

Congratulations

- To Antrim Construction Company's Wesley Murdock who received an award for Best Site Manager from NHBC. This award was for ACC's site at Carnbeg development and was the Northern Ireland final winner. Best wishes to Wesley and ACC as they proceed to the overall finals in London.
- To the Patton Group who have been short-listed for the Construction Employers Federation and industry trade magazine Specify Construction Excellence Awards.
- To Montgomery's who picked up the prestigious 'Best Restaurant Environment' (non-licensed) award at the Business Excellence Awards. Montgomery's acknowledged the help and support that they had received from The Loop Training Consultancy.
- To KJ McAtamney's who scooped the top two places for County Antrim in this year's NI Pork and Bacon National Sausage Week.
- To McBurney Transport from Moorfields who swept the boards at the Export and Freight Transport and Logistics Awards in Belfast. The company won two Haulier of the year awards – the first time any company has done so.
- To Nicholl Brothers who came runners-up in the UK Sky Independent Retailers Awards. The store was the only Northern Ireland finalist at the awards which aim to reward achievement and promote excellence.
- To CIGA Healthcare Ltd who fought off stiff competition to be crowned a Regional Winner in the 2006 HSBC Start-Up Stars Awards – the UK's premier showcase for the most promising start-up businesses and the inspirational entrepreneurs behind them.
- To the village of Broughshane which has been named Best Kept Large Village in Northern Ireland. This award is in recognition of their efforts to protect and improve the local environment.

**Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry
would like to wish all our members as well as all of Ballymena
a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**



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Ballymena

Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Newsletter



Foreword by President William McKean

This edition of the Chamber's Newsletter is dominated by the highly successful Business Awards which were held on Thursday 26th October in Tullyglass Hotel. The evening was one to remember and served to highlight all that is best about Ballymena. Congratulations to all those who won and many thanks to all who helped in any way to make this evening so successful.

I hope you find this Newsletter to be of interest and can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very prosperous and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year

BALLYMENA BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

At a glittering ceremony in Tullyglass House Hotel on Thursday 26th October the names of the winners in this year's excellence awards were announced. A record attendance of almost 430 packed into Tullyglass for a superb banquet. The evening was compered by Wendy Austin and the atmosphere was electric as the awards ceremony began.

This is the 4th Year that Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry have organised the business awards and Chamber President William McKean said "We are delighted to see such an excellent turnout this evening. I would like to thank all our sponsors, especially our 2 joint principal sponsors, Michelin and Ballymena Borough Council. Ballymena has long been recognised as one of the premier shopping towns in Northern Ireland and the number and quality of the entries this year certainly reflect that. Not only is Ballymena a premier shopping town, these awards illustrating that it is a great business town."

The Mayor of Ballymena, Alderman James Alexander said "On behalf of Council I wish to congratulate all the businesses who received awards at the gala evening. The event proved a tremendous success and certainly was successful in showcasing the Ballymena Borough as the place to do business".

A raffle was held with the money raised going to the N.I.Hospice and as a result of the generosity of all present, £3275 was raised.





James and Sarah Perry of Gloonan Gallery, winners of the Retail Sector – Independent Retailers, Customer Service Award, are seen here receiving the Award from Colin Massey of Sponsors Ulster Bank



Andy and Joan Hillen of the Fenaghy Vet Clinic, winner of the Customer Service Award in the Service and Hospitality Sector, are seen here receiving the Award from Seamus Doyle of Sponsors First Trust



Caroline McKinney and Patrice Canning of Marks & Spencers, receive the Customer Service Award for the Retail Sector (Multiple Retailers), from Austin McGillian of Award Sponsor ACE Fixings.



Award Sponsor David Patton of The Patton Group presents the Best Eating Establishment (Licensed) Award to Dominic McAteer of the Blackstone Restaurant



Dominic and Mary McAteer from Blackstone Restaurant receive the Best Licensed Premises Award from Edgar MacLaine of Sponsors Patterson Electronics



Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry President, William McKean presents the Best Eating Establishment (Non-Licensed) Award to Janice Kenny of winners Montgomery's



Church Street Open Day

Once again Church Street was the centre of attention when the annual Open Day was held on Thursday 9th November. Thousands of customers flocked to Ballymena to avail themselves of the genuine bargains on offer. The day was further improved by an outside broadcast with Seven FM which added to the carnival atmosphere. This event does much to promote the best of Ballymena and needs to be developed to embrace the rest of the town.



Powerful Turnout for NIE Ballymena Breakfast

Many local business people turned out to the Adair Arms recently to hear from Northern Ireland Electricity how they could cut energy costs.

The breakfast briefing, which was held by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Northern Ireland Electricity, had the theme 'Three Steps to Lower Energy Bills'.

William Mc Kean, President of Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the good turnout. He said: "This is one of a series of presentations on topical subjects which we are organizing for our members.

"With increasing costs and interest rate rises, it is paramount to look at reducing overheads," he said.

NIE's Business Support Manager Alison Moore then briefed the attendees on how to reduce their energy bills. She said: "The great turnout shows that Ballymena business people are switched onto reducing energy use and costs." Alison then went on to explain how being on the right NIE tariff and paying by direct debit can reduce energy bills. One of the attendees, Audrey Wales, formerly of 'News Rack' in the town said she could bear witness to this. She added: "When we owned our business we saved up to 20% off the cost of our NIE bill simply by changing tariff and switching to paying by direct debit."

If you would like to sign up to NIE's direct debit or request a free tariff check, call NIE on 08457 455 455 (business lines open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm).

CHAMBER STRENGTHENS LINKS WITH MOREHEAD, KENTUCKY

During her recent trip to Washington DC as part of a Sister Cities delegation, Audrey Wales, a past President of Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry undertook a series of meetings to promote the Borough of Ballymena.

Audrey was also fortunate enough to visit Morehead, Kentucky which is Ballymena's sister city. While there she considered it vital to investigate areas of mutual benefit.



Retirement Dinner for Mervyn Rankin

On Thursday 9th November, Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised a lunch in the Leighinmohr House Hotel to mark the retirement of Mr. Mervyn Rankin as Chief Executive of Ballymena Borough Council. The event was well attended by chamber members and Mr. Rankin and his wife June were presented with gifts to mark the occasion. Mervyn Rankin has been a faithful servant of Ballymena and a loyal and helpful friend of the Chamber. We wish both him and his wife well in his retirement.



CLIC Sargent Fashion Show at Michelin

A fashion show was organized by CLIC Sargent with children modelling clothes by Okadi and Mothercare. The event was held at Michelin Athletic Club and the compere for the evening was the Chamber's very own Vice President Alison Moore. Many thanks to all who contributed to this very worthy cause.



The Best Business Premises Award was won by McKillens (Ballymena) and pictured is Thomas McKillen and Esther McKillen with Neil Holland from Award Sponsor, Firmus Energy



Ballymena Business Centre's John Stuart presents the award for Best New Business to John McNeill and Irwin Armstrong from CIGA Healthcare Ltd



Export Award went to Teal Safety Ltd, Stephen McCully seen here being presented with the Award by Des Gartland of sponsor InvestNI



The Excellence in People Development/Training Practice Award was won this year by the Patton Group and Shauna DuPreez is seen receiving the award from Paul Crean of sponsors First Choice Selection Services Ltd



ACE Fixings Managing Director Austin McGillian receives The Excellence in Business Practice Award from Colin Steele of sponsors Northern Bank



Ashgrove Contract Furniture Ltd was the proud winner of the Excellence in Manufacturing Award sponsored by Michelin. The picture shows Liam Dempsey of Ashgrove receiving the Award from Graham Whitehurst of Michelin



Michelin Development Ltd sponsored the Best Small Business Award which was won by Mercer Electrical Distributors Ltd. Seen here with Graham Whitehurst and Cecil Caldwell of Michelin are Ian and Kirsty Mercer



The Best Marketing Initiative was sponsored by Black Advertising and was presented by Johnny Black to Thomas McKillen and James Dunlop of McKillens (Ballymena)



Mr David Patton receives the Commitment to Ballymena Award from Alderman James Alexander and Ballymena Borough Chamber Vice President Alison Moore

AWARD	SPONSOR	WINNER
Customer Service Retail Sector – Independent	Ulster Bank	Gloonan Gallery, Ahoghill
Customer Service – Service & Hospitality	First Trust Bank	Fenaghy Vet Clinic, Galgorm
Customer Service Retail Sector – Multiple	Ace Fixings	Marks & Spencer, Fairhill
Best Eating Establishment – Licensed	The Patton Group	Blackstone Restaurant
Best Licensed Premises	Patterson Electronics	Blackstone Bar
Best Eating Establishment – Non Licensed	Chamber of Commerce	Montgomerys
Business Premises	Firmus energy	McKillens Shoes
Best New Business	Ballymena Business Centre	CIGA Healthcare Ltd.
Export Business of the Year	Invest NI	Teal Safety Ltd.
Excellence in People Development/Training	First Choice Selection Services Ltd.	The Patton Group
Excellence in Business Practice	Northern Bank Ltd	Ace Fixings
Excellence in Manufacturing	Michelin	Ashgrove Contract Furniture Ltd.
Best Small Business	Michelin Development Ltd.	Mercers Electrical Distributors Ltd.
Best Marketing Initiative	Black Advertising	McKillens Shoes
Best Business Website	McKillens Shoes	First Trust Bank
Best Business Growth	Bank of Ireland	New World Developments
Corporate Social Responsibility	Gallaher Group Plc.	J.Robinson & Sons Ltd.
Employee of the Year	Fairhill Shopping Centre	James Dunlop(McKillens Shoes)
Commitment to Ballymena Award	Ballymena Borough Council	David Patton

Ballymena builds global bridges

During October, Ballymena was showcased to 70 international visitors when it hosted the 'Sister Cities International' annual retreat. Sister Cities International is a non-profit making network that strengthens partnerships between US and international communities. The visitors were treated to a walkabout around the shops in Ballymena by local councillors and Chamber members and then attended a gala dinner in The Ross Park Hotel.

Chamber member Audrey Wales stressed that "This trip has done Ballymena a lot of good. These visitors were from all over America, and are going home with a good impression of Ballymena. They really enjoyed the shops in Ballymena, some said they preferred it to Belfast, because there is such a diverse range of shops here".



Mark McKeown and Seamus Doyle of First Trust Bank, winners of the Best Business Website, receive their award from Thomas McKillen of Award sponsors McKillens (Ballymena)



The Best Business Growth Award, which was sponsored by Bank of Ireland, was won by New World Developments, whose Managing Director Austin McGillian is seen receiving the award from Alastair Kane from the bank of Ireland



The Corporate Responsibility Award, sponsored by Gallaher Group Plc was won by J Robinson & Sons Ltd. Tony Murray of Gallaher presents the award to winners James and Janet Robinson.



Employee of the Year Award went to James Dunlop of McKillens (Ballymena) Ltd. James and his wife Edith are seen receiving the award from Jim McGookin, Centre Manager of Fairhill Shopping Centre

Awards Benefits Northern Ireland Hospice



The Charity Raffle and Collection held on the Business Excellence Awards evening raised £3275, which was presented to Mr Jim McGookin, Treasurer of Ballymena Area Hospice Support Group.

Both Northern Ireland Hospice and Ballymena Borough Chamber would like to thank all those who contributed for their generosity in support of such a worthwhile cause.

Mr McGookin commented in a letter to the Chamber that "We are committed to representing Northern Ireland Hospice Care in our community and depend on local people to help us in our efforts to raise funds for Hospice"

"On behalf of everyone involved with the Ballymena Area Support Group for Northern Ireland Hospice Care, I would like to thank you for your generous donation"