

Newry Reporter

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Schools' nativity plays p 28



Sports Review of '09 p37



Adapt and flourish

By Cormac Campbell

Newry needs to diversify if it is to prosper in the future, according to Chamber of Commerce President Conor Patterson.

Dr Patterson told the Reporter that the local economy faces serious challenges in 2010 and as such the city must not allow itself to become overly reliant on retail.

"The Chamber's vision for Newry in the new decade is of a city - which remains a very successful retail centre of all-island

significance - but is also a city with a booming economy of businesses across a wide range of sectors offering high quality, well-paid employment to local people," he said. "a Newry which is an enjoyable place to live in and to visit."

This of course will not be easy. "Businesses in Newry know that 2010 will be a challenging year.

"In 2010 sterling is likely to strengthen. However, Newry has survived the ebbs and flows of past currency fluctuations. Its retail community is far from complacent and while it makes hay while the proverbial sun shines it also knows that it has to make the shopping environment attractive."

Dr Patterson added that considerable

Government investment and a new strategic blueprint is required and will be actively sought.

"Long-term under-investment by Government in Newry cannot be rectified overnight," he said.

"It will take many years to re-structure Newry so that it is not only fulfilling its economic potential but also functioning successfully as an attractive place to live and visit. To that end the Chamber is calling for a major strategic plan for Newry to be drawn up in 2010. The Chamber's focus is squarely on wresting from Government long withheld investment to regenerate Newry City.

"What is needed is a comprehensive development plan for Newry which sets

out a programme of improvements over the next 25 years.

"The new railway station and the new Belfast/Dublin road will make a difference to people trying to get to and from Newry. But further improvements are essential."

TWIN CITY

Dr Patterson believes that despite the financial benefits Newry has received as a result of inward cross-border trade, the city's long-term health is reliant on a close, mutually beneficial relationship with Dundalk.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE TWO)



Dr Patterson, 09W50N14

It was all great quack on Hill Street!



Sydney Cranston and his geese took a festive stroll on Hill Street, Newry. Money raised went to charity. 09W53N4

By Cormac Campbell

A foolhardy gaggle of 'Goosey goosey ganders went for a wander' in Newry City Centre just days before Christmas.

More than a dozen of the festive fowl bypassed butchers' shops at 11.30 am on December 23 - 'gandering' at the window displays of local shops.

Passers-by who enjoyed a bird's eye view of proceedings, were given a seasonal smirk as the birds refused to 'get in a flap' despite the stress of Christmas shopping.

At the time of going to press it is unclear as to whether our feathered friends had permission from the Parades Commission for the impromptu event - but it is believed that organisers would view any criticism as little other than 'water off a duck's back'.

A spokesperson for the geese said, "quack, quack, quack."

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