

Mourne Observer

LARGEST SALES IN COUNTY DOWN

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**Kilkeel Fashion Show
hailed as a success
– Page 12**



**Whelk gatherers causing
'inconvenience' to
landowners – Page 34**



Great chieftain o the puddin'-race! . . . Gareth Crozier of the Schomberg Society and Colin Moffett prepare to pipe in the haggis during the Burns Night celebration in Kilkeel on Friday night. More pictures on page 39. - Photo: Ingrid Perry.

Council calls for urgent road repairs

By Elizabeth McCamley

NEWRY and Mourne Council is pressing for a meeting with section engineers to prioritise which local roads should receive urgent repairs.

Long after the last of the frost has melted in the Newry and Mourne area, motorists are paying the price for the damage it has inflicted on road surfaces.

In a notice of motion at Monday night's monthly meeting of the Council, Cllr Josephine O'Hare (SDLP) and Cllr Gary Stokes (SDLP) said the local authority should write to the Department of Regional Development (DRD) in a bid to secure repairs to roads that were badly affected by the big freeze.

Large potholes have appeared throughout the district, causing untold damage to vehicles.

Cllr O'Hare told Monday night's meeting that when there is a shower of rain the water goes into the holes and people drive into them without realising and damage their vehicles.

"The bypass in Newry is no use to people
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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
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