

# Mourne Observer

LARGEST SALES IN COUNTY DOWN

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**Ballynahinch man fronts television advertising campaign – Page 4**



**Friends gear up for charity trek to Jordan – Page 10**



## PUBLIC TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON CONTROVERSIAL PROPOSALS



**PARK IT . . .** Newcastle traders Paddy Small, Ursula Hanna, Mark Davey, Peter Law and Chamber of Commerce chairwoman Audrey Byrne will be attending a meeting tomorrow (Thursday) night in the Newcastle Centre to discuss proposed car parking charges for Newcastle and Castlewellan. **Photo: Chris Halpin.**

## Why pay to park?

**AN EMERGENCY** meeting takes place in Newcastle tomorrow night (Thursday) in a bid to overturn plans to introduce contentious car parking charges.

Local people have been urged to demonstrate their opposition to the unpopular plans, which centre on Newcastle and Castlewellan, by attending the meeting.

Billed as "a golden opportunity" to highlight resistance to the plans for charging at Donard Park, the Downs Road and Castle Park in Newcastle, plus at Upper Square in Castlewellan, the meeting will commence at 7pm in the Newcastle Centre.

It has been organised by the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce.

With traders and residents alike urged to come along and register their thoughts on the plans, which were first aired by Down District Council late last year, it is anticipated that a number of local politicians will also be in attendance. Invites have also been extended to senior Council officials, including its Chief Executive, Mr John McGrillen. **(to page 15)**

# A&E UNIT TO BE SCALED BACK?

By Lisa Ramsden

**STAFF shortages could lead to the new Downe Hospital introducing limited opening hours at its accident and emergency department.**

Just seven months after the state-of-the-art facility within the £64-million new build was opened, the South Eastern Trust has confirmed it is having "many difficulties in safely and sustainably"

providing emergency cover to the local A&E unit on a round-the-clock basis.

High level talks took place earlier this week which centred on the 24-hour consultant-led emergency department's future, and yesterday (Tuesday) the Trust took steps to dispel rumours it is considering converting the emergency department into a minor injuries unit.

However, sources within the Downe have confirmed one option being considered, should the opening hours be reduced to an 8am to midnight basis, is

an extension of the current out of hours GP service at the hospital - meaning the nearest 24-hour A&E departments would be located in Belfast, Dundonald and Newry.

A spokeswoman for the Trust acknowledged it had "repeatedly highlighted" the difficulties experienced in recruiting staff, especially junior doctors, for the Downe's emergency department.

Emphasising that the Trust had "signalled repeatedly" that it needed to find a more suitable staffing model that **(to page 15)**



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For further information contact **Jim Mulholland** or **Andrea Kelly**,  
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