



SIMI

2021 ISSUE 4

# IRISH MOTOR MANAGEMENT

THE SOCIETY OF THE IRISH MOTOR INDUSTRY

## EV sales accelerate in 2021

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2021 REVIEW

LOOKING AHEAD  
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## 2021 A YEAR OF RESILIENCE



2021 brought us Brexit, COVID, semi-conductors and a new Climate Action Plan, all massive challenges individually, but crystallising at the same time has certainly made business more difficult, not just this year but for the year ahead. I have no doubt our members will rise to these challenges. Resilience is a word that best describes this year, it is a quality that our Industry has displayed time and time again and is something we must carry forward into 2022.

2021 has been yet another difficult year, the start of which saw the closure of our dealerships from January until May, yet despite this the Industry adapted to offer a click and deliver service. The heavy investment by dealers in their online platforms, helped to continue an amount of vehicle activity and provided some relief to the sector, while many of our members continued to provide essential services such as vehicle testing, servicing, repair and recovery.

2021 was the year we finally saw a trading agreement between the EU and the UK, but if we thought that was the end of the negotiations, we were mistaken, as the GB Government's refusal to implement what was agreed in relation to the NI protocol continues to bring uncertainty. The imposition of customs duties and formalities have added costs to many members' businesses, as well as causing delivery delays. In addition, the handling of the Brexit margin scheme and the treatment of VAT for used vehicle imports into Northern Ireland continues to be an area of huge concern, as both the current and proposed Great Britain measures not only discriminate against Republic of Ireland dealers, but also run counter to the protocol and EU VAT rules.

On a global level the shortage of semiconductor chips hampered the supply of new cars. While the situation is improving, it will take time to get back to normal levels. In the first half of 2022 there will be an issue with the supply of new cars and we hope that will resolve itself to some degree next year.

The most disruptive and key strategic issue for the Industry is, of course, Climate Change. The decarbonisation of the national fleet is both a massive challenge and a great opportunity for the Industry. In the right economic and taxation environment, our members can rise to this challenge and deliver for the country, both on environmental and economic levels. However, the portents are not good. In Budget 2022, we have seen the overriding influence of the Green Party on Government decisions in relation to our sector. To increase VRT on new cars for a second consecutive year, while at the same time removing supports for PHEVs, was both short-sighted and counterproductive. To do so at a time when our Industry like so many others is emerging from a pandemic, underlines that we are not safe from further future increases. It is essential that the existing basket of Electric Vehicle (EV) incentives are maintained, until we see the dial moving towards mass adoption over the next 10 years. SIMI has been working on the development of our own Decarbonisation Plan, which will be launched in early 2022. The plan will outline our approach to decarbonisation, policies required and how the Government can work alongside the Industry to create real change. We have already underlined the key messages from this plan at the Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change, and this type of engagement between the Government and the Industry is vital. We need to work together to try and deliver what is in their Climate Action Plan.

*continued overleaf*





While new car sales this year are nearly 20% ahead of 2020, we are still behind 2019 and 50% behind what could be termed as normal sustainable new car sales. We need a strong new car market of both lower emitting ICE and Electric Vehicles, not just to drive down emissions from new cars, but also to create a used car market that supports all motorists trading up to a newer lower emitting vehicle. In this regard, we need Government to deliver the right taxation and incentive framework to allow us to optimise emission reductions.

As we are going to press, a new COVID variant has emerged, which could lead to further restrictions. With retailers having proved over the last two years they can operate in a COVID-safe environment, we hope that we will not be faced with a further lockdown of members' businesses. We also have numerous challenges ahead: high levels of taxation on new cars; attracting and retaining technicians; the crystallisation of warehoused tax

liabilities over the next year; and vehicle and parts supply, along with consumer confusion over their next purchasing decision. The domestic economy in 2021 bounced back, and the Motor Industry has certainly benefitted from increased consumer spending. It is important this trend continues into 2022 and beyond, which, along with a fairer motoring taxation regime, can allow our members continue to support both their local economies and Ireland's ambition to drive down emissions.

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

**Brian Cooke**  
Director General, SIMI

## NOVEMBER NEW CAR REGS UP 24%: EV SUPPORTS VITAL FOR VIABLE USED CAR MARKET

1,131 new cars were registered for November compared to 913 in November 2020 (up 24%) and 761 in November 2019 (up 48.6%), according to SIMI. In all, 104,563 new cars were registered in the year to November 30 compared to 87,724 for the same period in 2020 (up 19.2%) and 116,885 in 2019 (down 10.5%). To present a more accurate picture of the new vehicle registrations, it is important to compare registrations totals with the same period in 2019 (pre-COVID) when businesses were fully operational.

For the year to November 30, 28,424 new Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs) were registered, an increase on last year's 21,431 (up 32.6%) and on 25,161 in 2019 (up 3.0%).

Year to date Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) registrations have totalled 2,649, compared with 2,037 in 2020 (up 30.04%) and 2,610 in 2019 (up 1.5%).

4,445 used cars were imported in November 2021, compared with 8,645 imports in November 2020, and 10,008 imports in November 2019. Year to date used imports (59,982) are down 10.7% on 2020 (67,149) and down 42.3% on 2019 (103,900). 195 new electric vehicles were registered in November compared to 61 in November 2020. So far this year, 8,533 new electric cars have been registered in comparison to 3,928 on the same period 2020. Electric Vehicle, Plug-in Hybrids and Hybrids continue to increase their market share, with their combined market share now over 31.62%. Diesel now accounts for 33.50%; Petrol, 32.20%; Hybrid, 16.19%; Electric, 8.16%; and Plug-in Electric Hybrid, 7.27%.

Commenting on the figures, Brian Cooke, SIMI Director General said: "New car registrations for November were ahead of last year for both the month and year to date, although new car sales continue to remain behind pre-COVID levels. The most positive aspect of the new car market is the ongoing growth in the electric car segment, with a further increase in EV sales anticipated next year. Notwithstanding this, we are still in the early stages of de-carbonising the national fleet and we have a very long way to go to get close

### 2021 New car sales stats compared to 2020 and 2019

To present a more accurate picture of the new vehicle registrations, it is important to compare registrations totals with the same period in 2019 (pre-COVID) when businesses were fully operational.

- New Car sales total year to date (to Nov. 30): (2021) 104,563 v (2020) 87,724 **+19.2%**
- New Car sales total year to date (2021) 104,563 v (2019) 116,885 **-10.5%**
- New Car sales total November (2021) 1,131 v (2020) 913 **+23.9%**
- New Car sales total November (2021) 1,131 v (2019) 761 **+48.6%**

to the targets in the Climate Action Plan.

"In this context, we need to continue year on year growth in EV sales, which in turn will kick start an active used EV market. In order to achieve this, we must both extend the EV supports until there is a critical mass of these cars to create a viable used car market, and implement a tax strategy that supports a much stronger new car market."

He added: "The potential benefits of this approach include the acceleration of EV growth, a material reduction in emissions, removal of the worst polluters from Irish roads and increased tax revenues. In a recent address to the Oireachtas Committee on the Environment and Climate Action, the Society highlighted the importance of the extension of EV supports, the rolling out of a national charging infrastructure, and an increased focus on supporting the business EV market. It is simply too soon to start eroding the current EV supports, but the recent and sudden removal of the PHEV Grant sends a bad signal to motorists and the Industry. It is not too late to reverse this, and we would again urge the Government to re-instate this support for those vehicles that the Industry and consumers have already committed to."



## MOTOR INDUSTRY REACTS TO GOVERNMENT'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN



The Climate Action Plan 2021, announced recently by Government, outlines a range of Industry-specific emissions reduction targets for each sector of the economy. Transport's core focus is towards accelerating the electrification of road transport and a shift to transport modes with lower energy consumption.

Key targets stated by the Government include:

- Electrification of passenger cars: "By 2030, we will reach 845,000 passenger EVs, with a focus on BEVs."
- Electrification of commercial vehicles: "By 2030, we will reach 95,000 zero-emissions vans and 3,500 zero-emissions HGVs."
- Biofuel blend rates: Bioethanol blend rate to reach 10% (E10) by 2030 – to reduce emissions from existing petrol cars. Biodiesel blend rate to reach 20% (B20) by 2030 – to reduce emissions from existing diesel cars.
- Zero-emission goods and passenger mass transportation: By 2030, replacements for bus and rail to be services 'green' services, including, for example, 1,500 EV buses and expanded electrified rail services.
- 42-50% emissions reduction.

Continued Government supports, and investment in EV infrastructure now, are central to the achievement of this plan, according to SIMI. Commenting on behalf of the Society, Brian Cooke, Director General stated: "The targets for Electric Vehicles (EVs) outlined in the Climate Action Plan will prove a huge challenge for all stakeholders; consumers, the Government and energy providers, as well as the Motor Industry. The Motor Industry has already begun the journey towards electrification, with large scale investment in new EV technologies on a global level and also investments nationally by local retailers in

their premises and their employees.

"We have already seen significant growth in sales of new EVs and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) this year, and the upward trend towards electrification of the new car market, will continue as the decade progresses. It should be highlighted that the Irish new and used car markets have under performed over the last decade. If the current low levels of new car sales continue into the future then we will fall well short of the updated targets. However, if we can significantly increase new car sales to more normal replacement levels, the Industry has the ability to get closer to the EV targets outlined in this plan, but we cannot do this on our own."

Brian Cooke continued: "The Industry must work together with Government to create the retail environment for consumers to make the best choices and to maximise the number of EVs on Irish Roads. We need continued Government EV supports and investment in EV infrastructure now; the rewards from this investment will be realised in the second half of the Climate Action Plan, not only in terms of new EV sales and lower emissions but also potentially creating a vibrant used EV market, which can bring second-hand car buyers into the EV experience. "We also need to address the huge numbers of older high-emitting cars on Irish roads and create an environment where those motorists can trade up to a newer lower-emitting car. To achieve the Climate Action Plan's target, commuters need real choice and affordable cleaner transport options. There is an onus now on the Government and the Motor Industry to work together to facilitate this change and to help deliver a more sustainable private transport environment."

## ELECTRIC ATMOSPHERE AT DROGHEDA MOTOR SHOW



The Drogheda Motor Show celebrated its eleventh year with another highly successful event this year.

This year's Drogheda Motor Show was a huge success, its organisers report. It had the theme of 'Evolution of the Motor Car', looking back at over 120 years of motoring in the town. A total of 60 new motor vehicles from 15 manufacturers were parked up on the pedestrianised Laurence Street, in the heart of Drogheda's town centre. The 2021 Drogheda Motor Show participating Motor Dealers were: Brian Reynolds Car Sales (Mazda & Fiat), Blackstone Motors (Renault, Dacia and Opel), Jack Doran Motors (Kia & Citroen), Western Motors (Volkswagen & Skoda), Malones Toyota Drogheda (Toyota), Windsor Drogheda Peugeot (Peugeot), Smiths of Drogheda (Ford & Ford Commercial Vehicles), Colm Quinn BMW Drogheda (BMW), and John McCabe Nissan (Nissan). "Now in it's 11th year, this was a very special event for our town. It's wonderful to see the local Motor Industry, Louth County Council and the Laurence Street businesses and

traders working so well together to deliver it. There was colour, fun, music and lots of new technologies to explore on the street. Lots of locals arrived down to Laurence Street and enjoyed the electric atmosphere," said Robert Murray, Head of Marketing at First Citizen Finance and President of Drogheda & District Chamber.

Year after year, he added, this award-winning motor show offers buyers the chance to get expert advice on ideal family cars, travel, energy consumption and much more. With the 221 registration plate coming out in January 2022, there were special finance offers available too

The 2021 Drogheda Motor Show was supported by First Citizen Finance, Drogheda & District Chamber, the SIMI, LHK Group, Louth County Council and the Laurence Street Businesses and Traders. The Electric Mobility Partner was SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland).



The 2021 Drogheda Motor Show Dealers with representatives from show supporters First Citizen Finance and Drogheda & District Chamber.



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## OPEL MOKKA-E WINS GOLDEN STEERING WHEEL AWARD

The daring all-new Opel Mokka-e has won the German Golden Steering Wheel 2021 award, defeating strong competition and claiming one of the most prestigious prizes in the automotive industry as "Best car under €25,000". The all-electric, zero emissions vehicle from Opel won praise from the experts and readers of Auto Bild and Bild am Sonntag to take the coveted prize.

The Mokka-e continues Opel's success in this award, for the second year in a row. Last year, the battery-electric Opel Corsa-e brought a Golden Steering Wheel accolade to Opel's headquarters in Rüsselsheim. Following in the footsteps of the Ampera-e which won in 2017 and the Corsa-e, the Mokka-e is now the third electric model and the first SUV from Opel, to take the coveted title.

Uwe Hochgeschurtz, Opel CEO, commented: "Our Opel Mokka-e is everything but ordinary, and proved it once again at this year's Golden Steering Wheel awards. With state-of-the-art technologies and uncompromising design, the Mokka-e makes e-mobility fun in every way."



Uwe Hochgeschurtz, Opel CEO, pictured holding the Golden Steering Wheel 2021 award for the all-new Mokka-e.

## SWEEP PARTNERS WITH BLUESTONE FINANCE

Car buying app Sweep has teamed up with Bluestone Motor Finance to help both people with strong credit ratings and those just starting to build their credit profile in financing a used car purchase. Sweep CEO Shane Ennis says the aim is to help a group that mainstream lenders often underserve. He comments: "The Sweep car buying experience fully focuses on helping the TikTok generation find and buy cars. For most car buyers, access to finance is a critical part of the journey. By collaborating with Bluestone Motor Finance, we have added digital access to finance with a real-life human touch, which means that more people will be able to gain that all-important finance approval."

Bluestone Motor Finance MD Donal Murphy notes that while success often starts and finishes online, the capacity to talk at an individual level can be beneficial: "We bridge the digital/human divide when it comes to car finance and many of our customers are the very millennials and Gen Z people that Sweep helps. Our digital model may not be able to help some people in this group automatically, but we don't stop at the 'computer says no.' While we cannot always say yes, I believe we go that extra mile whenever we can. It is why our new link with Sweep feels so appropriate."



Shane Ennis, CEO, Sweep.



Donal Murphy, MD, Bluestone Motor Finance.

## KIA UNVEILS ROADMAP TO CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2045

Kia Corporation has set out its vision to become a sustainable, responsible, and innovative mobility solutions leader, announcing a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045. The company's plan to achieve carbon neutrality is based on three key pillars – 'Sustainable Mobility', 'Sustainable Planet' and 'Sustainable Energy'. The pillars will guide Kia in its efforts to reduce carbon emissions in all operational facets, from supply, logistics, vehicle production and vehicle use through to disposal of waste. By 2045, Kia plans to reduce 97% of the company's 2019 level of carbon emissions. "For us, it is not only about setting goals and reaching targets. It is about setting a vision that will inspire others to join the movement to benefit humanity and protect the environment," said Hosung Song, President and CEO of Kia.



Hosung Song, President and CEO of Kia.

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## SONAX INTRODUCES CERAMIC FORMULAS



Three innovations based on a newly-developed sealing technology have been introduced by leading German car care company Sonax. According to Sonax, the three new formulas from the top-of-the-range Xtreme series – Xtreme Ceramic Active Shampoo, Xtreme Ceramic Spray Seal and Xtreme Ceramic Quick Detailer – are revolutionary in terms of paintwork sealing technology.

The Si-Carbon technology used in the new formulas provides the highest level of hydrophobic effect (water beading), as well as making the car much easier to clean. Designed for fans of hand car-washing, Sonax says its Xtreme Ceramic Shampoo is an efficient car shampoo which thoroughly cleans the car while also sealing it. After application, the wash provides a clean, high-shine paintwork and visibly revitalised colour. The Si-Carbon technology formula moistens the paint surface with a water and dirt repellent protective coating, Sonax says, creating a conditioning effect which the car's owner can enjoy for significantly longer than has been possible with conventional sealing shampoos.

"We're delighted to be able to offer these groundbreaking new Sonax formulas to our customers," said Gillian Fanning of Sonax distributors, Serfac Limited. "The Xtreme Ceramic products are innovative in that, unlike classic formulations, they do not contain any wax – they're based on a framework of compounds containing silicon.

Customer reviews online have been very positive and Gillian has recently tried the products out on her own car: "I can verify that the results are truly impressive. They're easy to use too, so they're perfect for regular car enthusiasts as well as professional detailers."

## TYRE MARKET REBOUNDS FROM COVID EFFECT



Tom Dennigan, head of Continental Tyres Ireland.

As with every economic sector in the country, tyre sales across Ireland succumbed to the Covid-effect during the pandemic over the last two years. Speaking at a Continental Tyres media briefing, Tom Dennigan of Continental Tyres Ireland said: "Taking pre-Covid 2019 tyre sales as our baseline, during 2020, the sector saw a drop to 88% of the 2019 figure – that is an overall 12% drop across all tyre classes including car, SUV and van. Car and SUV tyre sales each saw a reduction of 13 and 14% respectively, while van tyres were only slightly reduced during 2020 with 95% of the 2019 figure.

"We can attribute the drop in sales of tyres for cars, SUVs and vans to the 'lockdown effect' of 2020 when many vehicles were parked up for extended periods. The more modest drop in the van tyre segment highlights the increased use of vans during those lockdowns, as online shopping skyrocketed for many consumers, leading to increased use of vans for home deliveries. The increased use of vans is responsible for the 2021 rebound in the van tyre segment where sales went up by 124% versus the 2019 figure. Car and SUV tyres also saw a more modest recovery in 2021 with the segments registering sales of 94% and 102% respectively versus the 2019 figures."

Tom Dennigan that the last few years have also seen "huge growth" in sales of all-season tyres: "All-season tyres, tyres that have been developed to provide optimum performance in a temperate climate such as we have in Ireland where we rarely see the levels of extreme cold or hot weather as experienced in continental Europe, have seen significant increases in sales since 2019. In the all-season car tyre segment, the 2020 sales levels were similar to the 2019 figures, but in 2021, sales of all-season tyres for cars jumped by a massive 158%."

"In the van segment, the year-on-year growth of all-season tyres is much more pronounced with increases of 374% for 2020 and 448% in 2021."



## RENAULT 4 CELEBRATES TURNING 60

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Renault 4, the brand has teamed up with designer Mathieu Lehanneur to create SUITE N°4, a concept car that represents the designer's dream motoring experience.

Renault has turned the car's anniversary into a year-long celebration with different initiatives. For instance, the brand launched a global social media campaign, posting a variety of content each month and international media were given the opportunity to take a ride in different historic Renault 4L models, some of which have been retrofitted with a 100% electric engine.



The Renault 4 as imagined by designer Mathieu Lehanneur.

## UK OWNERS BUY THEIR CAR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT



A new survey asking 1,000 car owners in the UK how they treat their vehicles has found that 23% have bought Christmas presents for their cars in the past.

A mixture of maintenance gifts and 'sprucing up' products, like new wiper blades and air fresheners, are just some of the Yuletide presents that car owners like to give to their vehicles over the winter period, according to the survey by Vertu, the UK automotive retailer group. A further 23% say they haven't bought their cars Christmas presents but would like to in the future.

Interestingly, more than four in ten (42%) of British drivers also say they routinely greet their cars when they walk up to it, with Londoners (67%) being the main region of vehicle greeters.

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\*Commercial Model

## KEYLOOP'S AUTO TECH CONTEST INCLUDES MUNSTER TU

Following its 2020/21 inaugural competition, Keyloop has launched Dealer Tech, its Automotive Technology Competition for university students, for 2021/22. Building on the success of its first year, which saw six UK universities participate, the global automotive technology company has significantly expanded the competition, with 15 participating universities in total, 13 of which are UK based and, for the first time, universities in Canada and Ireland will also take part. It is expected that hundreds of students will take part between now and March when the competition ends.

The competition was created by Keyloop to encourage and nurture new talent into the automotive retail industry, focus on industry innovation amongst the next generation and spread awareness about the career opportunities available within the sector. Last year, 180 students took part, with six teams reaching the Grand Final, which was ultimately won by Brian Evans, a second year student from Exeter University. Brian took home £13,000 for his work on a web-based maintenance and service tracking solution which allowed consumers and automotive workshops to monitor and deliver updates on car repairs and servicing via a two-way communication stream.

As with last year, this year's participating students will be asked to develop innovative, tech-focused product ideas that will impact any part of the car purchasing or ownership experience. This could be a solution to help generate new leads, improve communications with consumers, drive efficiencies in the dealership, or impact any part of the automotive retail experience for the consumer or dealer. This year, registered universities in the UK include Imperial

College London, University of Edinburgh, University of Surrey, University of Exeter, with the University of Manitoba in Canada and Munster Technological University in Ireland also taking part. The competition is split into five key phases: Competition Launch, Product Idea Proposal, Product Idea Development, University Judging Days and finally the National Final Judging Day. Students have until January 2022 to create, develop and finalise their idea, with the University Judging Days taking place in February.

Commenting on the competition launch, Tom Kilroy, CEO at Keyloop, said: "We are excited to launch this year's Dealer Tech competition, inviting young talent to consider the career opportunities in automotive retail, develop important professional skills and gain hands-on experience of creating, developing and pitching a new solution. We hope this year's competition is as tough to judge as last year, which saw some brilliant ideas come to life through great collaborative and innovative thinking"

### Dealer Tech: participating universities

Imperial College London	University of Edinburgh
King's College London	University of Exeter
Munster Technological University	University of Manitoba (Canada)
Swansea University	University of Newcastle
University of Bath	University of Surrey
University of Birmingham	University of Warwick
University of Bristol	University of York
University of Buckingham	

## NEW 2 SERIES ACTIVE TOURER FROM BMW



The new BMW 2 Series Active Tourer boasts significant advances in all key areas and comes with an array of innovations previously reserved for the brand's larger, more expensive models, according to the car maker. It marks the debut of the BMW Operating System 8 and

the new generation of the BMW iDrive control system with BMW Curved Display in a compact-class BMW. Until now the advanced system has only featured in the fully-electric BMW iX and BMW i4.

Likewise, the range of driver assistance systems specified as standard or available as options sets a new benchmark both for the BMW model line-up and the sector.

The new BMW 2 Series Active Tourer's all-new architecture is designed to accommodate both electrified drive systems and conventional engines. BMW says the Tourer is taken to new heights of efficiency and agility by new engines, the car maker's second generation of 48V mild hybrid technology, the seven-speed Steptronic dualclutch transmission fitted as standard in all model variants, and extensively updated chassis technology.

Customers can initially choose from two petrol engines and one diesel, with the range set to expand from summer 2022 with the addition of two plug-in hybrid models equipped with fifth-generation BMW eDrive technology for a significantly extended electric range.

The BMW 2 Series Active Tourer is priced from €41,225.



## TOYOTA PROMISES TO INVEST €11.6BN IN BATTERIES BY 2030



Toyota believes its multi-billion investment will pave the way for more affordable zero-emission BEVs.

Toyota Motor Corporation has announced it is investing more than €11.6bn in R&D of batteries, electric motors and power control units for electrified vehicles between now and 2030. This continues Toyota's focus on electrification which started over twenty years ago with the introduction of self-charging hybrid vehicles.

Toyota says it is already making major step changes in battery development across HEVs, plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) and battery electrics (BEVs). For HEVs, its focus is on continuing to drive improvements in instantaneous power, and for PHEVs and BEVs it is focusing on battery capacity and endurance. The car maker says this can be seen in the new RAV4 Plug-in

Hybrid which has best-in-class electric range of up to 74Km. Toyota believes its multi-billion investment will make for safer, longer lasting, and more reliable high-performance batteries at a lower cost, paving the way for more affordable zero-emission BEVs.

Applying the technologies it has cultivated through the production of more than 18 million hybrid vehicles sold to date, Toyota said it will achieve battery cost reductions of more than 50% by 2030, while also achieving improved power consumption of 30%. Furthermore, its newly developed batteries will have a significantly higher capacity retention rate after 10 years compared to what has gone before.

In Ireland, Toyota says it has reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by over 100,000 tonnes through its hybrids sold in 2019 and 2020.

Zoë Bradley, Head of Marketing Communications in Toyota Ireland said, "Toyota is leveraging the expansive knowledge and customer feedback gained through its experience in manufacturing over 18 million self-charging hybrid vehicles. Through Toyota's pragmatic and holistic approach to providing a mass market solution to zero emissions, we aim to continue to lead the market to carbon neutrality by 2050. With the rapid expansion of electrified vehicles, Toyota is working to build a flexible system that can supply the required volume of batteries at the right time while meeting the needs of various customers in different regions around the world."



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## ELVES MOVES TO HELP ACCELERATE SAFE RECYCLING



Pictured at Hammond Lane Metal Company's Cork division in Ringaskiddy were (l-r): Lee-Jane Eastwood, ELVES and Gregg Hodnett, Hammond Lane Metal Company.

ELVES, the compliance scheme for end-of-life vehicles, has taken another step forward to ensure that all types of vehicles can be safely recycled, by installing liquid petroleum gas (LPG) tank purging and flaring equipment at metal recyclers in Ireland. The portable equipment will mean that LPG tanks from vehicles can now be safely discharged at a range of locations around Ireland.

LPG, also known as Autogas when used in cars, is a fuel that is easy to store and has a high energy value. Vehicles are often converted to take advantage of potential fuel savings, but using the gas also has environmental benefits, resulting in less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than petrol or diesel. Vehicles can be converted to allow them to run on LPG and removal of the tank is part of the de-pollution process for these converted vehicles. However, the removed LPG tanks can contain residual gas held at pressure. Therefore, it is important that the gas is extracted and that the tank is depressurised before it is shredded and recycled. If not properly decommissioned before shredding, these tanks may explode during the shredding process, causing damage to equipment and noise pollution for those living near the processing plants. The ELVES project to install LPG tank processing equipment means there is now a best practice solution in place to decommission LPG tanks from converted



The installation by ELVES of portable LPG tank purging and flaring equipment at metal recyclers in Ireland will mean that LPG tanks from vehicles can now be safely discharged at a range of locations around the country.

vehicles, thereby allowing them to be safely recycled.

LPG tanks from converted cars are not the only gas tanks that can turn up at metal recyclers. BBQ and home cooking gas cylinders also pose a risk, if hidden within vehicles or other equipment sent to recyclers. At one metal recycler alone, over 380 gas tanks were removed from waste received over the course of one year. It is vitally important that gas cylinders are not sent to metal recyclers hidden within other types of waste. This makes it difficult for staff at metal recyclers to spot these potentially dangerous items before they are put through a metal shredder. These gas cylinders should be returned to their supplier for proper

recycling.

Elena Wrelton, Environmental Compliance Manager, ELVES says: "Having portable LPG tank purging and flaring equipment available at metal recyclers in Ireland, gives flexibility to Irish recyclers that wasn't there previously. They can now have their LPG tanks discharged safely at a range of locations around Ireland."

The portable equipment will be made available at the following locations: Dublin, Cork, Galway, Athlone, Limerick, Sligo, Letterkenny, and Mountmellick, Co. Laois.



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striving to improve what appeared already perfect.





# 2021 SIMI Training Review



Notwithstanding the many tough challenges faced by the Motor Industry during the course of 2021, huge credit is due to SIMI members for their ongoing commitment to the training, development and upskilling of their employees despite operating restrictions, lockdowns and all of the other problems brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members are aware that, on their behalf over a number of years, SIMI has secured substantial funding from Skillnet Ireland, the business support agency of the Government of Ireland. This funding allowed SIMI to significantly subsidise the cost of close to 100 separate training events in 2021 and we are delighted that the current funding agreement with Skillnet Ireland continues in 2022. In previous years, SIMI short training courses were classroom and workshop based and often necessitated trainees travelling long distances to attend, but since early 2020 the SIMI Training Team, guided by the SIMI Skillnet Steering Group and working with our Industry training-provider partners, successfully converted the majority of our training programmes into online learning events. This initiative was enthusiastically embraced by members from the outset and for the most part very well-received as interactive online learning means less time away from the business for trainees, attracts no travel and accommodation costs, but can still deliver relevant and quality content.

### Strong demand for EV course

Regarding technical upskilling training for motor mechanics which could not be delivered remotely, as soon as it was practicable to do so within the HSE Covid-19 guidelines, workshop based training

was resumed. Perhaps not surprisingly in light of the targets for electric vehicles (EVs) outlined in the Climate Action Plan and the significant growth we have already seen in sales of new EVs and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), this year the most popular technical upskilling training programme was the three-day certified SIMI Skillnet Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems course.

As the Motor Industry continues on the journey towards electrification, with investments nationally by local retailers in their premises and their employees, it will be important that SIMI Skillnet continues to provide support to meet the training needs of members particularly in the independent sector.

### Prioritising talent development

Skillnet Ireland recently welcomed the focus on talent within Budget 2022 and the Government's decision to increase its funding allocation for 2022. The budget saw the agency receive total exchequer funding of €42 million for 2022 through the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. As the Motor Industry along with the rest of the economy continues to recover from recent disruption, talent development remains vital in ensuring businesses are prepared for future challenges, including rapid digitalisation and climate action.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Margaret O'Shea, Network Manager on email: [training@simi.ie](mailto:training@simi.ie)  
or call + 353 1 6761690



Speaking after the Budget 2022 announcement Skillnet Ireland Chairperson, Brendan McGinty said: "Investment in Skillnet Ireland is a testament to our work in driving innovation and supporting business growth through talent. The agency's focus on strategic talent development has yielded notable success in recent years, helping businesses to weather challenges and in positioning the Irish economy for long-term resilience and growth. The funding confirmed in Budget 2022 will enable Skillnet Ireland to expand its vital support for businesses and workers in Ireland, across all regions." Skillnet Ireland Chief Executive, Paul Healy said: "Our economy remains in a challenging position, and the Budget announcement is yet another powerful endorsement by Government of Skillnet Ireland's work in developing Ireland's talent base. With this investment, we

will expand our supports to business growth and innovation, and address the significant challenges facing firms today including digital transformation, climate action, and the new world of work."

We at SIMI look forward to working with Skillnet Ireland Team in 2022 to support members who face the challenges of upskilling their employees in order to remain competitive, by promoting life-long learning, management development programmes and technical upskilling, and by ensuring that tailored SIMI Skillnet Motor Industry training courses are effective, relevant and delivered efficiently, while also offering value for money.

SIMI training courses in 2021 came under the following headings; Technical Upskilling for Automotive Technicians, Management Development, Sales and Customer Focused Training, Aftersales Training, Marketing and Finance and Administration.

## An overview of training courses provided in 2021

### Technical Upskilling



- Hybrid & Electric Vehicle Systems Training Combined Level 2 & 3
- Electrical Fault Systems Diagnosis
- Advanced Driver Assisted Systems (ADAS)
- Oscilloscope Operation and Signal Test Methods

### Management Development

- New and Used Car Sales Management
- Parts Department Management

### Sales and Customer Focus

- Adapting Vehicle Sales to the Digital Environment
- Customer Service and Complaint Handling
- Customer Retention
- Telephone Sales Techniques

### Aftersales Training

- Aftersales Profitability Workshops
- Service Advisor Training
- Workshop Supervisor

### Marketing Training



- Introduction to Digital Marketing in a Post Pandemic World
- Facebook training for Beginners and Advanced
- Making a Marketing Sales Video

### Finance and Administration

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



# Looking ahead: planning for 2022

Click-and-deliver services have allowed customers and dealerships to develop new levels of trust.



Michael Neary, Corporate Finance Partner, Grant Thornton, discusses the factors that will influence how Dealers shape their business plans for the next 12 months.

Following the reopening and return to business of the Irish economy, Budget 2022 saw both positive and negative measures introduced that will impact the Irish Motor Industry. The increases and changes in Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT) following the COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit, and additional fuel taxes have added to the pre-existing heavy tax burden of new car ownership.

However, the €5,000 VRT relief for Battery EVs was extended to the end of 2023, and the extension of 0% Benefit-in-Kind exemption for EVs to 2025, with a tapering effect on the vehicle value from 2023. This should result in increased uptake of EVs in the future. However, from the Industry perspective, there is a need for continued and sustained Government EV supports and urgent investment in EV infrastructure to ensure that consumers are in a position to make the best choices. Diesel and petrol engines still remain the dominant engine type of choice for consumers, with diesel and engine passenger cars making up 33.57% and 32.29% respectively of the total registrations in 2021.

## COVID-19 and reduction in restrictions

Following the end of level 5 restrictions nationwide last summer, for the first time ever the registration of new cars in July surpassed registrations in January of the same year

(26,482 in July vs 25,140 in January), signalling a turn of fortunes for the Irish motor sector.

While many dealers operated a click and deliver service during the pandemic, the reopening of physical stores saw a release of pent-up demand, with registrations in July 7% higher than in July 2019 (pre-pandemic). This was due to a combination of a number of factors, including increased levels of consumer savings during 2020, and a break in the habit of routine buyers who may have been left with a car 18–24 months older than they would have originally anticipated.

## Virtual Salesrooms

One positive note from the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns which may aid dealerships moving forward to 2022 was the increased level of importance placed on their online platforms. Adapting their sales approach, dealerships around the country began to invest, or increased investment, in their websites, increasing the quality of information and photography posted, and offering online tools and web chat functions to aid existing customers with the servicing of their vehicles and new customers with sales.

Click-and-deliver services allowed customers and dealerships to develop new levels of trust, and encouraged customers to 'shop around', unburdened by the traditional experience of





**Budget 2022 added to the already high fuel costs Irish drivers are currently subjected to**

moving from showroom to showroom.

### Fuel Costs

The Budget 2022 tax increase of 2c on a litre of petrol and 2.5c on a litre of diesel added to the already high fuel costs Irish drivers are currently subjected to. Fuel costs have increased considerably compared to November 2020, due to increases in demand for oil, coupled with challenges in the global supply chain and recent increases in carbon tax. Increased fuel costs may force those living in cities to further consider alternative engine types such as hybrids and EVs or alternative means of transport such as cycling, public transport or the use of electric scooters in a bid to cut costs.

### Supply Chain issues

Global shortages of microchips or semiconductors have led some car manufacturers to offer customers the option to buy their cars with a reduced amount of standard equipment if they wish to receive their car more quickly. The items, such as blind-spot warnings, rear collision detection and cross-traffic alerts, are considered 'chip-heavy', and where customers opt to go without this allows the manufacturer to move the car from factory to driveway with fewer microchips used. This comes following a global shortage of the semiconductors which control everything from the electric switches on windows to the airbag controllers.

As a result of the microchip shortage, car manufacturers either have to leave customers facing long delivery lead times on new vehicles or sacrifice on innovation. This has been the leading factor behind the revival of the used car market in Ireland, with the average price of a used car having risen by 15% in Ireland since September 2020, while the national inventory of used cars has fallen by 18% in the same period. This shortage of microchips is expected to continue well into 2022.

### A post-COVID era

The post-COVID era may see a larger number of employees working remotely or as part of a hybrid model. IDA Ireland's latest quarterly labour market report found that the interest in jobs offering remote working has tripled since last year, with one in every seven jobs advertised offering remote working. This may see people holding onto their current car for longer, or opting to postpone the purchase of a car if a daily commute to work is not required. Depending on the scale of the hybrid work model, this could be a challenge to the industry.

### Planning for 2022

In order to best prepare for the continued growth of your business, consider the steps below when planning for 2022:

1. Consider the future direction of the Irish motor industry (such as the year-on-year growth in demand for EVs, or the increased taxes levied on fuel) and how your business can adapt to meet the possible changes and demands of consumer tastes in terms of product offerings.
2. Control and analyse internal elements within the business, such as managing costs and cash flows, and conducting research into the key performance indicators of the business which will allow you to benchmark your business's performance to prior periods.

### Conclusion

Government and the Motor Industry will need to work together in the years ahead to facilitate the changes that are needed to achieve the Government's Climate Action Plan's targets. Government investment in EV infrastructure and supports is vital to continue to grow the number of EVs on the road while the Irish Motor industry can play a key role in the provision of these new vehicles and the supply of younger, used vehicles.

# TOP 10 SELLING CARS 2021



Hyundai Tucson **5,466** 5.2%



Toyota Corolla **4,305** 4.1%



Toyota Yaris **2,697** 2.6%



Volkswagen Tiguan **2,662** 2.6%



Toyota C-HR **2,573** 2.5%



Toyota RAV **2,559** 2.5%



Škoda Octavia **2,552** 2.4%



Volkswagen Golf **2,341** 2.2%



Ford Focus **2,130** 2.0%



Kia Sportage **2,101** 2.0%

# NEW PASSENGER CAR REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11-30/11	01/01-30/11	Market share 2021 %
Alfa Romeo	1	33	0.03
Audi	33	4239	4.05
BMW	54	4448	4.25
Citroën	18	845	0.81
Cupra	1	182	0.17
Dacia	14	2187	2.09
DS	1	36	0.03
Fiat	4	207	0.20
Ford	49	7416	7.09
Honda	10	776	0.74
Hyundai	40	10731	10.26
Jaguar	7	171	0.16
Jeep	2	32	0.03
Kia	43	6634	6.34
Land Rover	7	895	0.86
Lexus	2	390	0.37
Mazda	6	1184	1.13
Mercedes-Benz	67	3256	3.11
MG	20	451	0.43
Mini	8	590	0.56
Mitsubishi	0	286	0.27
Nissan	31	4842	4.63
Opel	44	2793	2.67
Peugeot	70	5440	5.20
Porsche	5	176	0.17
Renault	29	4097	3.92
Seat	7	4009	3.83
Škoda	127	9015	8.62
Ssangyong	7	104	0.10
Subaru	2	27	0.03
Suzuki	20	1283	1.23
Tesla	16	776	0.74
Toyota	242	12970	12.40
Volkswagen	123	12587	12.04
Volvo	19	1394	1.33
Private Import	2	59	0.06
Other	0	2	
<b>Total November 2021</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>104,563</b>	
<b>Total November 2020</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>87,724</b>	
<b>2021 Change 2020</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>16,839</b>	
<b>% Change 2021 - 2020</b>	<b>23.88%</b>	<b>19.20%</b>	

# TOP SELLING CARS NOVEMBER 2021

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
1	Toyota Corolla	130	11.5
2	Toyota Yaris Cross	50	4.4
3	Toyota C-HR	43	3.8
4	Škoda Kodiaq	34	3.0
5	Peugeot 2008	33	2.9

Position	Model	Units sold	Market share %
6	Opel Corsa	29	2.6
7	Mercedes E Class	27	2.4
8	Škoda Octavia	23	2.0
9	Ford Kuga	21	1.9
10	Volkswagen ID.3	21	1.9



## NEW LIGHT COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11 - 30/11	01/01 - 30/11	% Share
Audi	0	4	0.02
Citroën	74	1782	7.19
Dacia	1	25	0.10
Fiat	22	390	1.57
Ford	158	6902	27.85
Fuso	7	106	0.43
Great Wall	0	0	0.00
Hyundai	10	363	1.46
Isuzu	8	155	0.63
Iveco	20	299	1.21
Kia	34	367	1.48
Land Rover	7	382	1.54
LDV	21	396	1.60
MAN	13	166	0.67
Mercedes-Benz	81	1514	6.11
Mitsubishi	1	123	0.50
Nissan	23	1244	5.02
Opel	92	2107	8.50
Peugeot	36	2800	11.30
Renault	82	3618	14.60
Ssanyong	0	40	0.16
Subaru	0	0	0.00
Toyota	23	2169	8.75
Volkswagen	51	3252	13.12
Private Import	1	50	0.20
Other	2	170	0.69
<b>Total November 2021</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>24,783</b>	
<b>Total November 2020</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>21,431</b>	
<b>2021 change 2020</b>	<b>-125</b>	<b>3,352</b>	
<b>% change 2021 - 2020</b>	<b>-14.01%</b>	<b>15.64%</b>	

## BUSES/COACHES REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11- 30/11	01/01 - 30/11	% Share
DAF	0	3	0.72
Higer	0	6	1.44
Isuzu	3	19	4.56
Iveco	0	7	1.68
MAN	0	0	0.00
Mercedes-Benz	1	7	1.68
Scania	0	0	0.00
Sunsundegui	20	44	10.55
VDL DAF	12	80	19.18
Volvo	0	2	0.48
Wrightbus	0	3	2.44
Yutong	0	0	0.00
Private Import	31	246	83.67
<b>Total November 2021</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>417</b>	
<b>Total November 2020</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>123</b>	
<b>2021 change 2020</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>294</b>	
<b>% change 2021 - 2020</b>	<b>1575.00%</b>	<b>239.02%</b>	

## NEW HEAVY COMMERCIAL REGISTRATIONS

Marque	01/11- 30/11	01/01 - 30/11	% Share
DAF	8	330	14.78
Dennis Eagle	0	4	0.18
Fuso	2	49	2.20
Hino	0	1	0.04
Isuzu	3	102	4.57
Iveco	5	81	3.63
MAN	4	112	5.02
Mercedes-Benz	8	226	10.13
Renault	31	251	11.25
Romaquip	0	0	0.00
Scania	40	648	29.03
Volvo	6	378	19.75
Private Import	3	50	15.72
<b>Total November 2021</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>2,232</b>	
<b>Total November 2020</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1,914</b>	
<b>2021 change 2020</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>318</b>	
<b>% change 2021 - 2020</b>	<b>42.86%</b>	<b>16.61%</b>	

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

# DoneDeal

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investment

**No.1**

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car buyers (IPSOS)

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Respond to customer needs wherever your customer is with Dealer Deposits

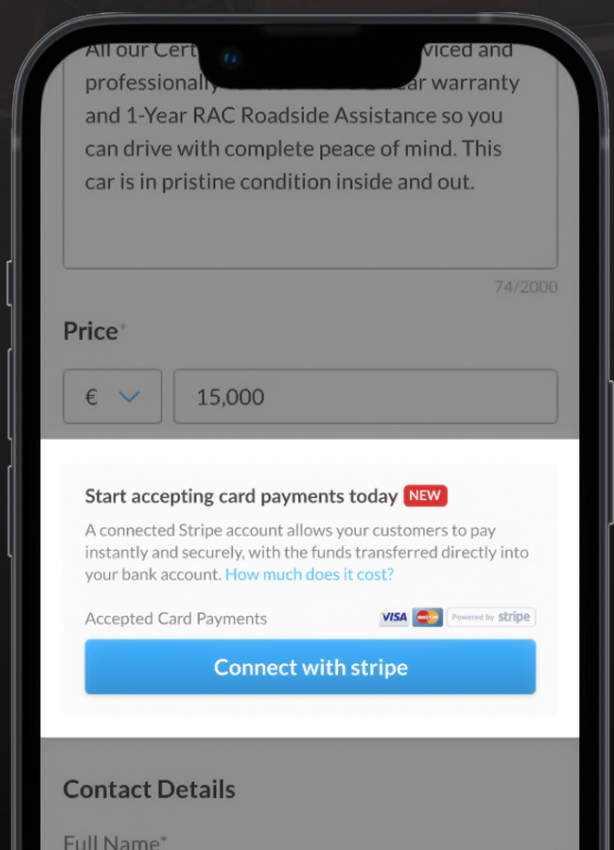
- Amazing for sales & easy peasy to manage
- At best, you can sell the car before the customer visits the showroom
- At worst, you have a very high intent customer, primed to complete the sale

**95%** of deposits placed on cars  
using this feature, **resulted in a sale**

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Contact [motorhelp@donedeal.ie](mailto:motorhelp@donedeal.ie) or  
Tel: 01 513 4122





# Used car values show no sign of cooling

In a follow-up to our report on the sector in our previous edition, we look at the continuing increase in used car prices and expectations for used car purchases in the short to medium term.

The latest data on used car prices from DoneDeal, in its most recently published Motor Index, confirms that the market is in a truly unique period. Prices are on an unprecedented upward trajectory and showing no signs of slowing down.

## Rate of price increase accelerates

In just three months since June 2021, used car prices have increased by 10.6%, the largest quarterly price inflation seen in Ireland since the start of DoneDeal data in 2011. For context – the previous quarterly inflation rates in Q2 and Q1 were 6.6% and 5.6%, respectively, while for Q4 2020 the rate was 3.5%.

Not only are prices still increasing but the rate of increase is speeding up, not slowing down. Choked supply due to Brexit and pandemic-induced delays on the production of new cars – coupled with increased demand from increased savings – are widely cited as causes of this abnormal price growth, and these contributing factors are showing few signs of abating in the short-term. The pandemic and Brexit-induced shock to the market have had a staggering effect on prices – used car prices are nearly 50% higher than they were just before the onset of the pandemic in February 2020.

Dr Tom Gillespie, economic analyst on the Motor Index, says that, to put this supply deficit into context, we can estimate the number of cars that would be required to bring prices



**Dr Tom Gillespie, an environmental economist jointly associated with NUIG and TCD, says the statistics suggest a deficit of cars in the region of 110,000.**

back to 'normal' levels. He explains: "In 2019, there were about 117,000 new car registrations and 114,000 used car imports, meaning a total of 231,000 extra cars in Ireland. By comparison, there were 168,294 extra cars added to supply in 2020 and there have been 151,782 so far in 2021."

The drop in the level of imports from the UK has been significant: these totalled 108,083 in 2019 but were at just 40,152 towards the end of the third quarter this year. Based on current trends, Ireland will likely see a total of 180,000 extra cars in the market in the year of 2021. These top-level statistics suggest that the deficit of cars over the last 20 months to the end of September 2021 is in the region of 110,000.

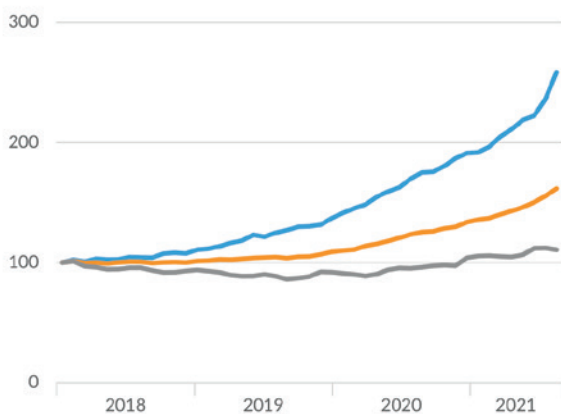
According to Dr Gillespie, opportunities to address this deficit are being identified from a variety of sources. For example, Japanese used car imports are up 65% from 3,243 in 2019 to 6,068 so far in 2021, and although they are a relatively small share in terms of total used car imports, that share has grown over four-fold from 2.8% of total imports in 2019 to 12% of imports so far in 2021.

Even more unusual is that the share of used European brands imported from Japan has more than doubled from 15% of total Japanese imports in 2019 to 37% so far in 2021.

The true figure of supply deficit is likely much higher due to other sources of used car supply, not to mention accounting for increased demand from pandemic savings. A lack of tourists in 2020 meant that many hire car companies held on to their existing stock of cars, rather than release them to the used car market and replace them with new models. In a normal year, this offloading of the rental fleet equates to roughly 20,000 cars per annum (source: Rental Car Council of Ireland).

### DoneDeal Price Index shows that inflation is still accelerating in the lower end of the market.

● Lower priced cars ● DoneDeal Car Price Index  
● Higher-priced



Source: DoneDeal Data, January 2018 - September 2021

**Figure 1. Price inflation is most pronounced in lower priced used cars.**



**Figure 2.**

The stock of surplus Celtic-Tiger cars which have been traded in Ireland for the past 13-16 years are now becoming obsolete, thus further straining supply in the lower end of the market. The unprecedented price inflation has primarily been driven by the lower end of the market. The quarterly inflation rate for the lower quartile of the market – prices less than €3,000 – is as much as 18%. However, the upper quarter of the market (cars worth €13,000 or more) is seeing a more modest quarterly inflation of 3.9%.

### What the future holds

A survey by DoneDeal in September of 3,000 adults outlines some of the key trends we can expect to see in the sector. For instance, two out of five Irish people intend to purchase a car. This is up significantly when you consider people replace their car every five years, on average.

The overall intent to purchase a premium car is at an all-time high with advices on cars between the ages of 2017-2021 continuing to grow by 150% year on year on DoneDeal. It is understood that this is due in large part to savings in the economy (Ireland Central Bank Press Release, Thu, Jul 1, 2021) from those lucky enough to hold onto their jobs, as well as the consumer market reacting to strong finance and lending options.

### Spending plans

In all, 60% of people say they intend to spend a minimum of €15,000 on their next car. This is unchanged since the first half of the year. 60% of people intend to use finance options (up from 50% at the start of the year). Only 2% of people expect to finance their cars through loans from friends and family. 60% of people in Ireland plan to trade in their car against their purchase from a Dealership. 26% said they planned to sell privately with 14% saying they did not have a car to sell on. In what may be a sign of how the pandemic has influenced purchasing behaviour, 35% of people still see click and collect as part of their car shopping experience, even as restrictions ease. Interestingly, 45% of people in Ireland intend to buy hybrid/ electric, up from 35% since the start of the year alone.

## THE ECONOMIC BACKDROP: CENTRAL BANK VIEW

The economic recovery from the pandemic shock has continued, but uncertainty remains given the recent resurgence of the virus across Europe. Against this backdrop, the Central Bank of Ireland recently published its second Financial Stability Review (FSR) of 2021, outlining key risks facing the financial system and offering its assessment of the resilience of the economy and financial system to adverse shocks. The FSR notes that, while uncertainty around the path of the pandemic remains, the economic recovery has continued over the past six months, reducing some of the near-term macro-financial risks. The review also reports that more medium-term vulnerabilities have been building up, stemming from developments in global financial markets, higher levels of indebtedness internationally, and growing price pressures and capacity constraints in some sectors. At the same time, the impact of the pandemic on the financial position of borrowers and the banking sector has started to dissipate as the economy has re-opened.

Central Bank Governor Gabriel Makhoul said the latest review comes at a moment of re-emergence of public health concerns around the path of the pandemic, underlining the inherent uncertainty of the current environment. He added: "Our overall assessment of the macro-financial environment is that near-term macro-financial risks have receded since our last review. The vaccination programme has had a supportive effect on economic activity. Indeed, we are now in an environment where medium-term risks of imbalances are beginning to build, both domestically and globally. At the same time, we have seen a continued increase in global levels of indebtedness, especially for governments and companies.

"Domestically, the labour market recovery during the second half of the year has been strong and has been associated with sectoral labour shortages, while house prices are now rising at rapid levels driven by an imbalance between supply and demand." Governor Makhoul added that inflation is "now running well ahead of many developed economy central bank targets."

He explained: "While our baseline scenario is that these inflationary pressures will gradually fade, we must also acknowledge the uncertainty involved and the prospect of the risks that would ultimately be associated with a more prolonged inflationary period."





# AFTERMARKET

- ▶ BATTERIES
- ▶ BRAKES

# Battery quality should be customer priority



Varta says its partner portal is the industry-leading online platform in providing assistance to technicians.

Innovative, high quality battery purchases are the motorist's best option in the long run.

## Testing time

With vehicle usage having been irregular for many drivers since March 2020, Varta are advising it is now more imperative than ever for cars to have their battery tested when entering the workshop. "Lots of cars have stood unused for many months, and some car owners are now doing far less journeys than pre-pandemic" says Andy Cook, Senior Technical Trainer at Varta. "This means the battery won't have been charged as regularly as it used to be, and in many cases, where the car has been parked for months on end, not at all."

## Battery status

When a car battery falls below a certain voltage, internal damage can begin to occur, and a new battery should be installed into the vehicle. "Varta have been advising technicians to check the battery status for many years, but now really is the time to implement this process into every customer's job list. "It's not just about generating revenue for your business; it's also ensuring that the customer has a battery in good working order, which is particularly important over the colder winter months."

With over a third of vehicles now having a start-stop system, it's vital that a workshop has an up-to-date tester, that can also accurately test absorbent glass mat (AGM) and enhanced flooded batteries (EFB). If it's an older tester that doesn't have the capabilities to test AGM or EFB batteries, then it's worth upgrading the tester;

otherwise the test results will likely be inaccurate.

Andy Cook notes: "It shouldn't take long to complete a battery test, not much more than five minutes, but by explaining the results to the customer, you are giving them peace of mind that the battery is operating properly, or advising that it might be time for a replacement. By doing this, you're ensuring they have a functioning battery and will be ready for upcoming journeys."

## Heart of the car

Batteries face greater demands than ever before, as they have to serve increasingly complex and power-hungry car electronics. Whereas digital dashboards, inbuilt screens and parking cameras used to be limited to high-end vehicles, they are now commonplace on even entry-level models, all placing additional strain on the battery. Andy commented: "Many drivers are also plugging in their mobile devices to charge them while on-the-move, again drawing power from the vehicle. This is why it's paramount to ensure the battery is in a condition to support all the comfort and safety features; it's the heart of the car."

The Varta partner portal provides assistance to technicians; the industry leading online platform uses original equipment information to help identify the correct battery for every vehicle, and also includes step-by-step fitting instructions. Access to the portal is available via all internet-enabled devices.



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 CLARIOS





**According to Ecobat, the workshop message to the customer should be to spend a little more now on a battery to save a lot more, in both money and aggravation, in the long run.**

### Customer advice

Ecobat Battery Technologies suggests that while it's tempting to take the easy route and give the customer what they've asked for, gently pointing out pitfalls will pay dividends for both the workshop/customer relationship and the profitability of the business, as well as for the long-term reliability of the customer's vehicle. Many workshops will have been in the position where they have informed a customer that their vehicle's battery has come to the end of its life and needs replacing, and the owner's immediate response is to say: "I now only use the car for short journeys to the shops just once a day, so I only need the smallest and cheapest battery you have." Most workshops will know that this customer request is actually the worst option, so it's important for the workshop manager to be able to explain logically and coherently what is in fact the best course of action for the long-term reliability of the vehicle. The manager needs to explain that starting the engine takes a lot of energy out of the battery and that driving the car continuously for less than 20 minutes will not recharge the battery enough to replace the energy used to make that initial start.

So, when it comes to the next start, the battery is less healthy than the day before, which continues in a downward spiral known as battery 'walkdown', until it reaches the point when there is simply not enough power left in the battery to start the engine.

It is important to state, that whatever the age of the battery, this issue will not qualify as a warranty claim, as the battery simply needs to be recharged, rather than it being fundamentally faulty.

The problem is amplified should the same situation reoccur on several occasions, because the normal lifespan of a conventional starter battery will be significantly reduced if it is subjected to repeated deep discharge. In this situation, even recharging the battery will prove impossible and it will need to be replaced again, which will naturally incur additional cost, exactly what the customer was trying to avoid!

Apart from using the car for longer journeys to sufficiently recharge the battery, a solution that is generally not practical, otherwise the issue in this example wouldn't have become a problem in the first place, there are two ways to resolve the matter. The first is regular charging, the second to upgrade the battery with a design that is able to withstand multiple deep discharge cycles. Both are solutions that can be provided by workshops with the assistance of Ecobat.

### Ecobat chargers

For those owners that can park on their own drive and have a little practical hands-on aptitude, charging the battery on a regular basis using a modern 'smart' charger, such as an Ecobat EBC1UK, will keep the battery in peak condition and is the easiest and cheapest option. However, many motorists are not in this position, so to upgrade the





The AGM/EFB alternative offers reliability and peace of mind, according to Ecobat.

battery is the only sensible alternative. Conventional batteries will generally be available in three categories – budget, value-for-money or top-of-the-range – so given this scenario, the recommendation should always be to go for the very best, in as large a capacity as is practical. However, there are also some even better options, particularly if the owner plans to keep the vehicle for the longer term. Although most members of the trade will be familiar with AGM and EFB batteries, which are the original equipment fitment for micro-hybrid vehicles with a start/stop system, many motorists are not. However, the two great advantages of these battery designs are the ability to withstand deep discharge and the capacity to make hundreds of thousands of engine restarts, meaning they will also provide a long service life. Although the advanced technology in these designs obviously comes with a cost, despite being more expensive than a conventional battery, the AGM/EFB alternative provides reliability and peace of mind, according to Ecobat. The message from Ecobat is to spend a little more now, to save a lot more in both money and aggravation, in the long run.



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**Banner prides itself on future-oriented technology and outstanding quality.**

### Environmental protection

Banner, based in Linz-Leonding, Austria, has been manufacturing batteries for all types of vehicles since 1937. The family-owned firm, which is headed by Andreas Bawart and Thomas Bawart, employs a workforce of around 805 across Europe. Banner produces and sells over four million starter batteries annually. The company says its battery production plant is one of the most modern and environment-friendly in Europe, and environmental protection is a vital element in Banner's corporate philosophy.

The company is a founder member of the Starter Battery Environmental Forum (UFS) and sees its processing of lead as demanding a special degree of responsibility. Research and production take place in accordance with the most stringent quality standards and employ environment-friendly procedures, according to Banner. The company describes its starter battery production as being characterised by a closed cycle, which extends from manufacture to recycling. Through a process of continual improvement, it aims to minimise environmental impact. Banner reports that its batteries are used for the first fitting of numerous models including: Audi, BMW, Caterpillar, Jungheinrich, Kässbohrer, Liebherr, Mercedes, Porsche, SEAT, Volvo and VW. A network of sales companies in fourteen countries provides retailer support and in addition Banner products are sold in more than 70 European, African and Asian states via direct importers. A company spokesperson notes: "Future-oriented technology and outstanding quality underline the international reputation of these exemplary products with 'buffalo power', as characterised by the Banner logo."

### E-mobility

The spokesperson says Banner, with its AGM and EFB batteries, is contributing greatly to sustainable e-mobility. "This is because all e-vehicles still require a 12V battery for

the supply of their electrical systems."

Among a number of European OEMs in the premium class, Banner also supplies the BMW Group. For instance, a Banner Running Bull AGM BackUp stabilises the 12V electrical system of the BMW i3 in order that the car's navigation and infotainment systems, as well as additional features, function perfectly. Other vehicle manufacturers use Banner's back-up batteries for highly automated parking and driving.

### Bull power as energy store

Fuel-saving hybrid vehicles need a reliable energy store and – especially in the case of micro-hybrid concepts owing to their high cyclical resistance – optimised lead-acid batteries such as the absorbent glass mat (AGM) and enhanced flooded battery (EFB) are the preferred choice. In particular, the AGM battery, which is fitted with a glass fibre mat separator, represents a highly efficient solution, as it facilitates flexible and extensive energy management which is especially important for the hybrid and e-vehicles of today and tomorrow.

### R&D

At present, automotive manufacturers regard lithium-ion technology as possessing the greatest potential for full hybrid and e-vehicles. By contrast, Banner is seen as a leading supplier of AGM and EFB batteries for micro-hybrids with start-stop systems and the company is currently involved in several development projects, which are aimed at enhancing the efficiency of these batteries. Using optimised cell design, additives to the active mass and various engineering measures, the intention is to improve power intake and output and thus make a sizeable contribution to environment protection. "Thinking about tomorrow today" has long been a Banner motto and is one reason why the company is now providing a massive input with regard to sustainable e-mobility."





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## Popular GS range

The GS Automotive Battery range from GS Yuasa is increasingly popular with Irish Motor Factors, according to Serfac Limited, Irish distributor for GS Yuasa, and its SMF, EFB and AGM batteries all provide superior performance and excellent value.

### Traction batteries

GS has just launched a new range of traction batteries for the European material handling market, which expands on its class leading Japanese traction battery range with a line up of European DIN and BS sizes. The company says its new range of individual 2V cells, full tank solutions and



**The latest GS range features enhanced performance capabilities that meet the needs of modern vehicles, according to its Irish distributor, Serfac Ltd.**

accessories uses the latest technology and is available in 24, 48 and 80 Volt solutions, providing coverage for all makes

and models with reliable power and hassle-free performance.

The GS Yuasa Yu-Fit battery configuration tool has also just received a fresh new look. An increasing number of vehicles are fitted with a battery management system (BMS) which monitors a vehicle's battery throughout its life to maintain optimum charge efficiency and operation of the stop-start system. If fitted, it's essential to re-programme the BMS via the OBD port following the installation of a replacement battery as failing to do so can lead to problems such as in-car error messages or even complete loss of start-stop functionality.

Liam O'Donohoe of Serfac Limited comments: "The GS Yuasa Yu-Fit has been designed to be one of the most user-friendly tools available and can achieve battery validation in less than 60 seconds. Although garages may already own diagnostic equipment, having a GS Yuasa Yu-Fit means that central diagnostic equipment doesn't have to be tied up on the relatively straightforward task of battery configuration." Special 2021 seasonal offers on the GS battery range are available from Serfac.



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**Serfac**



# New references introduced by Borg & Beck

Borg & Beck Braking has introduced a record number of popular new braking references over recent months, including Becktec coated rear brake discs for Tesla Model 3, 2017; Becktec coated front brake discs for BMW 3 Series, 2019; and Becktec coated rear brake discs for Hyundai Kona, 2017.

Specialists in braking, Borg & Beck offers a comprehensive range of more than 4,400 braking references covering pads, discs, shoes, drums, fitting kits and wear indicators, leads, hoses, cables, wheel cylinders, master cylinders and brake fluid.

All Borg & Beck pads and discs fully comply to R90 criteria requirements. According to Serfac, Borg & Beck brake pads are made using one of the very best fine semi-metallic, copper-free organic formulations which is less corrosive than cheaper alternatives and lasts longer. Borg & Beck brake discs are manufactured to OE specification dimensionally, with a high carbon content and no compromise on material make up or weight reduction.

## Unique ingredient

Becktec is a key quality ingredient used to differentiate Borg & Beck from other braking brands and can only be found on Borg & Beck brake pads and discs. With brake pads, the term Becktec refers to the Wolverine multi-layered advanced shim technology – Becktec Shimmed Pads. With Borg & Beck brake discs, the term Becktec refers to the zinc-aluminium coating on the discs.

Borg & Beck has produced a poster for workshops which promotes best practice and helps the repairer promote the importance of bedding

in new brakes to the driver. For copies of the poster, please contact your Serfac area manager or the Serfac sales team.



Available From:  
Serfac Limited  
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## CUPRA BORN

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**Batteries:** three options - 45kWh, 58kWh and 77kWh

**Pricing:** will start from under €39,000 excluding grants



## TOYOTA AYGO X

A compact urban crossover, the Aygo X arrives in Ireland in April 2022

**Engine:** 1L, three-cylinder 1KR-FE

**Pricing:** to be announced



## KIA EV6

This electric crossover is equipped with class-leading levels of safety tech

**Battery:** 77.4kWh

**Pricing:** from €50,000 including grants



## MERCEDES-BENZ EVITO TOURER

Mercedes has launched its new electric eVito Tourer van

**Battery:** 90kWh

**Pricing:** to be announced



## RENAULT KANGOO VAN E-TECH

Scheduled to begin selling throughout Europe from spring 2022

**Battery:** 45kWh

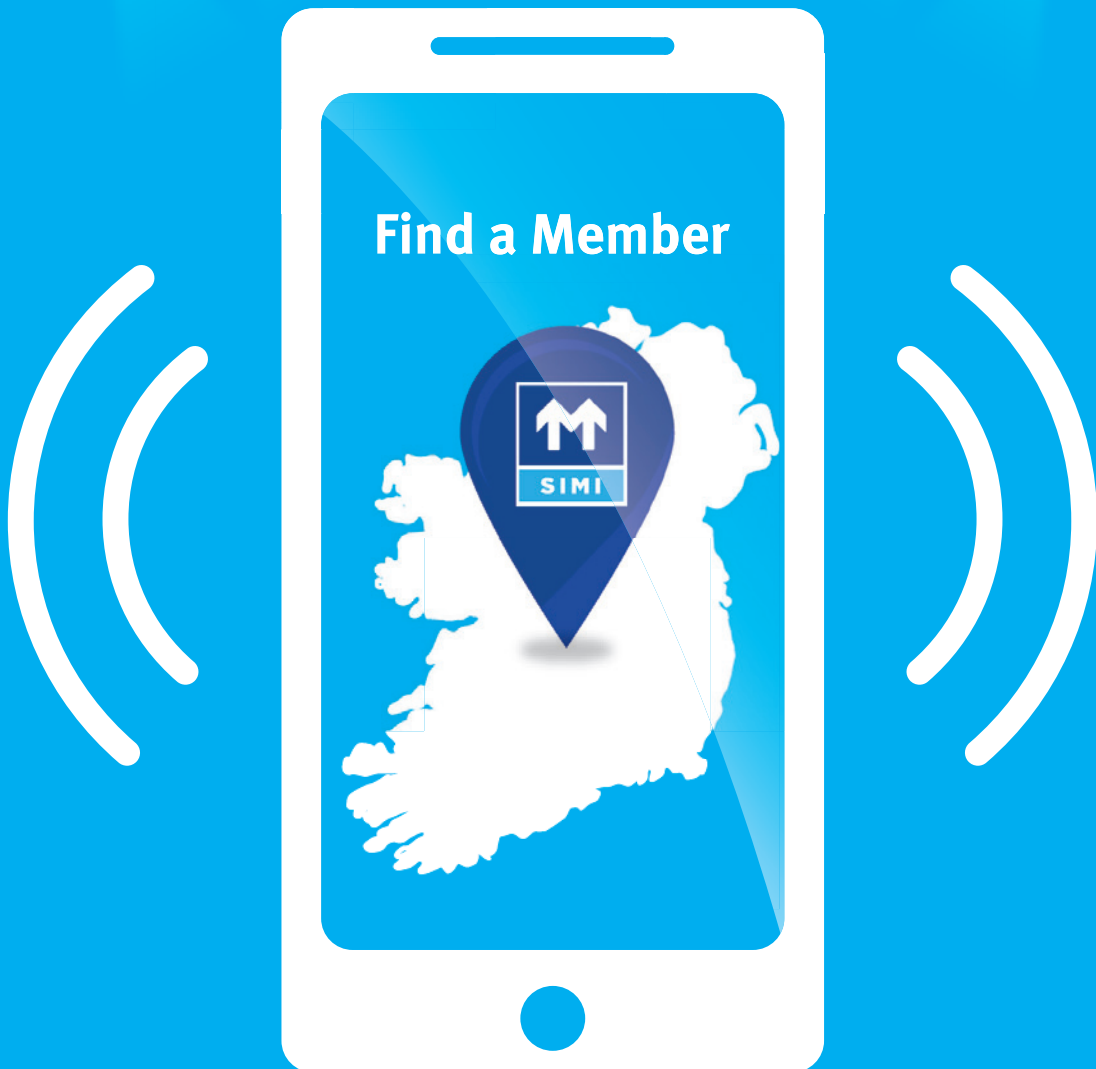
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