

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND FEDERATION OF CLUBS

# Review • Club Magnificence

VOLUME 36 - Issue 7, 2023

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# Light up a light, light up a life!

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As Northern Ireland's oldest peacebuilding organisation, Corrymeela has been shining a light for peace for almost 60 years.

Every year, we support thousands of people from different communities to live well together, through residential at our beautiful Ballycastle Centre and in groups throughout Northern Ireland and beyond. You can help us support even more people next year by shining your own light for peace this Christmas.

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We will send you a tag for every donor to personalise – use them to decorate your own tree. Ask for a donation for each tag and light up a life! Get in touch for more info.

### 3. Invite others to shine a light for peace:

Organise your own fundraising event – a bake sale, coffee break, raffle, sponsored event...you decide! Donate the proceeds and we will light a star on our virtual tree. Dedicate a message of goodwill and send a picture of your event for the tree and our social media channels.

Together, we will shine a bright light for peace, bringing hope this Christmas.

Thank you!

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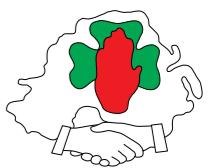
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## Global challenges and local concerns

An update from the chairman and secretary



John Davidson, Chairman, N.I. Federation of Clubs



Harry Beckinsale, Secretary, N.I. Federation of Clubs

In this issue, we find ourselves revisiting our previous concerns regarding the ongoing turmoil in Ukraine, only to be met with the heart-wrenching loss of life in the Middle East this month.

It is a stark reminder of the unpredictability of world events and how they can profoundly affect our lives. These recent events in the Middle East have far-reaching consequences, from the immediate tragedy of loss of life to the inevitable economic repercussions, including rising costs of food, fuel, and energy.

The suffering endured in this troubled region serves as a poignant reminder of the human toll of conflict and strife. Our hearts go out to all those affected, and we hope for a future where peace and stability prevail.

On the domestic front, we face our own set of challenges. The impending increase in the National Minimum Wage is a concern for many of our member clubs, who are already exploring ways to trim their overheads. The scarcity

of available staff, a common issue in the hospitality sector, compounds this challenge.

We've also been invited recently to participate in a meeting concerning the responsible retailing code of practice. The objective is to promote sensible consumption and responsible product discounting through promotions and similar strategies. While we continue to advocate for a prudent approach to promotions, it's worth noting that registered clubs, operating under a registration rather than a license, are not prohibited from offering benefits to their members.

In recent months, we've been gratified to provide assistance to numerous clubs facing a variety of issues. Many are considering amendments to their constitution and rulebooks, utilising the templates available on the Federation website.

Additionally, we've made contracts of employment available to our members. We strongly recommend reviewing these with the support

of the Labour Relations Agency or a reputable HR advisor to ensure compliance with current employment legislation. These resources are meant to empower our member clubs as they navigate the evolving landscape.

In closing, as we grapple with the ever-changing landscape of global events and domestic challenges, our commitment to supporting our member clubs remains unwavering. We stand united in our efforts to adapt, evolve, and overcome the hurdles that come our way.

Together, we can navigate these uncertain times, find

innovative solutions, and ensure the well-being of our communities and the continued success of our clubs. Let us remember that adversity often paves the way for growth and resilience, and by working in collaboration, we can emerge stronger and better prepared for the future.

Thank you for the continued trust in your Federation, and we look forward to the journey ahead with optimism and determination.

John Davidson  
Chairman

Harry Beckinsale  
Secretary

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# Scams warning for 12 million Self Assessment customers



Self Assessment customers are urged to be on the lookout for scam texts, emails and phone calls from fraudsters.

The scams take different approaches. Some offer a rebate; others tell customers that they need to update their tax details or threaten immediate arrest for tax evasion.

This warning comes as HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) received more than 130,000 reports about tax scams in the 12 months to September 2023, of which 58,000 were offering fake tax rebates.

With around 12 million people expected to submit a Self Assessment tax return for the 2022 to 2023 tax year before the 31st January 2024 deadline, fraudsters will prey on customers by impersonating HMRC.

so take your time and check HMRC scams advice on GOV.UK.”

Customers can report any suspicious communications to HMRC:

- forward suspicious texts claiming to be from HMRC to 60599
- forward emails to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk
- report tax scam phone calls to HMRC on GOV.UK

Myrtle Lloyd, HMRC’s Director General for Customer Services, said, “HMRC is reminding customers to be wary of approaches by fraudsters in the run up to the Self Assessment deadline. Criminals are great pretenders who try and dupe people by sending emails, phone calls and texts which mimic government messages to make them appear authentic.

“Unexpected contacts like these should set alarm bells ringing,

HMRC works to protect the public from scammers. In the 12 months to September 2023, HMRC has responded to 60,000 reports of phone scams alone and got 25,000 malicious web pages taken down.

Customers do not need to wait until 31st January before filing their tax return, they can submit it before then but do not have to pay until the deadline, unless they choose to. Filing earlier allows them to find out what they owe sooner or if they are owed money, get their refund.

Help and support is available on GOV.UK to help customers complete their return. HMRC has a wide range of online resources to help customers file a tax return including a series of video tutorials on YouTube and help and support guidance on GOV.UK alongside HMRC digital assistant, HMRC app, community forums and the help and support email service.

# Winter weather

## How should your club prepare?

Over recent years, increasingly extreme weather patterns are causing disruptions and creating hazards that can lead to slips and falls. Clubs should endeavour to make the entrances and exits to the club as safe as possible.

### Gritting and protecting surfaces

Arrangements should be made to minimise risks from snow and ice, by gritting, snow clearing and the closure of some pathways, particularly outside stairs. It is wise to keep a good supply of grit handy to help clear them. Gritting is not an automatic way of ensuring you are blameless but it is definitely recommended, especially around important thoroughfares like car-parks, entrances and exits.

### Temporary closures and footwear

If some pathways or entrances become too dangerous or troublesome to clear, place barriers and signs to close any footpaths that may pose a significant risk.

Also making sure all employees are wearing correct footwear is advisable to help protect

against avoidable slips/falls. Alternatively, if the club’s clothing policy typically involves smarter shoes, it could be worthwhile to allow boots or more hard-wearing footwear during winter.

### Preparation as well as reaction

Ignorance is not a defence against a claim, so make sure steps are taken to reduce foreseeable risk whenever possible. Paying attention to weather forecasts can help you get a head start in preparing for upcoming hazardous conditions, such as pre-emptively laying down grit or arranging appropriate signage to be placed on pathways.

### Records

It is important to document as much as possible such as retaining invoices and receipts for items in order to show you have taken an active effort to combat the problems and potential dangers caused by snow and ice. Keep a log to demonstrate when snow and ice have appeared and the action taken to reduce the risk posed. Remember that a claimant has three years from the date of the



incident in which to pursue a claim so it is important that checklists and logs are retained for at least this period.

Any incidents which could give rise to a claim should be communicated to the club’s insurers. You should arrange to take photos of the area where the accident took place to demonstrate conditions at the time, especially if you have made significant attempts to make the club safer. If you have CCTV covering the area, please ensure that any images are retained securely for three years.

### Written warnings and signage

Arrange to have some written instructions and warning signage on hand to inform members of the public that there is a risk of falling/ slipping and that reasonable care should be taken. Not providing these warning signs will leave the club more open to a liability claim.

The NIFC’s Approved insurance brokers, Rollins Insurance assisted with this advice and can be contacted on 028 028 9087 3002.

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# MONTRA Club raises £3,700 for Macmillan Cancer Support

MONTRA Club members and guests have gone all out to support Macmillan Cancer Support.

A great night was held recently, with a dance and live music provided by "Exclusive". The event saw the club raising an absolutely amazing total of £3,700 for the charity.

Macmillan Cancer Support was represented by Jodie McAneeny who was a fantastic speaker. This event was organised by club members Seamus Quinn and Robert Ramsey MBE. Thanks are extended to everyone who was involved in making this event the success that it was.



(L-R) J.P. Quinn, S. Quinn, A. Creighton, Macmillan's Jodie McAneeny, and Robert Ramsey M.B.E. Also pictured in the back row are five members of the band Exclusive who provided the entertainment for the evening.

# Belfast bids farewell to Hugh Russell

Mourners gathered at the funeral of the renowned photographer and champion boxer, Hugh Russell, to remember him as a "gentle soul with a heart of gold." Prominent figures from the worlds of sport, media, and politics came together at St Patrick's Church on Donegal Street to honour the 63-year-old, who passed away recently after a brief illness.

During the service, Father Michael Spence evoked a sense of "coming full circle" as Hugh's coffin was brought into the very church where he had been baptised and wed. He expressed gratitude for Hugh's life and the far-reaching impact it had on others, acknowledging the ripple effects of his existence.

Condolences were extended to Hugh's widow, Kathy, and their four children - Hugh Junior, Hayley, James, and Calum, on behalf of the entire parish. Father Spence also acknowledged the difficulty of putting into words the magnitude of the loss of such a beloved husband, father, brother, and friend, emphasising the challenge of encapsulating his life in its entirety.

"We can only attempt to capture some essence of the man and the fervour that fuelled his life," Father Spence continued. "His numerous achievements stand as a testament to that passion."

Affectionately known as 'Little Red,' Hugh had a successful career as a professional boxer from 1981 to 1985. He gained national recognition after winning the British

bantamweight title in 1983, followed by the British flyweight title, which he held from 1984 to 1985. As an amateur, Hugh had also claimed bronze medals at the 1978 Commonwealth Games and the 1980 Summer Olympics, both in the flyweight division.

In a time when Belfast was deeply divided by the Troubles, mourners were reminded that Hugh, like many others, sought solace and purpose in the world of sports. He firmly believed that boxing provided young people with discipline and a sense of belonging.

The church was located just a short distance from the Irish News, where Hugh worked for over four decades and established himself as one of the region's premier press photographers. Father Spence highlighted that the skills he honed in the boxing ring laid a strong foundation for his achievements in various aspects of his life.

Father Spence emphasised that, above all, Hugh was a devoted family man. He recounted a charming anecdote of how Hugh's mother had urged him to attend a grand reception upon his return from the 1980 Summer Olympics, where he had won a bronze medal. It was at that reception that he met his wife, Kathy.

The priest concluded by saying, "He might have won bronze in Moscow, but he struck gold in Belfast. Hugh knew he was a blessed man and was deeply grateful for the opportunities life had bestowed upon him."



Above: Federation Treasurer and former British Flyweight Champion, Davy Larmour, with his friend and former boxing adversary, Hugh Russell.



Right: Hugh Russell pictured in 2019 after being inducted into Belfast City Council's Sporting Hall of Fame.

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# Dealing with staff absence in your club?

Check out the advice from RKM Business Solutions

Dealing with employee absence in the hospitality sector can be challenging because it's an industry where staffing levels are crucial for the smooth operation of the business. Whether it's due to illness, personal reasons, or other factors, addressing absences effectively is essential to maintain high-quality service and guest satisfaction. Managing both short-term and long-term employee absences in the hospitality sector requires different approaches and strategies. Here's how you can address each type of absence:

## Short-Term Absence:

- 1. Absence Policy:** Have a clear policy on managing absence in the workplace and ensure it's communicated to all employees. Robustly manage each period of short-term absence in line with the organisation's policy. Complete return to work interviews which may highlight patterns of absence or any underlying medical conditions. Take further action as per policy requirements.
- 2. Cross-Training:** Cross-train employees to perform multiple roles so they can fill in for colleagues during short-term absences. This minimises disruptions in service.
- 3. On-Call Staff:** Maintain a pool of on-call or part-time staff members who can step in to cover shifts on short notice.
- 4. Flexible Scheduling:** Implement flexible scheduling and consider split shifts to accommodate employees' personal needs and last-minute absences.

- 5. Shift Swapping:** Allow employees to swap shifts when they have short-term personal issues, provided it doesn't disrupt the workflow. Ensure that swaps are properly documented.
- 6. Communication Protocols:** Establish clear communication protocols for reporting short-term absences. Make it easy for employees to notify their absence, such as a designated phone line or app. Monitor and manage absence reporting.

## 7. Performance Incentives:

- Offer incentives for employees who consistently show up for their shifts. This can motivate better attendance.
- 8. Contingency Plans:** Have contingency plans in place for critical roles. Identify key positions and have a plan for temporary replacements when short-term absences occur.

## Long-Term Absence:

- 1. Absence Policy:** Ensure you have clear processes for long-term absence documented within the organisation's policy and that this is communicated to all employees. Keep in regular contact with the employee with telephone calls and welfare meetings. Work closely with the employee to understand the reason for absence, prognosis and expected duration of their absence. Ensure you continue regular contact and manage the process throughout the period of absence.
- 2. Temporary Staff:** Hire temporary staff or utilise employment agencies to fill long-term vacancies. These

individuals can provide continuity in service during extended employee absences.

**3. Accommodations:** Explore reasonable accommodations for employees with long-term health issues. This might include modified duties, reduced hours, or remote work if possible.

**4. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):** Provide access to EAP services to support employees' well-being during long-term absences, which may be related to health or personal issues.

**5. Stay in Touch:** Maintain regular communication with employees on long-term leave. Stay informed about their progress and be prepared for their return.

**6. Documentation:** Ensure you have proper documentation from employees on extended medical leave, including medical certificates or disability-related absence.

**7. Cross-Train and Develop Staff:** Encourage cross-training and staff development to ensure that other employees can assume additional responsibilities during long-term absences. This can help with continuity.

**8. Rehabilitation Plan:** Create a rehabilitation plan for employees returning from long-term absence. This plan might include a phased return to work or modified duties until the employee is fully ready to resume their regular responsibilities.

**9. Legal Compliance:** Make sure to comply with all applicable employment law

and regulations when dealing with long-term absences. Seek further advice if necessary.

In both cases, maintaining open communication with your employees is crucial. Show empathy and support for their situations. By having a combination of flexible policies, cross-training, and contingency plans in place, you can better manage both short-term and long-term employee absences while minimising disruptions to your operations and service quality.



Ronnie McCullough,  
Managing Director  
Tel: 07835 255794



Nicola Curry,  
HR Consultant



Alan Hall,  
Health & Safety Specialist



**Q.** The club's members have called a Special General Meeting to remove a committee member from the committee. This is obviously going to be a difficult meeting for the club's president to chair. Could you provide some advice on best practice regarding such a meeting?

**A.** There are a few ways to run an SGM of this nature with the final decision being down to the person who is chairing the meeting. The most important part is for the vote to be undertaken fairly.

There are probably three ways a meeting like this can be held. Firstly, it could be that unlimited discussions and debate can occur from any interested member, which can be time consuming and can risk the vote being disrupted if the people who have attended the meeting drift off as the meeting length goes on.

Alternatively, it could be decided that only the proposer and seconder can speak and then the vote taken, although this can give rise to complaints that only one side has been allowed to speak. The only way to combat this is to allow a response from the other side - in this case the committee member in question - and this could also cause an issue if the response then requires a further response from the proposer and seconder. In short, allowing any discussion to take place can spiral into simply allowing option 1 to take place. This also ignores the fact that it may be

difficult to agree who will be the proposer and seconder and therefore who has the right to speak on this important vote - if 30 people have signed a petition to remove the committee or a member of the committee, it is possible that all 30 people have different reasons for wanting the committee (person) to be removed and all 30 will wish to speak on the subject - who decides who is going to be the proposer and seconder and who are therefore permitted to put their point of view across?

The third option is to simply open the meeting, announce the vote which is to take place, and then hold the vote quickly and efficiently. The benefits of this option is that the meeting is swiftly concluded with the will of the members present carrying the motion.

Therefore, whilst it is for the person chairing the meeting to make the final decision on how the meeting is run, we are sympathetic to an approach which prioritises speed and allows the vote to be taken without delay. We also have to consider the view of the members who have turned up at the meeting at the appointed time and whether they should be required to have to spend possibly a lengthy time attending a meeting before they can cast their vote.

**Q.** For the last year we have been running short of a full committee. This has been due to a general lack of interest to get involved with the day-to-day running of the club. Last year, the authorities picked up that we were three committee members short and recommended a rule change. Currently, our rules state that a full committee constitutes twelve members and that the number of officers you elect cannot be reduced. How many committee members should a club have? The club feels that

too few could be as bad as too many.

**A.** There is no statutory minimum or maximum constitution of a committee. The trend amongst clubs is to reduce the number of officers and committee members required to be elected. I do think that the twelve committee members required is the absolute maximum number being elected by clubs. I agree that the number should not be too low so that the management of the club is in the hands of too few people, but equally, a large committee can be unwieldy, so a small effective committee can be a positive attribute for the club.

I think it would be perfectly in order for your committee to reduce the current number to six with two members retiring each year, thereby creating a three-year tenure of office, or eight with four members retiring

each year, thereby creating a two-year tenure of office. If one of the above options were adopted I think this would assist the club in achieving a full committee.

**Q.** We have been approached by a person who wishes to transfer his membership of another affiliated club to our club. He has been a member of the other club for a number of years and has recently retired to our area.

**A.** It is not possible for membership to be transferred from club to club. Each club is legally autonomous and governed by its authorised rules. Therefore, in order to become a member of any club, it is necessary to be elected in accordance with that club's own rules.

If you have any questions you need answered for your club, then please send them to us at: [info@nifederationofclubs.com](mailto:info@nifederationofclubs.com)

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The business was established in 1945 and has always had an interest in the registered club sector. Indeed, in more recent times, the Federation is reminded of the period during the years of the Troubles when Rollins sourced club insurance when few, if any, were interested in discussing insurance for their members.

The founder of the company, a club man himself, held

membership in a number of clubs and played competitive sports as an adult, serving on numerous committees during his lifetime.

Over their long history, Rollins Insurance Brokers has been involved with the entire spectrum of registered clubs and has continued to develop new solutions for club insurance, including specialised cover for the protection of club management committees, various sporting activities, and outside surfaces/facilities.

Their experienced staff understand the requirements of every different club category and continue to

provide reassurance and straightforward advice as quickly as possible. This is reflected in the number of clubs engaging with them.

They confirm that time is specifically allocated to expedite claims efficiently, with the services of a loss assessor available to handle property damage incidents when necessary.

Recent claim settlements include Whitehead Rangers Club, where, following substantial damage, the major part of the club refurbishment has been completed, with only a small snag list remaining.

Commenting, Dermot Rollins said, "We are happy to provide quotations for a club of any size, with a 'no-obligation' client visit being arranged if necessary.

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# November's sporting extravaganza

Football, darts, golf, and more on Sky Sports!

The live sport keeps coming this November with a wide range of content to continue to provide the best sports experience for your members.

November sees plenty of top flight football in amongst the Grand Slam of Darts beginning on Saturday 11th November, and the final events from the DP World Tour Golf, giving your members a slew of reasons to remain in venue. Members can look forward to live action from the Premier League, EFL and high-speed action from Formula 1 with three race weekends over the course of the month.

The Premier League continues to provide some fantastic fixtures. On Saturday 4th November, Arsenal take a trip to St James' Park to play Newcastle Utd and there's a London derby on Monday 6th November with Tottenham v Chelsea at 8pm. Super Sunday on 12th November brings two great fixtures with West Ham Utd v Nottingham Forest, ahead of what is likely to be an epic battle between Chelsea and Manchester City in the 4.30pm kick-off.

On Saturday 25th November, Manchester City host Liverpool in an early afternoon kick-off in what should be an epic contest. These are just a selection of the great games available, so to find out when all the key matches are on, visit MySkySports.com to plan ahead.

In the EFL, members will be able to watch Championship and Carabao Cup matches throughout November. On

Wednesday 1st November, round 4 brings West Ham Utd v Arsenal and Manchester Utd v Newcastle Utd. On Friday 3rd November Leicester City take on Leeds Utd at 8pm and Saturday 11th November sees Sunderland host Birmingham City in the 12.30pm kick-off.

The Formula 1 season comes to its conclusion at the end of the month with three races to close out the 2023 campaign; the Sao Paulo Grand Prix, the Las Vegas Grand Prix, and the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

There is also golf action from the DP World Tour including the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai between 16th-19th November.

Plus, there's lots more action from NFL, Darts, the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup and so much more, so you will be able to give your members the best seats available to watch all this breathtaking sport unfold throughout the month on Sky Sports.

Don't forget to promote all this content by using your MySkySports.com account to create posters and social media posts - helping members to plan ahead and visit your club more, so you can establish yourself as the best place to enjoy live sport.



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**A selection of sports fixtures in November:**

- Wednesday 1st Nov. West Ham Utd v Arsenal - 7.30pm (Carabao Cup)
- Man. Utd v Newcastle Utd - 8.15pm (Carabao Cup)
- Friday 3rd Nov. ....Leicester v Leeds - 8.00pm (EFL Championship)
- Saturday 4th Nov. ....Aston Villa v Chelsea - 12.30pm (WSL)
- Ross County v Celtic - 12.30pm (SPFL)
- Newcastle Utd v Arsenal - 5.30pm (Premier League)
- Sunday 5th Nov. ....Norwich v Blackburn - 12pm (EFL Championship.)
- Nottingham Forest v Aston Villa - 2.00pm (Premier League)
- Luton Town v Liverpool - 4.30pm (Premier League)
- Monday 6th Nov. ....Tottenham v Chelsea - 8.00pm (Premier League)
- Thursday 9th Nov. ....Nedbank Golf Challenge (DP World Tour Golf)
- Saturday 11th Nov. ....Grand Slam of Darts
- Sunderland v Birmingham - 12.30pm (EFL Championship)
- Bournemouth v Newcastle Utd - 5.30pm (Premier League)
- Sunday 12th Nov. ....Livingston v Rangers - 12pm (SPFL)
- Celtic v Aberdeen - 2.30pm (SPFL)
- West Ham Utd v Nottingham Forest - 2.00pm (Premier League)
- Chelsea v Manchester City - 4.30pm (Premier League)
- Leicester City v Arsenal - 6.45pm (WSL)
- Thursday 16th Nov. ....DP World Tour Championship - Dubai
- Sunday 19th Nov. ....ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Final (Cricket)
- Brighton v Arsenal - 2.00pm (WSL)
- Manchester Utd v Manchester City - 4.30pm (WSL)
- Saturday 25th Nov. ....Man. City v Liverpool - 12.30pm (Premier League)

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Photo: Charlotte and her Cancer Support Specialist Gill.

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## Diageo gets the go-ahead for £26m extension at its Baileys Mallusk site

Diageo has been given the green light to proceed with plans for a £26m extension to its Baileys Mallusk facility in order to meet global demand for the Irish Cream Liqueur.

Baileys' proposed extension has been approved by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's Planning Committee and sees the Diageo brand expand its current site footprint by an additional 7,477m.

The expansion aims to help expedite the evolving needs of the company's global operations and to meet increasing demand for the brand.

Lesley Allen, Operations Manager at Baileys Mallusk, said, "We are delighted with the Council's decision. The extension will support the storage, delivery and distribution of raw materials and finished goods, and we are looking forward to the opportunities it will create.

"Baileys makes a considerable contribution to the local economy in Northern Ireland, and over 97% of our output is shipped around the world. We are confident that the planned extension will support Diageo's wider growth strategy, building on the £40m investment we made in opening the site in 2003 and the ongoing

investments to further develop the facility and the Baileys brand."

Representing a capital investment of £26m to the Borough, the economic benefits of the project will also include 100 construction jobs and around 35 posts upon completion.

Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey Councillor Mark Cooper said, "This £26m investment by Diageo further bolsters the Borough's reputation as a prime location for business. Diageo have been successfully operating at Mallusk for over 20 years, and this additional investment



Lesley Allen, operations manager, Baileys Mallusk and Robert Murphy, head of Baileys operations.

indicates their commitment to the growth and development of manufacturing skills in the area. I wish them every success for the future."

## Is love in the air?

According to a survey from music licensing company PPL PRS, 'cuffing season', is here, the point in Autumn when couples meet in order to have a relationship throughout the colder months.

Currently, clubs, pubs and cafes are tied at the top of the public's favourite dating destinations for this trend amongst Millennials and Gen Z.

Is this an opportunity for clubs? 35% of singletons rank their favourite hospitality-based date activity as dinner and drinks, with over a third opting to wine and dine in the evening. 30% just want to share a drink with a potential partner in the evening and, when meeting a prospective partner for the first time, daters feel most at ease listening to chill-out (57%), pop (45%) and RnB (27%) music.



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# Remembering Billy Donnelly

A tribute to a true artist and friend



Nigel Blair, Belfast 89FM.

I dedicate this month's page to the memory of Billy Donnelly - a multi instrumentalist, comedian and good friend.

Billy came from an area close to Belfast City Centre, known as Brown Square. There were three children in the family, Cecil being the eldest, then Billy, and the youngest a girl, Gladys. At the age of eight Billy showed an interest in music, and duly joined the Duncairn Flute Band. His big brother Cecil also joined the band and was easily identified as the man with big bass drum.

Billy was a keen learner and took flute lessons from George Galway, brother of the great James Galway, and at sixteen became the All Ireland Flute Champion. He later learned to play the saxophone, guitar, clarinet and the penny whistle, actually two penny whistles at one time, and in harmony, and as if that wasn't enough, he was also an excellent percussionist.

Billy was attracted to the stage, and in his late teens he and his friend Dean Ferris would entertain at local venues. I came to know Billy when he

had a band called The Trads. The band featured Billy on drums/flute/saxophone and compere; Hugh Campbell on guitar and vocals; and Bobby Stinton on bass guitar and vocals. They were a band ahead of their time, and they could back any cabaret artist that came along. I myself once did an audition with Billy, who was interested in adding piano to the band (I was only fourteen at the time) and Billy had assumed I was much older. He complimented me on my musical ability, and said really he would need someone with their own transport. However, he asked me to do a few cabaret spots with the band and cover if, and when, Bobby or Hugh were on holidays, as I could play both their instruments. If truth be told, Billy was the man who introduced me to showbusiness.

Billy was also a long-term member of the Belfast Showbiz Charity Club. This was a group of entertainers who came together creating shows to raise funds for charities in need, mostly for children, although many other worthy causes were catered for. Its members included two of the finest comedians of the day, who are now sadly no longer with us - John Cooke, and Jacki Geddis - and many other singers and musicians too numerous to mention.

When the band scene had slowed down somewhat, Hugh Campbell became a solo artist, as did his bandmate Bobby Stinton. Billy turned his talents to becoming a cabaret



artist and comedian, using his concert flute and penny whistles within his act, which proved very popular with audiences across the country.

Billy, Hugh Campbell and myself played the Ulster Hall in Belfast amidst bands of the armed forces, playing military tunes to modern technology. The show was compered by Lynda Jayne from Downtown Radio, who would introduce us while the changeover of the bands was arranged. A great day and a wonderful memory.

In addition to Billy's talents as a musician, he served his time as a plumber, and at the age of only twenty, he became self employed. He later turned his talents to property development. Billy was a very successful man in all aspects of his life.

Billy suffered in recent years from cancer, and whilst in the Hospice, he celebrated his 54th wedding anniversary with his loving wife Nan, where they also renewed their marriage vows.

Billy was very proud of his family and is survived by his daughters, Joanne and two grandsons, and Gillian and one grandson.

In recent years Billy found God and was a Christian. He sadly passed away on the 29th September 2023. He is a man that was loved by many, and someone I feel much better for having known.

Nigel



# Give the Gift of Hope this Christmas



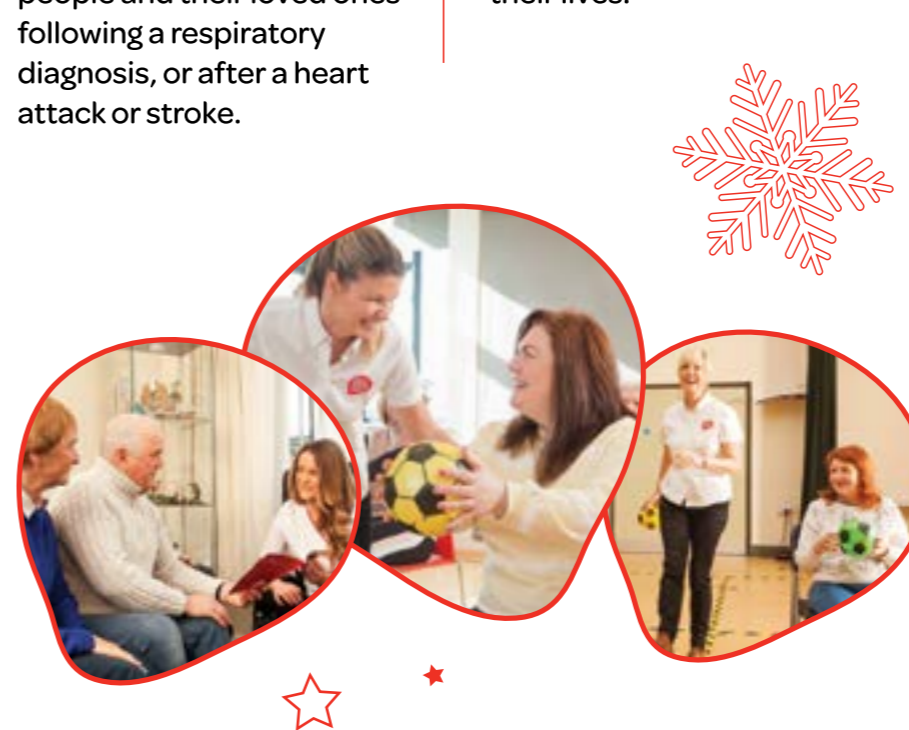
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## Tiernan Lynch and Ben Wilson shine as September's top football figures

Larne Football Club boss Tiernan Lynch is the NIFWA Manager of the Month for September. The reigning Sports Direct Premiership champions won five of their six games in all competitions during the second month of the season - scoring 15 goals and conceding a measly two.

That included back-to-back victories over Linfield in both the league and County Antrim Shield. They also saw off Newry City, Carrick Rangers and Glenavon, with their solitary defeat coming away to Loughgall.

Tiernan said, "We haven't really had that real consistency so far this season, but all credit to the players and the staff - they roll their sleeves up, there's been no complaining and we've ground out results. I'm hoping that our best days are ahead of us."

"I don't think there are such things as personal awards in a team environment. With the effort and commitment that people put in at the club, in all aspects, it's nice to be able to bring these awards back."

Cliftonville Football Club striker Ben Wilson has won the Dream Spanish Homes Player of the Month prize for September. The former Brighton & Hove Albion forward hit six goals in all competitions during the month for Jim Magilton's team - including back-to-back doubles in the wins over Ballymena United and Coleraine.

Wilson has formed a strong relationship on the pitch with Rory Hale and says he's learning off talismanic Reds striker Joe Gormley.

Ben said, "It's nice to be recognised for scoring a few goals and helping the team. I couldn't do this without my team-mates and I have to thank them. Jim's been brilliant. I worked with him at Club NI and when he got in contact with me, I was really impressed by what he was trying to do, and I really wanted to play senior football. That was a big part of it and I'm really enjoying it at Cliftonville."

Meanwhile, in the Championship, Portadown Football Club's Ryan Mayse is the Northern Ireland Football Writers' Association's Championship Player of the Month for September.

The former Ballymena United and Dungannon Swifts man found the net four times during the month and added five assists to help Niall Currie's side move joint-top of the Play-Fit Championship table.

Mayse said, "Personal accolades are great when you get them, but ultimately it boils down to the team and this award is being lifted on behalf of the team in my eyes. There's no I in team and everyone has to chip in with their bit."

"It's taken us four or five weeks to adapt to the league, but now we know what each team is going to bring."



Top: Larne boss, Tiernan Lynch.

Middle: Cliftonville striker, Ben Wilson

Bottom: Portadown midfielder, Ryan Mayse.





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