

KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

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NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION

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IRHA Budget Submission / Road Tax

The IRHA has made its pre-budget submission to the Department of Finance seeking an overhaul of commercial vehicle road tax in the forthcoming Government budget. The Association's pre-budget submission focuses on one subject matter and one only as it is critically important that the hire and reward licensed haulage industry is supported and ultimately allowed to compete with out-of-state vehicles operating unfettered within Ireland by reducing the burden of excessive road tax levels.

As is the case with the fuel rebate that the Association successfully lobbied for, our proposals for change to

commercial vehicle motor tax are costed and supported with figures supplied by the Department of Transport and Environment, therefore all data is easily verifiable.

Based on our past experience, we know that the support of members at ground level via representation to your local representative is vitally important to bring about change. The message to be conveyed is quite simple; the industry requires a change from unladen weight to Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) in the forthcoming Government budget, coupled with a significant reduction to the various bands in order for the Irish haulage industry to survive.

For clarity, the changes outlined above of unladen weight to GVW must be implemented before Government can introduce a 'pay-as-you-go' road user charge which remains the ultimate objective of the Association.

To date, a positive response from Government level continues to be received at this point in time with feedback suggesting that the difficulties of the industry, voiced by the IRHA, are being heard.



Minister Michael Noonan

Members also continue to be very pro-active at ground level with local lobbying efforts and in-turn providing feedback to IRHA head-office. The collective effort that has been channelled into this industry lobby to date is certainly having a positive effect on the key decision makers in Government.

A meeting of the IRHA with Minister Noonan in advance of the Government budget in October has been secured and members will be informed of the outcome of that meeting as soon as possible.

In the intervening period, your continued support by lobbying at local level would be greatly appreciated. A copy of the Associations budget submission can be obtained from IRHA head-office as well as a listing of public representatives countrywide.

Vehicle Testing - Period of Validity of Test Certificates

The IRHA recently met with PWC to discuss the period of validity of certificates of roadworthiness.

As stated during the RSA consultation process in 2011 prior to the introduction of the revised testing regime and upon its introduction, the IRHA remains vehemently opposed to test certificates being granted for any period less than twelve months from the date of the test. Such an approach to commercial vehicle testing is not mirrored in any other Member State.

With the introduction of the CVRT in 2013, there is now scope for a vehicle to undergo its initial test on day one and the following day a second test can be carried out, where upon passing the test, it will yield a roadworthiness certificate for twelve months. This approach, in the opinion of the IRHA, is deeply flawed and appears to be more focused on generating revenue and favourable data for the Authority as opposed to enhancing road safety.

The Association remains firmly of the position that where a commercial vehicle undergoes its roadworthiness test, that test certificate must be valid for twelve months from the date of the test. This approach is echoed by our nearest competitors in Northern Ireland and the UK where it is also worth noting that

commercial vehicle test fees are much less than in Ireland.

In respect to vehicles and equipment off-the-road due to a lack of operational / seasonal demand, there should be no requirement to undergo a roadworthiness test if it is genuinely off-the-road. There is no road safety justification for requiring the industry to test their commercial equipment when it is parked on private property. As soon as there is any intention of an owner to put equipment back into service on the public road, it is at that point that a roadworthiness test should be undertaken.

The IRHA is fully committed to supporting the Road Safety Authority's efforts to promote road safety within the commercial vehicle sector. However, on this particular subject matter the Association does not believe the current commercial vehicle testing regime is fit for purpose as it is creating an unacceptable burden on the industry. Therefore an urgent change to provide a twelve month certificate of roadworthiness from the date of test is required.

At the time of going to print, the Association was awaiting an official response from the RSA following the meeting with PWC, therefore further updates will be provided to members as soon as possible.

IRHA Toll Tag

In May 2015, the Irish Road Haulage Association launched www.TruckTag.ie as an exclusive IRHA members only toll payment system.

Following a successful launch, www.TruckTag.ie is operated for IRHA members by ParkMagic, an authorised and well established nationwide toll operator.

The key features and benefits of the IRHA 'TruckTag' include; a dedicated IRHA support team; automated Eastlink report generating your rebate documentation in seconds and a mobile application to keep track of toll activity while you are on the move.



Further exclusive innovations are in development and will be made available to IRHA 'TruckTag' users as they emerge. Today, 'TruckTag' works on all Irish toll roads and with it the transit is 16% cheaper on the M50.

You can get your IRHA 'TruckTag' for free with a monthly administration fee of €1 per tag. The payment type is a top-up account with flexible direct debit set up. The IRHA ask all members to support our 'TruckTag' initiative so that your Association can speak with one voice on all matters relating to tolling in Ireland.

Switching to IRHA 'TruckTag' is seamless and you will be supported from start to finish by an experienced customer care team. You can order your new 'TruckTag' on-line at www.TruckTag.ie or by phone - 061 311 422.

East Link Toll Rebate

With the introduction of the HGV management strategy in Dublin City in 2007, the Association achieved a rebate for five and six axle vehicles crossing the East Link toll bridge during the cordon hours of 07:00 - 19:00. It took considerable lobbying efforts for the Association to achieve this rebate in order to ensure the licensed road haulage operator was not adversely affected monetarily when the HGV restriction was introduced.

Members are reminded that there is only a two month window, after the qualifying vehicle crosses, that the toll rebate can be claimed. It is a very tight window of opportunity so you really must be on-top of your administrative elements to ensure that you do not lose out on the rebate.

"Members are reminded that there is only a two month window, after the qualifying vehicle crosses, that the toll rebate can be claimed."

With the two month window to claim the rebate in mind, members can avail of a very efficient and user friendly service for claiming your tolls by using the East Link rebate portal supplied and supported by our tolling partners Park Magic. It is all part of the Park Magic service and their IT system can

automatically generate the reclaim form for you, thereby considerably reducing administrative burden and any risk of not claiming your entitlement due to the short window of opportunity.



East Link Toll

Further details in this respect can be obtained from Park Magic - 061 311 422. Alternatively please contact IRHA head-office if you would like to discuss the matter further.

Drivers Hours – FYI

A recent question posed by an MEP on driver's hours produced the following response from Ms Bulc on behalf of the European Commission.

For your information, the question and answer is as follows:

Subject: Review of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 for the improvement of drivers' rest periods

The Commission is now preparing to review Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, almost 10 years since it was first adopted. The third aim of this Regulation, namely to improve the social and working conditions of drivers, is hampered by the rigid way in which rest periods are regulated. Experience with the current Regulation has shown that professional long-distance drivers transporting goods are unable to return home for their rest periods. The Regulation therefore obliges drivers to take their rest periods in their vehicle cabins, which increases both costs and risks while decreasing productivity, the quality of the rest and opportunities for balancing work with family life. Moreover, the Regulation makes it difficult for goods transporters based in peripheral countries to use their vehicle fleets in the most efficient way. A number of professional organisations have made

concrete proposals seeking to resolve this problem, both directly and in hearings arranged by the Commission.

1. Does the Commission plan to introduce greater flexibility with regard to the number of days between weekly rest periods for drivers of goods transporters to enable those from peripheral states to return home?
2. Can the goods sector benefit from the same flexibility that is granted to the occasional passenger transport sector and thus avoid the kind of fines that are being imposed in countries such as France and Belgium on drivers taking their rest periods in the cabins of their vehicles?

Answer given by Ms Bulc on behalf of the Commission

With the aim to enhance road safety and working conditions of drivers the co-legislators decided, under Regulation (EC) No 561/2006[1], that as a general rule a driver must take: a daily rest within each period of 24 hours, a weekly rest at the latest after 6 periods of 24 hours, and within two consecutive weeks he must take either two regular weekly rests of 45 hours or one reduced of 24 hours and one regular weekly rest.



Ms Bulc

In specific circumstances and where objectives of the Regulation are not jeopardized, the Regulation offers certain flexibilities in applying these provisions. It allows drivers engaged in a single occasional service of international carriage of passengers to postpone the weekly rest under certain specified conditions. Such an exemption is justified by the specificity of international coach tours, where, contrary to the carriage of goods, the daily and weekly driving times are very short, much below thresholds set in the

Regulation. For goods transport the Regulation allows flexibility in multi-manning situations, where drivers are allowed to take their daily rest within 30 hours and not within 24 hours period.

The Regulation does not oblige, but provides a possibility for the driver to spend the daily rest period in the vehicle, if the driver chooses so and if certain necessary conditions are met.

The Commission launched the ex-post evaluation of the social legislation in road transport with the aim to verify whether the rules in place are fit for purpose and to identify ambiguities of the existing provisions, including those on rest periods. Based on the results that are expected at the end of 2015, the Commission will consider the next steps.

Manual Shut off Taps

Members will recall from an earlier edition of this newsletter that it is intended, as part of the vehicle testing requirements, that articulated vehicles registered since the 1st of June 2011 will be required to have self-sealer couplings fitted to affected vehicles as of the 1st of June 2015. Such a change requires vehicles fitted with manual shut-off taps to change over to self-sealer couplings.

The IRHA has made protracted representations to the RSA raising concerns of the affects a move away from manual shut off taps that have served the industry very well for numerous years. The Association has raised numerous health and safety concerns, as well operational issues.

Following a recent meeting with the RSA where the IRHA made further representation rejecting the rationale that has been used to introduce this change, the IRHA achieved a deferral on the introduction date of seal-sealer couplings of an additional two months. Therefore this requirement under the CVRT will be pass advisory until the 1st of August 2015.

During the two month deferral that the IRHA has achieved, the Association has being exploring all legal perimeters associated with the introduction of the self-sealer couplings and if there is any scope available to prevent

the mandatory change as intended under the CVRT regime. Essentially, is there any legally binding requirement emanating from European legislation that actually requires this equipment change.

The matter is currently on-going, therefore further updates will be provided to members as soon as possible and if you have any specific questions on this subject matter please do not hesitate to contact IRHA head-office.

IRHA Truck Run

The Association is supporting a truck run that is being organised in memory of recently deceased Katie Drennan - RIP - daughter of Eugene Drennan, Spa Transport Ltd, Co Clare.

Katie sadly passed away of CF at a very young age, 24, on the 20th of February this year. Therefore a truck run in Katie's memory and also to raise funds for 'TLC4CF' (Tipperary, Limerick & Clare for Cystic Fibrosis) will take place on the 26th of September around Co Clare.

Please support this very worthy cause where further details can be obtained from Eugene Drennan on 086 265 2355.

IRHA Research

The Association is currently conducting a telephone survey of members on the drivers hours - Regulation 561 of 2006 - to establish what, in your opinion, are the more problematic elements of the drivers hours requirement and how it affects your business, both from ensuring that your drivers receive their adequate rest periods, as well as from an operational cost perspective.

The reason for our research effort is to establish data that can be utilised at European level to seek to open the debate on



driver's hours and ultimately bring about changes that better cater for an island economy on the periphery of Europe such as Ireland.

The data gleaned from our survey will greatly help our lobbying efforts in this respect, therefore please participate where requested to do so.

Finally, there will also be some questions asked in relation to your fleet insurance and again if you could assist in providing this data it would be appreciated.

Further updates in terms of our findings arising from this project will be provided as soon as practical.

IRHA Cyclist Sticker

Members are advised that the Association has available cyclist stickers creating awareness of passing a HGV on the inside. The stickers are of a high print quality and therefore should maintain their finish long after they are affixed to the back of a vehicle.



There is no charge to members for obtaining these stickers and if you wish to obtain a quantity please contact IRHA head-office.

Load Securing

Many members will have experienced roadside enforcement in respect to load securing. The subject matter is open to much interpretation as there is essentially no legal 'blueprint' or specific reference material that haulage operators can utilise. There are numerous guidance notes but no one reference point, therefore the matter poses problems for haulage operators.

At the recent IRHA conference in the Slieve Russell Hotel, one of the Associations patrons, 'Dennison Trailers' had on display a load restraint system.

The Dennison load restraint system was well received by members present at our

conference with a number of orders placed. The particular restraint system in question is very keenly priced, and just as importantly, can be easily fitted retrospectively to a semi-trailer. It can be easily removed where equipment is sold or is no longer in use.



The system that Dennison are offering; the 'Guardian Cargo Restraint System', is designed in the UK and is VOSA compliant. If you are interested in fitting such a load securing system. Please contact John Browne on 045 90 60 22.

Driver Walk-around Checks

With regard to a drivers daily walk-around vehicle checks, a recent query sought to clarify if it was feasible for a driver to conduct his walk-around check at the end of the day as opposed to the beginning of the day.

The key obligation is that walk-around checks are undertaken and defects reported and rectified before the vehicle is used. The Regulations specify that the vehicle walk-around check is undertaken before the vehicle is driven in a public place.

"In cases where there is a change of driver during the day, each intending driver must carry out his or her own visual check of the vehicle prior to driving the vehicle."

If the driver of the vehicle concerned completes the walk-around check as part of the post trip routine rather than a pre-trip inspection, then this is an acceptable practice provided the vehicle is subject to a walk-around check in each 24 hour period and the vehicle concerned is next driven by him or her within 24 hours of that check. A person is not required to conduct a check of the same vehicle more than once in any 24 hour period.

In cases where there is a change of driver during the day, each intending driver must carry out his or her own visual check of the vehicle prior to driving the vehicle. A driver is responsible for the vehicle/combination of vehicles which he/she is driving. It is not

sufficient that a walk-around check has been carried out by another driver earlier in the day. The exception to this general rule is where the same driver has already carried out the visual checks in the period of 24 hours immediately preceding the driving of the vehicle.

The above is intended to provide a flavour of how the RSA would intend on enforcing this element and therefore is not to be viewed as being a legal interpretation of the requirements specified in SI 348 of 2013.

RSA Consultation

The RSA recently launched a public consultation on proposals to make it compulsory for a breakdown emergency pack to be carried in all vehicles. In the emergency pack it is proposed that a first aid kit, high visibility vest, a breakdown triangle and a torch must be included.



At present, the legal requirement in respect to HGVs is to have in the vehicle an advance warning triangle, the presence of which is already checked at the CVRT. The legal basis for provision of an advance warning triangle in a HGV arises from Article 38 Road Traffic (Lighting of Vehicles) Regulations 1963.

It is therefore proposed that a first aid kit, a torch and a high visibility vest be introduced as compulsory for HGVs. As part of this consultation process, consideration is being given to mandating these additional items for a) new HGV's registered from the 1st of January 2016 or b) for both new and existing HGV's from the 1st of July 2016.

The IRHA has responded to this consultation process stating that it does not have any objection to a torch, high visibility vest and first aid kit becoming compulsory for HGVs in the existing fleet. The vast majority of vehicles will already have such items in the vehicle cab in the interests of the driver, therefore the Association does not believe that the additional three items will be an onerous cost versus the road safety and health and safety benefits for your driver.

Norway – Minimum Wage Requirement

As of the 1st of July 2015, Norway introduced a minimum wage requirement that affects out-of-state haulage operators carrying out operations in Norway, including foreign undertakings that post employees to Norway in connection with temporary services.

The Regulations apply to all employees carrying out freight transport by road with a vehicle 3.5 tonne or greater. The Regulation applies to employees posted from abroad. All employees falling within the scope of the regulations shall have a minimum hourly wage of NOK 158.32 = €17.73 (as of 14-7-15).

“The IRHA is opposed to the considerable financial strain this measure will place on out-of-state vehicles entering Norway and affected by this measure.”

The IRHA, in conjunction with colleagues in Brussels and the Norwegian haulage association have compiled a ‘Q & A’ document in order to try and provide some degree of clarity. In addition, an official document has been provided by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority and a copy of both references can be sourced from IRHA head-office.

The IRHA is opposed to the considerable financial strain this measure will place on out-of-state vehicles entering Norway and affected by this measure. Representations by the Association are continuing at European level opposing the application of the minimum wage rate to Irish operators, least of all when the minimum wage rate is astronomical in comparison to the minimum hourly rate in Ireland.

Further updates on this subject matter will be provided as soon as possible.

Germany Minimum Wage Requirement

Further to numerous notes provided to members following the introduction of a national minimum wage in Germany, it is

important to highlight that while the infringement case between the EC and Germany is on-going, the pending procedure does not suspend the obligations in relation to the minimum wage law and it remains in force.



In order to avoid any inconvenience, the IRHA advises that road haulage operators continue to meet the legal requirements as they currently stand. If members wish to adopt an alternative strategy and not submit the necessary documentation it is entirely at your own discretion. In this respect, the first period of registration ended as of the 30th of June. Furthermore, members must inform the German authorities of any new drivers that are being added to the submission.

On a related matter, it is important to note that slightly amended forms have been provided for non-German transport operators prior to deploying their drivers on German territory in the context of the minimum wage. The revised forms are available in English and can be sourced from IRHA head-office.

Please note that the new form contains an additional column on page two as regard the number of deployments in Germany. In this column, the operators should fill in how many times the driver will be in Germany in the period for which he is being registered (normally six months). Each period of time between an entry to German territory and the consecutive exit is to be counted as one deployment. It may be necessary to replace the six month registration with several ones for a shorter period given it may not be possible to give a sensible estimate for a period of six months in advance.

This is preliminary information given to assist operators and will be confirmed at a later stage as soon as an official answer from the German customs authority is forthcoming.

International Operators

Port of Calais:

As of the 14th of July, the Port of Calais remains partially blocked but the traffic is free-flowing. The route remains under serviced to the tune of four ferry's being out-of-action. The traffic is expected to remain extremely heavy over the coming weeks.

The Association is continuing to make representations at European Level, via the Department of Justice and our MEPs, as to the continued and ever growing threat to the safety of Irish HGV drivers in Calais. The IRHA continues to closely monitor the situation.



Port of Calais

UK - 'Operation STACK':

'Operation STACK', an emergency measure to queue HGVs on the M20 to avoid causing gridlock across Kent's road network, is on-going.

Members are reminded to strictly follow the procedure of joining the back of the queue which will then enable you to be issued with an 'Operation STACK' sticker that in-turn allows your vehicle to move down into the port when the vehicle reaches the front of the queue.

Kent Police are authorised to turn around any driver who does not have a sticker and this can cause problems as arguments take place between drivers and the police and the queue is held up. This then results in the ferries leaving port at a reduced capacity which is obviously having the knock-on effect of holding up traffic and resulting in 'Operation STACK' remaining in place.

Stickers are distributed from Junction 8 to those who have queued and not to those that have driven past all waiting vehicles.

Cross-Channel freight queues and 'Operation STACK' are likely to return later this week as

under-capacity at the Port of Dover, resulting from the continuing French ferry workers' dispute, is exposed by heavy freight days combined with a rush of traffic generated by UK holidaymakers heading for the European mainland.

Observers note that the situation could be exploited by the seamen's union SMN, which is behind the partial closure of the Port of Calais and who could decide to re-instate a total blockade at the Channel port in order to give fresh impetus to further their demands.

UK - Dartford Crossing:

A new traffic safety system has been implemented on the Dartford Crossing and important related information for drivers of goods vehicles can be sourced from IRHA head-office.

United Kingdom:

As of April this year, the UK Government introduced exit checks at all ports and airports. The UK government requires Eurotunnel to gather information on the identity of every person leaving the country via the Channel Tunnel and pass this information to the UK border force.

The trials conducted to date have proved to be successful and in order to avoid unnecessary delays for your drivers, it is advisable that they carry a valid passport or ID card with them at all times when on the terminal and present it opened at the relevant page when requested by the port agents. The exit checks will take place at the frontier post after check-in.

Eurotunnel:

As part of a major investment programme to accommodate higher volumes of traffic on both terminals, Eurotunnel report that the tunnel works are progressing well and on schedule.



Eurotunnel

As part of this construction work and for safety reasons, the access road to the Eurotunnel from the A20 was closed as of the 29th of June and this will be the case for approximately seven weeks. During this time, all traffic will be redirected to the M20 so that a vehicle can re-join the terminal accordingly. All diversions will be clearly signposted. The main traffic accessing the Eurotunnel terminal from Junction 11A off the M20 motorway will not be affected.

France:

As of the 1st of July 2015, it is forbidden for all drivers to wear any device capable of emitting sound in their ear. This applies to all road users driving with a steering wheel (truck, car) or a handlebar (motorbike, scooter, moped, and bicycle).

The prohibition applies not only to telephone conversations but also to music and radio whenever the sound passes through a device in contact with the ears.

This is a class 4 offence incurring a fine of €135.

This decree complements the existing prohibition from holding a phone in one's hand while driving. Devices fitted in the vehicle i.e. without an earpiece and not requiring handling, remain acceptable while driving.

France:

As of the 1st of January 2016, the requirement to carry a high visibility vest will be extended to all road users, including drivers of 2, 3 or 4 axle vehicles without bodywork. The wearing of a high visibility vest will be mandatory in the case of an emergency stop and the high visibility vest should be yellow or orange and meet Standard EN 471.

There are three requirements in respect to this legislative change: 1) to have in your possession 2) wear when necessary and 3) be able to present the high visibility vest at roadside checks, in addition to carrying a self-standing warning triangle.

An €11 fine will be levied if a high visibility vest is not carried on-board the vehicle and failure to wear the high visibility vest in the case of an emergency stop will incur a fine of €135.

The driver will be penalised but the driving licence will not be affected.

Germany:

On the 26th of March 2015, the German Parliament adopted an expansion of the country's infrastructure charging system for trucks to 1100 km of Federal Highways, applicable as of the 1st of July 2015.

Furthermore, as of the 1st of October 2015 all vehicles between 7.5 tonnes and 12 tonnes will be included in the road charging system. New tariffs have been established and they consist, on the one hand, of charges for the use of infrastructure and, on the other hand, of charges for air pollution.

The axle class of the vehicle (2, 3, 4 or 5) is referenced for the amount to be paid for the infrastructure use.

Transport companies which are frequently operating on the roads concerned should register at Toll Collect and should place an On-Board Unit (OBU) in their vehicles. For more information contact head office.

Greece:

Members with an international load travelling to Greece should bear in mind that they need to carry cash with them in order to buy fuel and other necessities. The maximum amount of money permitted from ATM's is €60 per day, with queues at ATM's expected to be very long, especially in larger cities.

Trade activity is very low as companies need to pre-pay for goods and any costs related to the order by cash.

Regarding customs operations, no issues have as yet been reported and the transit of vehicles continues as normal.

Driving Restrictions: A revised listing of driving restrictions has become available for Spain and Slovakia and can be sourced from IRHA head-office.

Commercial Vehicle Roadworthiness Testing

Members are advised that you can now apply on-line to the Road Safety Authority for a replacement certificate of roadworthiness (CRW) where a CRW is lost, stolen or destroyed.

To apply on-line for a replacement CRW, the registered owner of the vehicle should log onto www.cvrt.ie. CRWs will only be issued to the registered owner of the vehicle. To use the system, vehicle owners will need the vehicle registration number along with the date of first registration of the vehicle. A fee of €7 applies and payments via the on-line system must be made using credit or debit cards.

The on-line portal does not allow the details of the registered owner or address of a vehicle to be changed. Changes of registered ownership or address of a vehicle are dealt with by forwarding your vehicle registration certificate for amendment to the Department of Transport, Shannon, Co Clare.

Offer of Work

1. Transportation of a load of full computer cabinets weighing 1000 kg each is required to be transported to Sweden on a weekly basis commencing this October. The computer cabinets must be secured within the vehicle during transportation. For further details please contact Alan on 087 255 4337
2. Operator to transport a load of shellfish from Dungarvan to London a couple of times a week. For further information please contact Ray 087 329 8714.



Drivers Required: As is widely known throughout the industry, there is a shortage of competent and available HGV drivers. Two members in particular urgently require full time drivers to support their business operation. The offer of work relates to articulated vehicles engaging in national transport.

1. Member one can be contacted on 086 250 7563 - Brian
2. Member two can be contacted on 087 258 8610 - Sean

Close Brothers Finance

Close Brothers Commercial Finance has added operating lease to their suite of products.

This is welcome news for many firms looking for new ways to fund their operations. According to the Close Brothers Business Barometer, a quarterly survey that canvasses the opinion of MD's and company owners on a range of subjects, almost a third of Irish businesses plan to expand between now and 2016.

Adrian Madden, from Close Brothers Commercial Finance explains more: "We're really excited to now offer operating lease as a finance option. It allows a company the full use of an asset, such as a commercial vehicle/ plant and machinery/tractor or trailer, without having to purchase it themselves.

"Operating lease is a rental agreement between Close Brothers, the customer and a preferred third party supplier and the lease period is for a fraction of the asset's useful life, typically between one to five years.

"It therefore means the customer pays Close Brothers directly for the use of the asset over the term agreed and is also responsible for its maintenance and insurance.

"At the end of the lease term, the asset is returned to, and disposed by, the third party supplier, who will also recover the residual value the agreement was based upon."

For further details on the service available from Close Brothers Finance please contact Adrian Madden on 087 170 1101.



Topaz - IRHA Corporate Partner

Topaz has concluded another exciting chapter in its charity drive announcing a total donation of €360,000 to its charity partner Aware.



Over the past three years Ireland's leading fuel and convenience retailer has exceeded its charity targets by pledging the sum to the voluntary organisation which works to provide support, education and information services to people impacted by depression.

The funding for the partnership stemmed from a number of different areas which included forecourt fundraisers across the company's service stations, charity fun days, corporate events, the Play or Park loyalty programme and also Aware's national events such as the Aware Christmas Run which Topaz staff have partaken in over the past 3 years.

The total of €360,000 which has been raised over the past three years has exceeded the targets set by both organisations when the partnership was first announced in 2012. The funding has been crucial for Aware in maintaining and developing its depression and related-mood disorder support services over the past three years. Aware strives to reach as many people as possible, by providing online support options as well as face-to-face options to really make a difference in the lives of people who are faced with depression.



According to Aware CEO Dominic Layden, the support from Topaz has given the organisation great growth opportunities over the past number of years when their support to Irish communities has been needed more than ever.

Dominic Layden, of Aware said: "Depression and mental health issues are something which face every family at some point in life. Working with Topaz since 2012 has been a really wonderful experience and their support has enabled Aware to reach out to families' right across the country at a time when many were impacted by financial constraints, emigration and other significant life challenges. A very sincere thanks is due to

everyone involved - Topaz staff and customers throughout Ireland - who made this partnership possible and helped to raise these funds for Aware's work. We greatly appreciate your support for our work."

Gillian McGowran, Marketing Manager of Topaz Energy added: "With over 330 stores nationwide, we are at the heart of communities right across Ireland and we know the value of the vital support services that Aware provide. Mental health and depression in particular are two very important issues in Irish society and with the great work of Aware, many lives have been changed for the better. We're privileged to have been a supporter of their work with this partnership over the past three years, building for a better future."

"I'd also like to thank the wide network of Topaz staff who have been hugely supportive in their efforts as part of this charity initiative and without them, we wouldn't have been able to reach the fantastic target that we celebrate here today."



IRHA President Verona Murphy recently met with Mrs Mary McQuaid wife of one of the founding members of the IRHA Mr Sean McQuaid.

IRHA Corporate Partners

