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# Down Recorder

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DOWN DISTRICT'S TOP SELLING WEEKLY

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## news

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# By-pass boost from builders

## LOCAL developers are prepared to join forces to construct a major new link road in Downpatrick.

In an unprecedented display of solidarity, a number of builders have indicated they are prepared to build the new road linking the Rathkeltair and Ballyhornan roads to free up huge swathes of land for new housing.

Developers believe the move can help kick start the flagging construction industry, provide a timely boost for the local economy and take vehicles away from the congested town centre. But they are looking to Roads and Planning Service officials for help.

Builders want roads officials to be provided with the money they need to determine the definitive route of the so-called western by-pass outlined in the Down Area Plan and for a detailed ground condition survey to be carried out.

In addition, developers want planners to look favourably upon applications for new housing along the route of the by-pass and assurances they will not be asked to build the link road in its entirety before any new houses can be constructed.

Representatives from a number of building firms met with the district's most senior roads official last week and developers now hope

David  
By Telford

Stormont Minister, Conor Murphy, will seize the initiative and help progress the construction of the by-pass.

One of the hurdles developers have to overcome is the fact that not all of the land along the route of the by-pass is in their possession. One suggestion which has been floated is that if deals for this land can't be reached, it could be vested to allow both the new road and housing schemes to progress.

A spokesman for one developer who owns 40 acres of land close to the Ardfern estate at the Saul Road said builders are willing to move on the link road issue, provided they are given some encouragement.

"Builders are looking for a common sense approach on this issue. It has been suggested the new link road should be built from start to finish before any houses are constructed, but this sim-

ply isn't going to happen," he said.

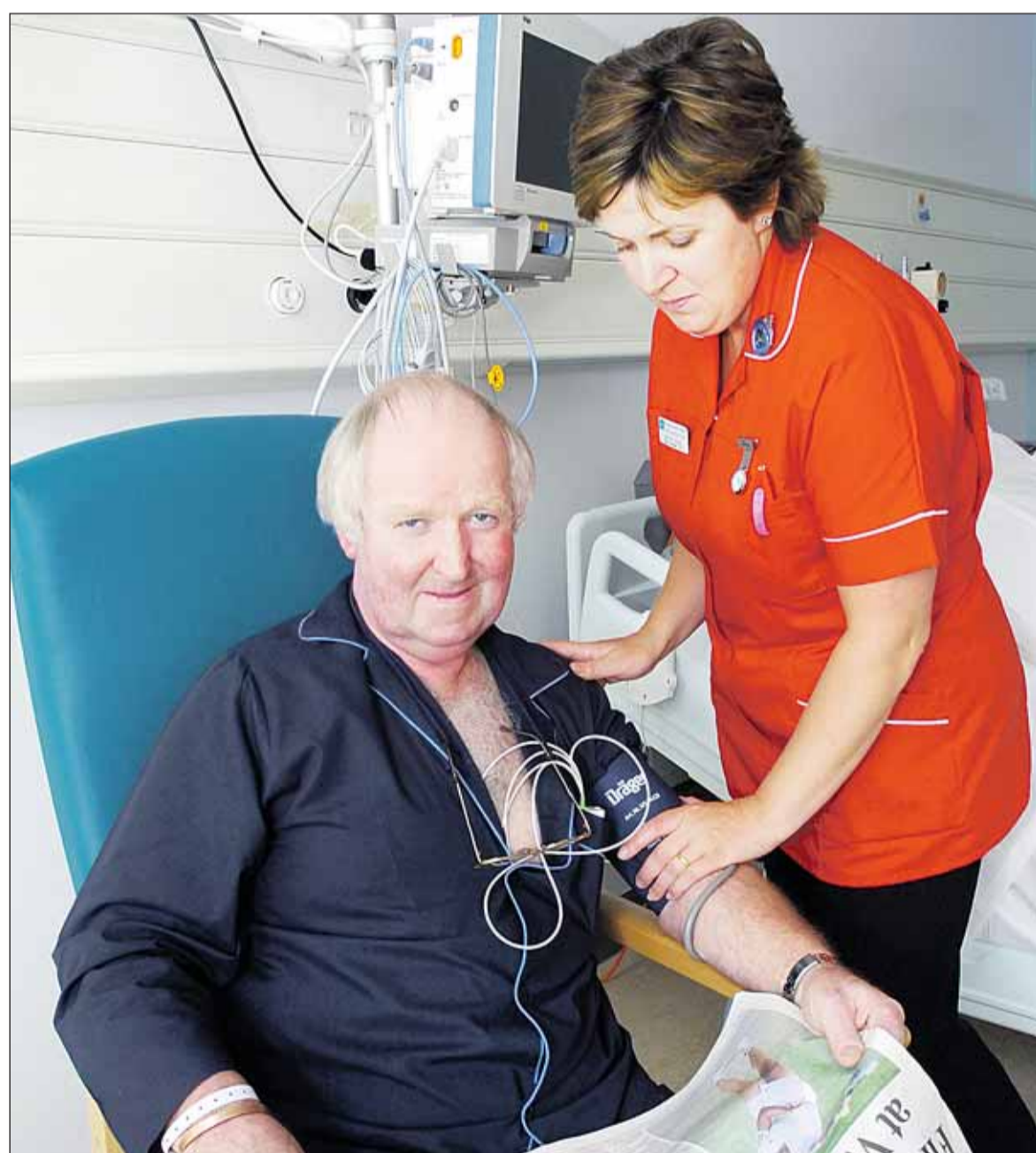
"The economics of such a scenario do not add up. Building houses as the road progresses is the sensible way forward. The definitive route of the proposed new road has not yet been defined and it's crucial this happens as soon as possible."

Local politicians, who last week highlighted the urgency of defining the route of the by-pass and allowing new homes to be built along it and are also seeking a meeting with Mr. Murphy.

Downpatrick councillor, Éamonn Mac Con Midhe, who raised the link road issue at a meeting of Down Council, said the local authority fought an intensive campaign to have more new houses built in Downpatrick.

"The opportunity which the new link road presents must not be squandered. We need to develop the town's roads infrastructure and this will make a major contri-

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**FIRST PATIENT** — Castlewellan man, Mr. Charles Pritchard, who was the first patient to be admitted to the new £64m Downe Hospital which opened last Sunday morning after a 40-year community campaign. With Mr. Pritchard at the hospital's coronary care unit is ward sister, Joanne Carson. Full coverage of the opening starts on page 29. Photo: PHILIP KELLY

## Killyleagh mob damage

A MOB went on the rampage in Killyleagh last weekend.

Trouble erupted around 4am on Saturday morning at the Catherine Street and Irish Street areas when a number of people were woken by disturbances outside their homes.

Windows at the Drop-In Centre

were smashed and a number of cars were also targeted by the men who are believed to have been drinking.

Several car windscreens were damaged by the men as they made

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