

## Northern Ireland councils head to the top

Councils throughout Northern Ireland were celebrating at the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle as the winners of the last night in the Northern Ireland Local Government Awards for 2009 announced by broadcaster Lynda Bryans.

All local councils in Northern Ireland were invited to make a submission for the awards highlighting the best services, initiatives, staff and councillors from their council. A total of 68 submissions were received across the 10 categories. The high standards reflected the many projects and individuals who often go unrecognised in our communities.

Paul O'Brien, Chief Executive of APSE said *'No council can afford to ignore developments made by their fellow councils. Tonight we have seen many examples of new projects and initiatives, and an outstanding commitment to service delivery.'* He added

*"These awards are a great way to network and learn from others at a time when we all need to be aware how others in the sector are looking at services. Councils in Northern Ireland are making an enormous contribution to continually improving local services'.*

Cllr John Mathews, NILGA President said *"We all know that councils play a vital part in local community life and that the services they provide are fundamental to the way we live our lives. It is important that people know that money is being spent effectively, that innovation and excellent service delivery is alive and well in local councils and that there are individuals who are prepared to go beyond the call of duty to provide public services."* He added *"The second year of the awards has been as impressive as the first and I am sure they are now established as a highlight in the local government calendar"*

- The Northern Ireland Local Government Awards were introduced in 2008 and there were 68 submissions made by local councils across ten award categories.
- The 8 main organisations which support local government in Northern Ireland have come together to establish the awards and these are APSE, Local Government Staff Commission NI, Local Government Training Group, NILGA, SOLACE NI, William Johnson Memorial Trust, the National Association of Councillors and the Women's Development Steering Group.
- The awards were sponsored by Scotshield, Red Box Media and the Municipal Journal
- The awards reflect a culture of improvement in local government in Northern Ireland with a series of independent judging panels identifying the finalists and then the winner for each category

### List of winners and finalists by category

#### Best Local Authority Service Team of the Year - Sponsored by APSE

**Winner** – Belfast City Council Community Safety Team

Cookstown District Council - Ballyronan Marina

Newtownabbey Borough Council - Zest Fitness

### **Change Champions in Practice - Sponsored by Local Government Staff Commission NI**

**Winner** – Coleraine Borough Council - Causeway Kids Cuisine

Coleraine Borough Council - Wildcats Activ8

Limavady Borough Council – Team Success and Culture Change at Roe Valley

### **Innovative HR in Practice - Sponsored by Local Government Staff Commission NI**

**Winner** - Armagh City and District Council – A muscular approach to managing absence

Omagh District Council – Innovative and Integrated HR

### **Innovative Training Initiative - Sponsored by Local Government Training Group**

**Winner** - Omagh District Council – Delta a force to be reckoned with...

Ards Borough Council – Excellence Driver Training

Lisburn City Council – Unlocking potential...delivering excellence

### **Best Initiative by a Councillor - Sponsored by the National Association for Councillors**

**Winner** - Cllr. Dermot Curran - Down District Council

Alderman Sydney Anderson – Craigavon Borough Council

Alderman Stephen Moutray – Craigavon Borough Council

### **Best Joint Initiative between Councils - Sponsored by SOLACE NI**

**Winner** – Cafe Culture – Good Relations Conference - Coleraine Borough Council, Derry City Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Limavady Borough Council, Magherafelt District Council, Moyle District Council, OFMDFM

Blackwater Regional Partnership – Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council, Armagh City and District Council, Monaghan County Council

East Border Region Tourism Partnership – Ards Borough Council, Armagh City and District Council, Banbridge District Council, Craigavon Borough Council, Down District Council, Louth County Council, Meath County Council, North Down Borough Council, Monaghan County Council, Newry and Mourne District Council

### **Employee of the Year - Sponsored by William Johnston Memorial Trust**

**Winner** – Ian Beaney – North Down Borough Council

Ciara Lowe – Newry and Mourne District Council

Katrina McGuire – Lisburn City Council

### **Best Sustainable Development Initiative - Sponsored by NILGA**

**Winner** – Belfast City Council – Mayor’s Big Clean up

Cookstown District Council – Willow Biomass Project

Larne Borough Council – Sustainable Living Magazine

### **Best Improvement Project - Sponsored by NILGA**

**Winner** – Belfast City Council – Ulster Hall Redevelopment

Belfast City Council – Building Control Partnership

North Down Borough Council – Bangor Castle Walled Garden

### **Women in Local Councils Award - Sponsored by Women’s Development Steering Group**

**Winner** – Ards Borough Council and North Down Borough Council – Visible Women

Craigavon Borough Council – Olga Murtagh

Derry city Council – Mainstreaming Gender Equality – we’ve made a difference!

**Ends**

**Notes**

APSE is the association for public service excellent, a not for profit organisation working with over 300 local authorities throughout the UK

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