and following his beloved Leinster, wherever they play. On that note, he's also fond of travel, when he gets the chance.

SIMI Training Courses

SUMMER 2024



Details of SIMI Skillnet subsidised courses planned for the coming months are listed below. All course information is available on www.simi.ie.

Bookings: contact Ami Fox, Network Manager on email: afox@simi.ie

Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems

Tuesday 30th, 31st July & 1st August 2024, Dublin



This course is for technicians, employed in the Motor Industry, requiring the knowledge and skills to be able to remove and replace HV components for hybrid and electric vehicles safely. With hybrids and EVs increasing in popularity, garage technicians will become more involved in the servicing and repair of these vehicles. The technology and safety challenges presented by hybrid and electric vehicles mean technicians will need to understand how these systems operate before proceeding with any repairs as they are very different to traditional vehicles.

TRAINER: MKW Motors

COST: €560 for SIMI Members; €600 for non-Members

LOCATION: MKW Motors, A6 Kingswood Business Park, Baldonnell Rd, Dublin 22

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.00am-5.30pm each day

DURATION: Three full days (eight hours plus lunch)

SIMI Skillnet Electric Vehicle Sales

Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th August, ONLINE

As interest in electric vehicle models continues to grow, successful retailing of EVs and ensuring a positive customer experience demands a change to dealership practices. This training programme is designed to upskill the Sales Department by enhancing their selling techniques of Electric Vehicles specifically, to inspire consumer confidence and meet customers' expectations when they are purchasing an Electric Vehicle, as we continue to see this increase in Electric Vehicle Sales.

TRAINER: Yellow Box Enterprises

COST: Members: €110.70 (€90 plus VAT)/Non-Members: €147.60 (€120 plus VAT)

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DATE: 14th and 15th August 2024

SIMI Skillnet Managing the Aftersales Department

Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd August 2024, ONLINE



Managing the Aftersales Department has been designed to develop the skills and competencies of participants to confidently lead an Aftersales team in the Motor Industry, whilst ensuring an efficient and profitable Aftersales Department. It is intended for Franchise and Independent Businesses - Dealer Principals, Owner Managers, Aftersales Managers.

TRAINER: Navigate Solutions Ireland Ltd

COST: Members: €172.20 (€140 plus VAT)/Non-Members: €209.10 (€170 plus VAT)

DAY SCHEDULE: 9.30am-12.30pm each day

DATE: 22nd and 23rd August 2024



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Ami Fox, Network Manager on email: afox@simi.ie
or call + 353 1 6761690

SIMI Skillnet Facebook & Instagram Advertising Using the Ads Manager

Monday 26th August 2024, ONLINE



Ideal for: Small Business Owners, Sales and Marketing Managers, and new-entrant marketing staff in the Motor Industry. This course is designed for anyone who has taken on the marketing role and needs a working understanding of Facebook. Training is designed to assist participants with creating a detailed Facebook & Instagram advertising plan and have the skills and tools to be able to implement and measure it.

TRAINER: Sandra Hennessy, Be Dynamic

COST: Members: €24.60 (€20 plus VAT) Non Members: €49.20 (€40 plus VAT)

DAY SCHEDULE: 2pm-5pm

DATE: 26th August 2024

Automotive Retail Management Programme

September 2024 to April 2025



Blended Learning (Online Learning & On-site Workshops)
This Industry-specific management development programme is designed to increase the business skills and personal effectiveness of the participants by providing them with best practice examples that may be implemented within their businesses to increase profitability. It will help participants to function at a managerial level effectively and confidently and become better equipped to contribute to their management team.

TRAINER: Optimum Ltd & Navigate Solutions Ireland

COST: €3,565 for SIMI Members; €4,182 for non-Members

LOCATION: Online learning & Workshops (Killashee Hotel, Naas, Co. Kildare)

DURATION: September 2024 to April 2025

SIMI Skillnet is co-funded by Skillnet Ireland and network companies. Skillnet Ireland is funded from the National Training Fund and the European Union through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.



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Western Motors Drogheda – Franchise Sales Operation of the Year



We caught up with the SIMI Award winners to talk about their 60th anniversary and the past 12 months.

Western Motors has been in business for six decades, but they are not leaning on past glories. Instead, they continue to invest in their team and maintaining a loyal customer base. "Our success hinges on our exceptional team at Western Motors," says Liam Gillespie, Brand Manager. "Across all departments, our people work hard to achieve outstanding results in every aspect of the business. At the risk of sounding clichéd, our customers, we could not thrive without their support and loyalty."

"Winning this award [Franchise Sales Operation of the Year] is fantastic recognition of the hard work and dedication of everyone involved. It underscores the collective effort and commitment to excellence that drives our success."

A Family Business

"Western Motors is a family-run business and the values that define that are instilled in the entire team," says Liam. "We remain a tight-knit group, united by a common goal: providing the best possible experience for our customers. Our team undergo regular training to stay updated on product knowledge and sales techniques, enabling us to serve our customers better. As we continue to expand, maintaining this customer focused approach and commitment to excellence will be even more crucial."

60 Years in Operation

2024 is a momentous year for Western Motors, as they marked six decades in business. Unsurprisingly, they celebrated.

"The celebrations kicked off with the owner brothers, James and Simon, creating a great Western Motors video, telling the story that began in 1964 with their dad James McCormack opening the dealership in Ballybrit," says Liam. "The video took us on a trip down memory lane through pictures and the story of their mom, Anne McCormack, who later took over the business. Anne, one of the very first women to run a car dealership in Ireland, went on to be one of the most entrepreneurial women in the industry, securing the Western Motors partnership with Volkswagen, which still goes strong today, 40 years later. "2024 celebrates the Western Motors 60th anniversary and our 40th anniversary as a Volkswagen partner, two significant and exciting milestones."

"This year marks a journey filled with passion, dedication, and the unwavering support of our incredible team, colleagues and customers. We've come a long way together, building memories and connections that last a lifetime."

Benefits of being a Franchisee

As mentioned, Western Motors has been a Volkswagen partner for 40 years now, which Liam says offers numerous advantages.

"Volkswagen have established operational guidelines and best practices that help us deliver a consistent, high quality customer experience," he says. "Their strong brand reputation attracts a loyal customer base, making it easier for us to build trust and drive sales. The loyalty of Volkswagen customers ensures repeat business and long-term engagement."



L-R: Paddy Magee, Past President of SIMI, John Feeney, Bank of Ireland with Liam Gillespie and Robbie Matthews of Western Motors Drogheda, winners of the Award for Franchised Sales Operation of the Year 2024, Brian Cooke Director General of SIMI.

"Their continuous development of cutting-edge technology means we offer our customers the newest and most advanced vehicles in the market."

Working Sustainably

Like many SIMI winners this year, Western Motors is invested in the future.

"Sustainability has always been a priority for Western Motors and was a critical factor in driving many technology changes in our business," says Liam. "By becoming less paper driven and more data driven, adopting cloud-based systems for data storage and process management, we have not only improved our operational efficiency but aligned with our commitment to sustainability."

"In 2023 our Galway site invested in PV Panel technology, in Q2 2024, our Drogheda completed our PV panel project in April 2024. In addition to the financial benefits these installations bring, we embrace this technology to become a more sustainable business and reduce our carbon footprint."

Adapting to Customer Behaviour

The Motor Industry, like many others, saw seismic changes in 2020, the impact of which are still here. One example is how customer research and purchasing habits have changed.

Liam says: "Consumers are increasingly turning to online platforms for the vehicle research and purchasing decisions and this shift accelerated our digital developments, during and post-Covid.

"We are seeing an increase in consumer preferences for sustainable vehicle options, and we have expanded our inventory to meet this demand. Our customers are also more value conscious, economic uncertainties have made them so. We have responded to this by offering attractive financing options, promotions, and value-added services to provide the best possible deals."

Beyond customer habits, the impact of Brexit still looms.

"Brexit does continue to impact our business," admits Liam, "in terms of supply chain disruptions, increased costs and regulatory changes.

"Despite these challenges, our proactive strategies and resilient team have enabled us to adapt effectively."

EVs and Hybrids

Another development in recent years has been the dawn of EVs, a key technology in making motoring more sustainable.

"At our dealership we are still seeing a great demand for electric vehicles," says Liam, "both in new and used cars. On the other hand, whilst we do offer hybrid vehicles across our brands, we have not seen as strong a demand for them compared to the full electric vehicles.

"While national figures show a slight decline in EV sales compared to last year, the EV segment remains a compelling option for environmentally conscious consumers seeking sustainable transport. Our brands continue to develop at speed with advancements in technology and an increasing range of models available so as awareness continues to grow and the infrastructure expands, we expect continued interest and increased adoption of electric vehicles."

Brand Expansion over the Years

Liam offers a timeline of the company's evolution.

"1984 began our relationship with Volkswagen in Ballybrit, Galway. Then in 2007, 'East met West' when Western Motors Drogheda was born. 2012 saw the addition of the Skoda brand at Western Motors Drogheda. Then, in 2021, the latest addition to our portfolio was SEAT & CUPRA at Western Motors Drogheda.

"Driven by the success of our Volkswagen Passenger & Commercial brands and our Skoda brand, in 2021 we embarked on an ambitious project to expand our site and business, anticipating the future needs of Western Motors in the East.

"The SEAT & CUPRA brands became available in county Louth, and we successfully secured these franchises. This led to the creation of a new showroom dedicated to these exciting new brands.

"Additionally, in 2024, we have built a dedicated Volkswagen Commercial Van Centre, providing a specialised destination for our commercial vehicle customers.

"Recognising the growth in our car park, we also expanded our workshop capacity, upgrading from a 12-ramp workshop to a more modern facility with 19 ramps.

"Our full five-brand site now spans 4.1 acres, including a basement with parking and storage for over 100 vehicles. The site features a seven-bay valeting centre, two service wash bays and a vehicle photography studio with a turntable to ensure professional and consistent vehicle presentation.

"We are proud to have such a comprehensive and modern facility and a team of over 80 personnel, dedicated to serving our customers six days a week."

Selling Your Business



Our Deal Advisory team has successfully facilitated numerous business sales across various industries. Michael Neary, Deals Advisory Partner at Grant Thornton, recommends implementing the below steps to help you get the best deal.



Michael Neary,
Deals Advisory
Partner.

Planning and Preparation

Forward planning is crucial for preparing your dealership for sale, and the earlier the process is started, the better. This preparation time allows you to enhance your business for sale, optimise operations, enhance financial records, and address any potential issues that could impact the sale value. A key component to preparing for a sale is the practice of maintaining high-quality records. These are essential for showcasing the financial health and operational efficiency of your dealership. High-quality records not only build buyer confidence but also streamline the due diligence process, potentially increasing the sale price and reducing transaction time. Key documentation which will form part of the sale could include financial statements, lease agreements, franchise agreement and employment agreements. So, it's important to ensure this information is up to date and available.

As part of this preparation, take time to address any ongoing issues which may currently impact the business. This could include the resolution of any pending legal claims or uncertainty around the ownership of assets. Prospective purchasers will always consider a "worst-case" scenario and adjust their offer accordingly.

Maximising Value

Prior to sale, you should also focus on maximising the profitability of your dealership. As a prospective purchaser will likely base their offer on a multiple of trading performance (e.g., earnings before interest, depreciation and amortisation, or EBITDA), an improvement in your dealership's performance will increase the overall value for the business. If you're

confident that your business can improve performance through cost reduction or restructuring, don't hesitate to make the necessary tough choices.

Engage Seller Support Services

Engaging a professional advisory team (including financial, legal and tax experts) early in the process is crucial for a successful sale. If you enlist the help of a financial advisory service (such as Grant Thornton), a deal advisory team with extensive knowledge of the automotive sector can provide initial valuation services by assessing your dealership's worth based on market conditions, assets, and profitability. This team will also support your route to market, by developing a strategy to identify potential buyers and highlighting your dealership's strengths and growth potential through the preparation of a Confidential Information Memorandum (CIM) which details your dealership's business, financials, and market position.

Throughout the negotiations process, an advisory team can maintain competitive tension among buyers, manage effective negotiations, and facilitate the due diligence process—all aimed at maximising value and ensuring a seamless transaction. This comprehensive support ensures you enhance your business's worth whilst navigating the intricate challenges of selling a dealership.

Continuity of Business Operations

One of the most critical factors in ensuring a smooth transition is the retention of key management and staff. Buyers are often concerned about the potential loss of experienced personnel who possess valuable knowledge about the dealership's operations, customer base, and

business processes. Ensuring that these key employees are willing to stay on post-sale can significantly enhance the attractiveness of the dealership. This can be achieved through retention bonuses, long-term contracts, or other incentives. Similarly, maintaining strong relationships with customers is essential for the continuity of business operations. Established customer loyalty programmes that offer rewards and incentives should be continued where possible and can help ensure that the customer base remains loyal during and after the ownership transition. Buyers will value the dealership more if they see a high level of customer retention and engagement.

Understand Potential Buyers

Fundamentally, a business is worth what someone is willing to pay for it. This may differ from buyer to buyer based on the strategic opportunity the acquisition of your dealership represents to them. It is important to figure out what opportunity is for the buyer (for example, if the buyer were an international party, the acquisition may provide them with access to an Irish customer base) and use it to your advantage. Understanding the buyers' motivation, objectives and concerns is paramount in achieving a successful outcome for the negotiations.

Closing the Deal

The decision to sell is an emotional one for an owner, with your business possibly representing a lifetime of effort and achievement. Make sure you do not sell yourself short. Establish a highest target and a minimum walk-away price for yourself. Having a clear price range helps you stay focused during negotiations and prevents you from getting swayed by emotions or external pressures, enabling you to make decisions based on rational financial considerations. It also allows you to confidently reject offers that fall below your minimum threshold and encourages potential buyers to submit their best offers to meet your expectations. This empowers you as the seller, protects the value of your business, and increases your chances of securing a favourable deal.

In conclusion, implementing the above steps will help you maximise your business' value and increase the likelihood of a successful sale. Ultimately, the sale of your dealership is not just a transaction but a culmination of years of dedication and hard work. By prioritising preparation, understanding the intricacies of your business, and fostering transparent communication with potential buyers, you can ensure that the sale process reflects the true value and potential of your business.



TOP 10 SELLING CARS 2024

Hyundai Tucson **3,390** 4.3%Škoda Octavia **3,140** 4.0%Kia Sportage **2,561** 3.2%Toyota Rav **2,309** 2.9%Toyota Yaris Cross **2,141** 2.7%Toyota Corolla **2,028** 2.6%Toyota Yaris **1,666** 2.1%Hyundai Kona **1,638** 2.1%Nissan Qashqai **1,540** 2.0%Nissan Juke **1,519** 1.9%

NEW PASSENGER CAR REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/06/24 - 30/06/24	01/01/24- 30/06/24	Market share 2024 %
Alfa Romeo	0	36	0.05%
Alpine	0	2	0.00%
Audi	44	3489	4.42%
BMW	55	3037	3.85%
BYD	12	913	1.16%
Citroën	26	769	0.97%
Cupra	9	931	1.18%
Dacia	29	2589	3.28%
DAF	1	19	0.02%
DS	0	88	0.11%
Fiat	1	387	0.49%
Ford	58	2920	3.70%
GWM	0	36	0.05%
Honda	1	107	0.14%
Hyundai	51	7111	9.01%
Ineos	0	3	0.00%
Jaguar	0	46	0.06%
Jeep	2	77	0.10%
Kia	59	5617	7.12%
Land Rover	9	661	0.84%
Lexus	14	595	0.75%
Mazda	5	893	1.13%
Mercedes-Benz	24	2059	2.61%
MG	13	724	0.92%
Mini	19	268	0.34%
Mitsubishi	0	0	0.00%
Nissan	8	3784	4.79%
Opel	26	1790	2.27%
Peugeot	15	2837	3.59%
Polestar	19	114	0.14%
Porsche	9	228	0.29%
Private import	7	96	0.12%
Renault	10	2281	2.89%
Seat	29	1969	2.49%
Škoda	65	8076	10.23%
Ssangyong	1	30	0.04%
Subaru	0	11	0.01%
Suzuki	17	1431	1.81%
Tesla	515	1600	2.03%
Toyota	195	11673	14.79%
Volkswagen	131	8460	10.72%
Volvo	20	1185	1.50%
Total June 2024	1499	78942	
Total June 2023	2990	77602	
Change 2024 - 2023	-1491	1340	
% Change 2024 - 2023	-49.87%	1.73%	

TOP SELLING CARS JUNE 2024

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
1	Tesla Model 3	289	19.3
2	Tesla Model Y	226	15.1
3	Toyota Yaris Cross	58	3.9
4	Škoda Octavia	40	2.7
5	Toyota Corolla	38	2.5

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
6	Kia Sportage	37	2.5
7	Toyota Rav	29	1.9
8	Ford Puma	27	1.8
9	Volkswagen ID.4	26	1.7
10	Volkswagen Tiguan	26	1.7

NEW LIGHT COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/06 - 30/06	01/01 - 30/06	% Share
Alfa Romeo	12	260	1.29%
Audi	0	4	0.02%
Citroën	68	1636	8.09%
Dacia	0	56	0.28%
Fiat	4	601	2.97%
Ford	263	3901	19.28%
Fuso	6	91	0.45%
Hyundai	1	219	1.08%
Isuzu	7	133	0.66%
Iveco	12	126	0.62%
Kia	7	95	0.47%
Land Rover	6	279	1.38%
LDV	0	4	0.02%
MAN	4	170	0.84%
Maxus	13	393	1.94%
Mercedes-Benz	19	737	3.64%
Mitsubishi	0	0	0.00%
Nissan	17	492	2.43%
Opel	9	1616	7.99%
Peugeot	49	1646	8.14%
Renault	95	3481	17.21%
Ssangyong	6	60	0.30%
Subaru	0	0	0.00%
Toyota	19	1987	9.82%
Volkswagen	68	2206	10.91%
Private import	3	36	0.18%
Total June 2024	688	20229	
Total June 2023	1072	17179	
Change 2024 - 2023	-384	3050	
% Change 2024 - 2023	-35.82%	17.75%	

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

BUSES/COACHES REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/06 - 30/06	01/01 - 30/06	% Share
DAF	0	35	7.34%
Higer	0	7	1.47%
Isuzu	0	0	0.00%
Iveco	1	20	4.19%
MAN	0	4	0.84%
Mercedes-Benz	0	0	0.00%
Scania	0	13	2.73%
Sunsundegui	0	0	0.00%
Tekaydinlar	0	4	0.84%
VDL DAF	5	32	6.71%
Volvo	3	35	7.34%
Wrightbus	40	174	36.48%
Yutong	0	0	0.00%
Private import	3	153	32.08%
Total June 2024	52	477	
Total June 2023	26	221	
Change 2024 - 2023	26	256	
% Change 2024 - 2023	100.00%	115.84%	

NEW HEAVY COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/06 - 30/06	01/01 - 30/06	% Share
DAF	13	256	14.02%
Dennis Eagle	3	14	0.77%
Fuso	0	21	1.15%
Isuzu	4	74	4.05%
Iveco	6	49	2.68%
MAN	9	109	5.97%
Mercedes-Benz	9	160	8.76%
Renault	11	209	11.45%
Scania	47	502	27.49%
Volvo	22	402	22.02%
Private import	3	30	1.64%
Total June 2024	127	1826	
Total June 2023	129	1549	
Change 2024 - 2023	-2	277	
% Change 2023 - 2022	-1.55%	17.88%	

New vehicles

The latest models on the way to forecourts around the country.

AUDI Q6 E-TRON

The all-electric SUV with the additional drive variant is now available to order alongside the Audi Q6 e-tron quattro and sporty SQ6 e-tron.

Battery/Engine: Total gross capacity of 100 kWh (94.9 kWh net)

Pricing: TBD



BMW 3 SERIES SALOON

These latest plug-in-hybrid BMW 3 Series models boast greater efficiency and a considerably longer electric range than before.

Battery: New high-voltage battery with 19.5 kWh of usable energy

Pricing: From €56,700



SMART #3 SUV COUPÉ

This is now available for viewing in selected dealer showrooms within the Mercedes-Benz network.

Battery: 200kW performance delivers 343Nm of torque and a top speed of 180 km/h

Pricing: From €38,714



RENAULT RAFALE 4

Rafale 4 E-Tech full hybrid, Renault's new flagship model will also be available with 4.9% APR HP offer.

Battery/Engine: 200 hp E-Tech hybrid powertrain

Pricing: TBD



VOLKSWAGEN GOLF EDITION 50

A special 50th anniversary edition of the Golf will be released to commemorate its golden anniversary.

Engine: 1.5 / 2L

Pricing: From €37,500 RRP

AFTERMARKET

A close-up, low-angle shot of a tyre tread, showing a complex pattern of sipes and grooves. The image is monochromatic, with a blue tint. The tyre is the central focus, curving from the bottom left towards the top right.

► WASTE MANAGEMENT / TYRES

Circol ELT consultation

Minister Ossian Smyth announced in January that the Extended Producer Responsibility initiative for tyres would be expanded to include all categories, commencing in January 2025. Tyres in the Agricultural, Commercial, Construction and Industrial sectors will now be included in the scheme.

In response to this announcement, Tyre Scheme operators

Circol ELT has engaged in a comprehensive consultation process with all key stakeholder groups, meeting with individual operators as well as industry representative organisations.

Feedback from consultation meetings has been instrumental in helping shape the logistics of the

expanded Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI). John Coleman, Membership Manager at Circol ELT, commenting on the process said: "We would like to thank all of those who have participated in the consultation. Your input has provided valuable insights into the rollout of the tyre categories that will be added to the scheme in 2025."

Circol ELT's communication plans include trade and consumer shows, information road shows nationwide, tyre take back days and national radio campaigns. Should you require information on the expansion of the Tyre Scheme please email info@circoelt.ie or call 01 4618 600.



Driving a sustainable tomorrow



In the last year, Circol ELT have helped recover and recycle over 3.8m tyres with the support of our members.

Play your part and join today! Call (01) 461 8600 or visit circoelt.ie and find out how you can benefit from being part of Ireland's Tyre Compliance Scheme.

For further information:
W circoelt.ie **T** (01) 461 8600 **E** info@circoelt.ie

TAOISEACH AND MINISTER O'DONOVAN ANNOUNCE THE TEAM TRAVELLING TO FRANCE TO REPRESENT IRELAND IN WORLD SKILLS COMPETITION 2024

Taoiseach Simon Harris and Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science Patrick O'Donovan have announced the 18 participants who will compete as Team Ireland at the 2024 World Skills event in Lyon, France in September.

The WorldSkills competition will see over 1,500 competitors from more than 71 countries and regions around the world demonstrate their skills across 62 skills areas. Team Ireland will compete in areas including Industrial Mechanics, Beauty Therapy, Restaurant Service and Cloud Computing.

Team Ireland competed for the first time in 1957 and has competed at every international competition since then winning 63 Gold medals, 53 Silver medals, 80 Bronze Medals and 174 Diplomas/Medallions of Excellence with 732 Team Ireland competitors. In 2016 Ireland Skills adopted the global branding to become WorldSkills Ireland.

Speaking at the announcement, Taoiseach Simon Harris said: "I am delighted to announce the team of 18 inspiring young people who will compete in the world's biggest skills competition. This event provides a fantastic opportunity

for these incredibly talented individuals to demonstrate the quality of their skills and trade on an international stage.

"The World Skills competition also gives us an important platform to recognise and promote the value of skills-based learning in Ireland, and also to celebrate the incredible achievements of these young people here today as they begin their exciting journey to represent their country at this prestigious event."

Minister O'Donovan said: "I would like to congratulate these outstanding young people on being chosen to represent Ireland. We wish them the best luck as they begin their preparations to compete in the 47th World Skills competition. We have such a wealth of talent in Ireland and the World Skills competition gives us an important space to showcase the variety and quality of skills that we are fostering, from traditional areas such as Building and Construction, to newer areas, such as Cyber and ICT."

SIMI would like to wish all the participants representing Team Ireland the best of luck and Jamie Connick, Wexford, who will be competing in the Automobile Technology category, Apprentice Automobile Mechanic.



Pictured Irish World Skills Team with Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science Patrick O'Donovan and Taoiseach Simon Harris. (Photograph source: Government Information Service (GIS).

IMCTGA golfers enjoy successful outing at Hermitage Golf Club

Hermitage Golf Club, Lucan hosted the recent Irish Motor & Cycle Trades Golfing Association outing. This the second IMCTGA event of the year and was held on Monday June 17. Once again, the event was generously sponsored by Willis Towers Watson and Aviva.

Representing the sponsors on the day were Daniel Parker and Brendan Meaney from Willis Towers Watson. Aviva were represented by Brian Mahon and Philip O'Connor. Goodyear Dunlop continued their ongoing sponsorship of the Dunlop Cup 1st Prize now in its 108th year of competition. Goodyear Dunlop also participated on the day and were represented by Martin McGloin and Richie Ormonde. Over 95 members, from every corner of the country, participated in the various competitions throughout the day. With excellent conditions for golf, competition was intense especially for the main event, The Dunlop Cup, which was won by Joe Galligan with a score of 36 points playing off a handicap of 24. Runner-up on the day was Eoin

Quinn also with a score of 36, only to be beaten on the back nine playing off a handicap of 15.

The winner of The Percy Cup was Derek Dunne with 19 points playing off a handicap of eight. The winner of the Louis Lemass Memorial Trophy was Gerry Caffrey, a popular winner with 36 points playing off a handicap of 28. A delighted winner of the Matt Fagan Memorial Trophy was Finbar Quinn. This competition was for the best front nine score and Finbar finished with 22 points playing off a handicap of 29.

An early morning breakfast was enjoyed by all competitors before heading out to the various tee boxes for the shotgun start singles stableford competition. During the prize giving ceremony IMCTGA President, John

O'Hanlon thanked all members for attending in such great numbers and expressed his appreciation to our very generous sponsors on the day. He also thanked Goodyear Dunlop for their long association with this competition for over a hundred years now. He thanked the Hermitage Golf Club for the outstanding condition in which the golf course was presented for members and also thanked the excellent catering that was provided by the club on the day. This return visit to Hermitage Golf Club proved to be a very enjoyable and successful event for all members, visitors and sponsors.

Those interested in becoming a member of IMCTGA should contact Con Dalton, Secretary: condalton@gmail.com.



John O'Hanlon IMCTGA President presenting the Percy Cup to Derek Dunne winner of the Back 9 competition.



Gerry Caffrey receiving the Louis Lemass Trophy from IMCTGA President John O'Hanlon.



Finbar Quinn overall winner of the Matt Fagan Memorial Cup front 9 competition receiving the trophy from IMCTGA President John O'Hanlon.



Joe Galligan overall winner on the day proudly holding The Dunlop Cup.



Left to Right: Brian Murphy, Tony Burke, Louis O'Hanlon and President of the Irish Motor & Cycle Trades Golfing Association John O'Hanlon on the 1st Tee Box.



Left to Right: Philip O'Connor (Aviva), Brian Mahon (Aviva), Daniel Parker (WTW) and Brendan Meaney (WTW) sponsors of the IMCTGA Hermitage outing relaxing prior to the event start.



Left to Right: On route to the 10th Tee Box, Gerry Caffrey, Siobhan Caffrey, Chris Hanlon and Alan Dorgan.

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