

Ballymena
**BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE
AWARDS**
2017

CELEBRATING THE BEST OF BALLYMENA BUSINESS

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR



ORGANISED BY





HOTEL & RESIDENCES

Welcome to the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards

Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry is delighted to present the 2017 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards. The awards seek to give recognition to the hard work and dedication of businesses in the Ballymena area and enable us all to celebrate their success.

Ballymena is widely renowned as the premier shopping town in Northern Ireland, but it is sometimes overlooked that Ballymena has a vibrant and successful industrial base as well. These awards help to celebrate the huge contribution made by our business community. The economic environment has been very tough in the last year, and these awards demonstrate the commitment of individuals and the business excellence that exists in Ballymena and the local villages.

There are 21 awards this year so there is a category to suit everyone – large or small businesses, retail, hospitality or industrial and individual awards as well.

I would like to thank Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for agreeing to be our principal sponsor once again this year. Chamber has an excellent working relationship with Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and I look forward to continuing and indeed building upon this relationship. I would like to thank all other businesses who have sponsored awards or taken an advertisement in the awards brochure.

The judging this year will again be carried out by Insight Mystery Shopping – it is entirely independent of Chamber thereby ensuring the integrity of the awards.

The Gala Awards Evening this year takes place on Thursday 19th October in Tullyglass House Hotel. This is now a major event in the Ballymena business and social calendar, so put the date in your diary now. We promise you an excellent evening, so come along, renew old acquaintances and make new ones but most important – help us celebrate and reward all that is best in business in the Ballymena area.

I wish all entrants every success.



Ronan McCann

President

Ballymena Borough Chamber
of Commerce and Industry



NI Hospice Care is our
chosen charity for 2017

Borough Council's commitment to commercial excellence again underlined

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is delighted and proud to sponsor the hugely prestigious Ballymena Business Excellence Awards.

Council is fully committed to supporting business growth and development, and promoting an environment that encourages and facilitates investment in our Borough.

The message is clear: Ballymena is open for business.

There are undoubted challenges, but Council and the local commercial sector can deliver that growth and prosperity by working together for the good of all.

Our Borough has a strong reputation as a manufacturing heartland and rather than be daunted by those challenges, we have chosen to embrace change and strive to ensure we are ideally positioned to adapt to and thrive in an ever-changing economy.

We have committed to creating a vibrant business culture and we are proactively seeking to build on our strengths in advanced manufacturing and agri-food, while supporting the growth of new industry sectors, including digital, tourism, financial and business services.

Ballymena Chamber of Commerce and Industry is dedicated to a flourishing local economy and has been organising these awards for many years now, which contribute positively to overall economic growth and prosperity.

We recognise this significant contribution and are proud to continue to support these awards which recognise the achievements of our local businesses and business people in helping us all to build a stronger economy for the benefit of all our citizens.

We celebrate the talent, entrepreneurship and ambition of our local business leaders and pay tribute to your unrelenting and inspirational commitment to Ballymena and Mid and East Antrim.



The Mayor
Councillor Paul Reid
Mid and East Antrim
Borough Council



Customer Service Award Retail Sector (Independent Retailer)

Sponsored by First Trust Bank

Shoppers are increasingly looking for a unique shopping experience. This award recognises the independent retailer who can demonstrate individuality, quality service and innovative merchandising based on a keen understanding of their customer base. In particular it rewards excellent personable face to face customer service.

This category will be judged by Mystery Shoppers who will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ Delivering excellent customer service
- ✓ Providing insight in product selection
- ✓ Understanding of the local customer base
- ✓ Exceeding customer expectations
- ✓ Exhibiting a strong visual impact

Independent retailers will be viewed as independent owners with three or less stores. Branded retailers, even if independently owned, will not be accepted in this category.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

First Trust Bank is delighted to sponsor the Customer Service Award Retail Sector.

We at First Trust Bank place major emphasis on building strong customer relationships and delivering a high quality service. We continue to invest in our people, who are our most important asset. This investment is by way of ongoing training and development to ensure that we maintain the high standards of customer service required to grow our business successfully.

We firmly believe that continued good service goes hand-in-hand with continued good business and this award, which will highlight the best of local business, is an ideal way for Ballymena companies to gain recognition, and be rewarded, for their best efforts.

To find out what we can do for your business locally please contact Fiona McCoy at First Trust Bank, 78 Wellington Street, Ballymena

Good luck with your entry.



Customer Service Award Retail Sector (Multiple Retailer)

Sponsored by Power NI

Shoppers are consistently demanding a higher level of service from their retailers and expect a sophisticated store environment. To win this award, multiple retailers must prove that they are focused on their customer's individual needs through their product offering, customer service and store environment.

This category will be judged by Mystery Shoppers who will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ Excellent one on one service
- ✓ Exceeding customer expectations
- ✓ Exceptional design layout and shop format
- ✓ Innovative product range
- ✓ Advantageous store facilities and services

Applications are invited from multiple retailing companies. A multiple retailer will be viewed as a company with four or more branches throughout Northern Ireland.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Power NI is Northern Ireland's number one energy supplier with over 35,000 business customers and hundreds more switching back.

Alan Egner, Commercial Sales and Marketing Manager at Power NI, comments: "We're delighted once again to support Ballymena Chamber and sponsor one of the Customer Service Awards at this year's event.

Good customer service is essential for any business and it is something we pride ourselves in across our Power NI offices in Antrim, Belfast and Omagh. Power NI customers are assured of a friendly, local service and independent research released recently by the Consumer Council NI showed that last year Power NI received the lowest level of formal complaints of any other electricity supplier in NI, for the fifth year running!

We have a long-standing relationship with the Chamber and their Excellence Awards are one of the highlights in the Northern Ireland business calendar. Good luck to all entries and we look forward to a great evening."



Best Use of Digital and/or Social Media Award

Sponsored by Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

This award recognises organisations that demonstrate the best use of digital technology and/or social media to enhance loyalty, promote their services and interact with their customer base.

Judges will be looking for examples of how they have successfully utilised social media through the means of social networking sites, blogs and other forms of viral communication.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Clear objectives
- ✓ Innovation and creativity
- ✓ Evaluation and review
- ✓ Management and implementation
- ✓ Tangible results and success

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

When the Chamber was founded back in 1919 its objectives were to "uphold, protect and promote the general interests of manufacturers, merchants, traders, farmers, fruit growers, scotch mill owners, horse and cattle dealers of Ballymena and the surrounding areas". Whilst business life has changed dramatically the ideals of the Chamber remain as true today as they did over 90 years ago.

Ballymena is renowned for its mix of multi-national and independent businesses and these awards celebrate the best businesses and individuals in the local economy.

Chamber is delighted to sponsor the Best Use of Digital and/or Social Media Award and would like to wish all entrants every success and looks forward to presenting the winner with their trophy at the Gala Evening.



Ballymena

Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Best Eating Establishment Award

Sponsored by RiverRidge

The winning establishment will offer customers an enjoyable eating experience whether they are a restaurant, bistro, hotel or bar. Judges will be looking for an industry leader where service and culinary standards are inspiring.

This category will be judged by Mystery Shoppers who will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ Excellent service and rapport with customers
- ✓ Tempting food offering
- ✓ Ambience and atmosphere
- ✓ Delicious food
- ✓ Exemplary housekeeping

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

RiverRidge is regarded as Northern Ireland's largest independent waste management company.

The company has built a strong reputation for itself through the delivery of sustainable landfill diversion solutions. With a comprehensive range of collection options available, RiverRidge offers an award winning and reliable waste transfer service to over 3,500 customers across 95% of Northern Ireland's postcodes.

Food waste management is paramount in the hospitality sector, RiverRidge has worked closely with this sector to adequately provide a full suite of services to its customers.

The company takes great pride in working with the many businesses in the Ballymena area and as proud sponsor of the Best Eating Establishment Award, RiverRidge is delighted to recognise the very best in the industry.



Best Small Eatery/Coffee Shop Award

Sponsored by firmus energy

This award is designed to attract applications from coffee shops, cafes, sandwich bars and fast food outlets from within the area.

The judges will be looking for a business that delivers excellent customer service and rapport with customers. They will also wish to see evidence of good atmosphere and ambience in attractive premises in addition to a tempting range of food suitable to the needs of its clientele.

This award will be judged by mystery shoppers who will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ Excellent service and rapport with customers
- ✓ Tempting food and drink offering
- ✓ Ambience and atmosphere
- ✓ Delicious food
- ✓ Exemplary housekeeping and layout

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Landmark year as firmus energy pass 1000km milestone

Over the past 11 years, firmus energy has delivered a robust £110 million investment programme having laid over 1100km of natural gas pipeline. This milestone has enabled properties in more than 30 towns, cities and villages across Northern Ireland to benefit from natural gas.

To date, firmus energy has more than 80,000 residential and commercial customers across the province, with over 30,000 of these from areas new to natural gas and the remainder in Belfast who have chosen to switch to firmus energy from their previous supplier.

Those already enjoying the significant benefits of natural gas include; private homes, housing executive properties, some of Northern Ireland's largest manufacturers along with many schools, hospitals and small businesses.



Customer Service Award Service Sector

Sponsored by Riada Resourcing

This award will be presented to the business that has best demonstrated their commitment to delivering exemplary customer service that generates positive and additional business.

This award is open to all service businesses that are committed to offering the highest levels of customer care to each and every customer.

This category will be judged by Mystery Shoppers who will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ A warm welcome
- ✓ Expert professional knowledge
- ✓ Friendly closure
- ✓ Exemplary customer service
- ✓ An attractive environment

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

As previous winners of the customer service category, Riada Resourcing believe in outstanding service and added value for our clients. We are delighted to be supporting the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards.

We recently achieved Investor in People Gold standard, the whole team were thrilled and as a business it confirmed our commitment to quality and excellent customer service, and is key to our continued growth and sustained success.

Riada Resourcing supports clients across Northern Ireland in all major business sectors including, HR, Accountancy, Engineering, Industrial, Sales, Catering and Marketing to name but a few.

Our local experience in sourcing high calibre permanent, contract and temporary staff, allied with our management and personnel services, has enabled Riada to build valuable working relationships and work in partnerships with our clients and candidates. We are large enough to deliver but small enough to care.

We would like to wish all entrants every success and look forward to presenting the award on the Ballymena Chamber's gala evening.

We are Experts in recruitment and specialise in Engineering, Professionals and Industrial. To find out what Riada Resourcing can do for your business please contact Arlene McConaghie on 028 2563 1555 or email arlene@riadaresourcing.com



Customer Service Award Hospitality Sector

Sponsored by Autoline Insurance Group

This award will be presented to a business that has best demonstrated their commitment to delivering exemplary customer service that generates positive and additional business.

This award is open to all hospitality businesses that are committed to offering the highest levels of customer care to each and every customer.

This category will be judged by Mystery Shoppers who will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ A warm welcome
- ✓ An attractive environment
- ✓ Friendly closure
- ✓ Congenial, knowledgeable service
- ✓ Going the extra mile

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Autoline Insurance Group is one of the fastest growing financial services companies offering a broad range of insurance, mortgage and financial products to both personal and business clients across Northern Ireland. Currently employing over 200 staff, Autoline has branches in Ballymena, Coleraine, Downpatrick, Enniskillen and Newry. Customers sit at the very heart of Autoline and as a business, Autoline are renowned for their customer service excellence, offering the highest standard of service in every customer interaction.

Michael Blaney, Managing Director of Autoline Insurance Group said, "We are delighted to be supporting the Ballymena Business Awards for the fifth consecutive year, by sponsoring the Customer Service Award for the Hospitality Sector. Support from local customers is essential for business growth and we are really pleased to see large numbers of local customers enjoying the benefits of moving to, and building relationships with, Autoline. We are also very proud to be part of the Ballymena Business community and we look forward to being involved in recognising and celebrating the very best example of customer service in the hospitality sector in the Borough."

For more information about Autoline Insurance Group please contact 028 2565 2424 or email us at enquiries@autoline.co.uk



Business Premises Award

Sponsored by Fairhill Shopping Centre

The judges will be looking for a business premise design that is fit for purpose, exhibits all-round design and layout excellence and matches the requirements of its customers.

Business premises will be visited by appointment in September 2017.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- ✓ Initial visual impact
- ✓ Fit for purpose
- ✓ Innovation of design
- ✓ Use of materials, textures and colour
- ✓ Use of space
- ✓ Ease of access
- ✓ Quality of materials and finish

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Fairhill Shopping Centre is delighted to sponsor the Business Premises Award at the 2017 Ballymena Business Awards. This award affords us the opportunity to recognise business premises, which demonstrate innovative design & quality finish to ensure customers are presented with a unique and enjoyable shopping experience every time.

Fairhill Shopping Centre, with its distinctive mix of high street names, is the ultimate shopping destination for people of all ages, tastes and budgets. It is always easy to find the freshest new looks with an inspirational selection of fashion brands to choose from, as well as a great choice of restaurants allowing you to take time out from shopping. The centre offers all that is best about high street shopping with over 80,000 visitors per week. Open 7 days a week, there is parking for over 900 cars in our multi-storey car park, with designated spaces for disabled car parking and parent/child parking.

We believe in going the extra mile to maximise added value for our customers and it is for this reason that we are delighted to be associated with the Best Business Premises Award.

We wish all the contestants well and look forward to presenting the award on the evening.



Innovation Award

Sponsored by Robinson's of Ballymena

This Award will be presented to the organisation that can best demonstrate a proven ability to create, nurture, and develop innovations or processes that substantially improve the commercial performance of a company.

Tell us about any new product, initiative, service, facility or campaign that has improved your overall business performance. We want to hear about all innovations whether they are commercial, marketing, operational or environmental. The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Development, planning & objectives
- ✓ Success of the innovation
- ✓ Evaluation
- ✓ Implementation
- ✓ Uniqueness

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

The Innovation Business award made a welcome return last year and Robinson's Supermarket, delighted to be part of the annual Business Excellence Awards for the third year, are the proud sponsor of the category again for 2017. The presentation will be in recognition of those who show true innovation in the field of local business

Robinson's Supermarket is family operated and presents its customers with a unique offering in the independent retail sector of Ballymena. From butchery (McAtamneys) to off sales, fuel to convenience grocery and 'food to go' there is a fulfilling and value for money shop on offer, under one roof. The added advantage of being a Nisa member sees ongoing strong promotions and deals

Again it is an honour to be associated as a sponsor of the Business Excellence Awards and we wish all the entrants the best of luck, both in these awards and in their future business endeavours



Best Business Website Award

Sponsored by GES Group

This award is open to all businesses that have a website. Judges will be looking for an informative business website that successfully engages and excites visitors and possibly also sells to customers.

Judging criteria will take into account ease of navigation, design, accessibility, engagement levels and effective use of modern media techniques.

Judges will be looking for:

- ✓ Accessibility and ease of use
- ✓ Content
- ✓ Engagement and overall appeal
- ✓ Good use of technology
- ✓ Design and graphics
- ✓ Use of modern media techniques

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Established in 1972 as Grants Electrical Services (NI) Ltd., we have grown into GES Group, a leading Electrical and Mechanical Engineering company, serving customers throughout Ireland, the UK, and Europe. Traditionally AC/DC motor rewind specialists, we have developed an extensive product and service portfolio as a market leader, to include: LV/HV installation and maintenance; design, build, and install of distribution and control panels; renewable power systems, and much more.

GES Group is an essential element in maintaining and strengthening power generation, industry, manufacturing, and agri-structure in the UK and Ireland. We are the silent partner to industry and the economy, working for 90% of NIs Top 100 businesses, ensuring electrical and mechanical systems are operational 365 days a year.

We pride ourselves on building strong partnerships with customers, providing power and energy solutions for local SMEs, as well as large multi-nationals, across a diverse range of industries. The most basic plant and machinery, and the most advanced communication networking systems, all rely on a well-designed, maintained, automated and controlled, energy efficient, and mechanically vibration free, steadfast and clean electricity supply – at GES Group, we uniquely specialise in each of these aspects, which combine to build strong and reliable electrical and mechanical power systems.

Using a holistic approach, we provide for all of our customer needs in-house.



Right Place to Work Award

Sponsored by Black Advertising

Is your company a great place to work? Businesses have to fight hard to recruit and retain people and this award aims to highlight those businesses that have really put people at the heart of their overall strategy.

This award is open to all businesses, regardless of size or turnover, that are committed to supporting employees, enhancing employee satisfaction and have demonstrated an overall commitment to its employees at all levels.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Company culture and values
- ✓ Structure for people management
- ✓ Recognition of skills and achievements
- ✓ What makes your organisation a better place to work
- ✓ Commitment to learning and development
- ✓ Employee support

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

At Black Advertising we believe that the way a business projects itself is not merely based on a logo, a colour palette, a website or any other standard branding device. A business is also, and perhaps more significantly, defined by the ethics, values and qualities of the people who represent it and those of the business as a whole.

It gives us great pleasure to support the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards, and in particular to recognise those companies who understand and prioritise these key aspects in the overall development of a positive working environment.

black
A D V E R T I S I N G

The Setting

Mid and East Antrim Borough covers an area of just over 400 square miles extending from the River Bann in the west to the beautiful Antrim coast in the east and includes part of the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

- It is not only beautiful, but welcoming, industrious, and unique.
 - There are three main towns - Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne – and a host of welcoming villages – including many award-winning ones – and rural communities.
 - Commercially, Mid and East Antrim Borough benefits from its strategic location in Northern Ireland; with close proximity to both major airports, the Port of Belfast and the Port of Larne itself.
 - Recently completed roads infrastructure projects, including the opening of the revamped A26 – and other developments in hand – are continuing to boost trade.
 - These fabulous highways allow for better access for international manufacturing – such as the continuing success of Wrightbus and other businesses.
 - Ballymena’s resilient manufacturing base in turn supports local companies and numerous independent retailers across Mid and East Antrim and increasingly, the tourism sector has a greater role to play.
 - Ballymena is known as the Gateway to the Glens and in recent years has attracted major private investment – although natural attractions, such as Slemish – have a value that remain in perpetuity.
- Although the multi-million pound Gobbins cliff path attraction isn’t in the immediate Ballymena area, its worldwide fame and international visitor base contributes strongly to economic prosperity for all of the Borough.
 - Sport really scores for Ballymena too: The Northern Ireland Festival of Golf, part of the NI Open, held at Galgorm, is a case in point. It attracts both a world-wide audience on TV and many thousands of visitors to the area, all of whom provide vital spending for retailers and increasing levels of business for the hospitality sector. The associated Food Festival is also well received.
 - The SuperCupNI (formerly Milk Cup) finals and the many other matches played at the Showgrounds are again increasing the profile of Ballymena and boosting the town’s business status.
 - Another annual tourist fillip comes from the Ballymena Agricultural Show, also held at the Showgrounds – attracting not only the whole range of agricultural interests but also equine enthusiasts and others to this showcase event.



- Retail is of course a major strength within Ballymena, which is one of Northern Ireland's top retail destinations, providing a vibrant mix of both national and independent businesses.
- Ballymena is also benefitting from being the first town in Northern Ireland to vote to establish the town centre as a Business Improvement District (BID).
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is now well established and among many other projects, is already breathing new life into Ballymena's Ecos Centre through a partnership with Catalyst Inc. (formerly the NI Science Park) to develop an Innovation Centre to support the growth of leading global companies.
- The Borough's Local Area Plan is to be published soon with two key strategies, one for economic growth and one for tourism.
- That will dovetail with the work in hand by the Strategic Alliance for Community Planning, whose aims include sustainable jobs and developing tourism potential.



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- 1 Slemish Mountain
 - 2 Shopping in Ballymena
 - 3 Wrightbus manufacturing



Working together to create a better future for all

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk

Most Promising New Business Award

Sponsored by Bank of Ireland

Have you started your own business in the last three years? Is it exceeding expectations? And is it going to be around for a while? Well then why not enter this award and tell us about your success to date?

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Business profile and objectives
- ✓ Innovation & individuality
- ✓ Business structure and management
- ✓ Business performance to date
- ✓ Sustainability

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses must NOT have been in existence before October 2014.
Businesses entering Best Small Business can NOT enter this category.

Bank of Ireland UK is delighted to be working in partnership with Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry, contributing to the overall success of these Awards.

In supporting the "Most Promising New Business" Award we understand the importance of the SME and the wider business market to the local economy, and the Awards will highlight and reward the quality of local businesses and the individuals who strive for excellence within this environment.

Our involvement in these awards reflects our drive and commitment for continuous improvement in setting new and higher standards in business, playing our part in the success of our local businesses.

We take this opportunity to congratulate all those nominated for an Award and thank you for your contribution to the local community.

Bank of Ireland  UK

Best Small Business Award

Sponsored by Michelin Tyre PLC

This award celebrates the small business and its ability to exploit its size to its best advantage. The award will be presented to an organisation that demonstrates best practice but is also dynamic and individual.

Businesses should not employ more than 20 employees.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Business strategy
- ✓ Innovation & individuality
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Business and growth management
- ✓ Business performance

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses entering the New Business category can NOT enter this category.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Michelin Ballymena, is proud to be associated with the Ballymena Business Awards and to sponsor the 'Best Small Business Award'.

In the current economic climate, when businesses are facing challenging times, it is important to support and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation as well as recognise and celebrate business achievement.

Michelin, through its subsidiary Michelin Development Ltd, is dedicated to helping SMEs by providing unsecured competitive loans and business advice, aiming to help create new employment in the countries where Michelin has manufacturing operations. Over the past 13 years, Michelin Development (Ballymena) has provided financial support and expertise to more than 150 local businesses, helping to create over 550 jobs in the area.

We wish all the entrants good luck in this year's awards and look forward to presenting the Best Small Business Award at the Gala Evening.



Export Business of the Year Award

Sponsored by Danske Bank

This award recognises the achievement, innovation and excellence of businesses, large and small, in reaching new markets.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Export/Marketing strategy
- ✓ Management excellence
- ✓ International trade growth achieved
- ✓ Sustainability

The term "export" will include all areas outside of Northern Ireland. UK and Republic of Ireland will be considered as export.

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

At Danske Bank we have the privilege of working closely with some of Northern Ireland's most innovative and exciting exporting businesses; businesses of all sizes and from a wide range of sectors. We are delighted to sponsor the Export Business of the Year category.

Whether your business is just starting out or you are looking to take your business to the next level, we are here to help.

Our customers benefit from local management and local decision-making but with the strength and leading technology of our European parent. We have a wealth of knowledge and experience in all aspects of business banking from basic cash management and day to day banking needs, to comprehensive cashflow management and international trade finance.

Talk to us at any time to discuss how we could help support your business's growth ambitions.

We wish all the entrants the very best of luck.

Aaron Ennis, Head of North Business Centre, Danske Bank
Broadway, Ballymena
M: 07771 835 061 E: aaron.ennis@danskebank.co.uk

Danske Bank

Social Enterprise of the Year Award

Sponsored by Ballymena Business Centre

We want to celebrate Ballymena's most innovative, passionate and successful social enterprises. If your organisation is fervent about achieving social or environmental change above maximizing profit, then we want to hear from you.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Positive impact on community/society/environment
- ✓ Clear leadership and management
- ✓ Success and measurable outcomes
- ✓ Innovation and individuality
- ✓ A clear breakdown of income
- ✓ Future growth and sustainability

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Ballymena Business Centre is a registered Northern Ireland Charity helping individuals to start and grow their business in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council area. Ballymena Business Centre is focused on creating opportunities in our Town Centre, Rural and Neighbourhood Renewal Communities.

Ballymena Business Centre is making a difference by...

- ✓ Inspire people to be enterprising
- ✓ Encourage the creation of new business
- ✓ Promote enterprise within community planning
- ✓ Ensure enterprise is accessible to all within our community
- ✓ Promote knowledge sharing within existing business
- ✓ Create enterprising community hubs

To find out how we can help your business or to find out how you can support our charitable objectives contact...

Melanie Christie Boyle, Chief Executive, Ballymena Business Centre
www.ballymenabusiness.co.uk melanie@ballymenabusiness.co.uk
Telephone 028 2565 8616



Involvement in the Community Award

Sponsored by McKillens Footwear

This award acknowledges individuals or businesses that have had an ongoing relationship with the community through their voluntary contribution.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Initiation and involvement with the local community
- ✓ Impact and benefits to the local community
- ✓ Level of commitment of time and resources
- ✓ Strategy for ongoing involvement with the community

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

McKillens of Ballymena is delighted to once again sponsor an award.

We have enjoyed success at this esteemed annual awards ceremony in the past, in addition to other successes on a regional and national level, including being named UK & Ireland Family Footwear Retailer of the Year.

The Chamber of Commerce continues to do fine work by promoting business excellence and also rewarding it. The awards bring a great sense of achievement and provide extra incentives for all who work so hard to make Ballymena a great place to do business.

We wish all participants well with their entry and look forward to presenting the award at the Gala Evening.



UK & IRELAND AWARD
WINNING FOOTWEAR RETAILER

Best Creative Business Award

Sponsored by Millside Restaurant Gracehill

This award recognises entrepreneurs and companies with a flair for creativity either through their products or services. The winning business will demonstrate their passion, creativity and ability to turn their talent into enterprise.

Entries are welcome from artists, crafters, publishers, photographers, film-makers, designers, architects, musicians and many others.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Innovation & individuality
- ✓ Business objectives and strategy
- ✓ Business structure and management
- ✓ Business performance to date
- ✓ Sustainability

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Millside Restaurant Gracehill is a family run business situated in the Old Schoolhouse which itself is over 200 years old. It is set in the historic village of Gracehill between Galgorm and Ahoghill.

Millside first opened its doors in December 2008 and has gone from strength to strength to become the 75 seated restaurant it is today. We offer an excellent range of menus including breakfast, lunch and dinner. We can also provide a separate function and party menu for larger parties at very competitive rates. We are a non-licensed restaurant with bring your own bottle facilities.

Being previous winners in the Best Eating and Customer Service categories Millside is delighted to be involved with this year's Business Awards. Creativity is essential in our business so therefore it is entirely appropriate for Millside to sponsor the Best Creative Business Award.

We wish all entrants every success and look forward to presenting the winner with their trophy at the Gala Evening.

For more information about Millside Restaurant Gracehill please visit www.millsiderestaurant.com



Best Young Person in Business Award

Sponsored by Northern Regional College

This award is open to individuals under the age of 40 who have established and developed an owner-led business. The judges will be looking for a hard working, creative and innovative individual who has demonstrated vision, clarity and focus in responding to challenges.

The judging panel will be looking for evidence of the following:

- ✓ Track record in starting and running a business
- ✓ Business achievement and financial success
- ✓ Designing and implementing business strategy
- ✓ Vision and leadership
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Sustainability and plans for the future

This category can be entered in **addition** to two other categories.

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Northern Regional College is one of six colleges of Further & Higher Education within Northern Ireland. It is the main provider of further education and training across a diverse catchment area which serves a population of over 429,000 from its campuses in Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Magherafelt and Newtownabbey.

Courses are offered on a full-time and part-time basis within a range of professional and technical areas, including work-based learning such as apprenticeships, all designed to provide learners with a life-changing, supportive and innovative experience, which equips them with the skills to compete successfully in the global employment market.

The College also has a successful track-record in working with the business sector. This is focused on delivering a variety of funded training packages for employers of all sizes in order to ensure they can fill vacancies with skilled employees, and upskill those already working for them.

To talk to us about training or upskilling your workforce, please contact the Business Development Team on 028 2563 6258.

NORTHERN
Regional College 

Employee of the Year Award

Sponsored by Grafton Recruitment

The hardest award to win and also the hardest category to judge. Has someone gone beyond the call of duty to help the business? Have you observed someone excelling in her or his day-to-day duties? Has someone done something particularly noteworthy? These are just some of the reasons why you might want to nominate an employee for this award.

Judges will be looking for the following:

- ✓ How well they have performed at their role
- ✓ How they have made a difference to the business
- ✓ How they are perceived by management, colleagues and customers

Employees must have been in their current role for at least one year. Entrants must be nominated by their employer.

Application forms will be forwarded by email on receipt of entry. Deadline for return of applications is Thursday 7th September 2017.

Grafton Recruitment is delighted to sponsor the Employee of the Year category in the 2017 Ballymena Borough Chamber of Commerce and Industry Awards. Grafton Recruitment is proud to have served the town of Ballymena for over fifteen years from our offices in Wellington Street.

Now more than ever it is paramount that you employ the best people to sustain your business whether it's permanent employees with specialised skillsets or temporary employees who allow you manage unpredictable levels of supply and demand in an uncertain market.

Grafton Recruitment has been providing temporary and permanent recruitment solutions to Private and Public sector clients since 1983. We are here to respond quickly to your needs, to give you the best insight into the skills available in the market place and the cost of those skills. We manage the interface between you and the candidate and make your recruitment process as cost effective as possible.

If you'd like to more please visit us at www.graftonrecruitment.com or call 028 2564 2699.

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Business Growth Award

Sponsored by Ulster Bank

Despite the current tough economic climate, is your business bucking the trend? Are sales up? Has turnover increased? Has profitability risen? Whether this is from new sales, new products or improved resource management we want to hear from you.

The judges are looking for evidence of:

- ✓ Business and marketing strategy
- ✓ Financial and growth performance
- ✓ Improved resource efficiency, reduced costs and minimised waste
- ✓ Business and growth management
- ✓ Future Sustainability

All interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

Businesses that have been successful in winning this category for 3 consecutive years will not be permitted to enter. A period of 12 months must pass before they are eligible to enter this category again. These businesses are however welcome to enter other categories.

Founded in 1836, Ulster Bank exists to serve its customers and help communities prosper. We are proud to be more than just a provider of financial services. We do that by being here at the moments that matter, with leading digital banking channels that let customers stay on top of their finances on the go, supporting customers with property ambitions, and by boosting local businesses and by being at the heart of the community in Ballymena.

Sponsoring the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards is another expression of our commitment to the Ballymena community. We know that there are fantastic companies and individuals doing innovative things to boost their business who should have a platform to be recognised which is why we are delighted to sponsor the Business Growth Award and help celebrate local business success.

Help for what matters
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Commitment to Ballymena Award

Sponsored by Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is delighted to sponsor this award, especially as we already work hard with our stakeholders to maximise the potential for all our areas, including Ballymena.

Assessment for the Commitment to Ballymena Award will be based on the submission by the nominator and will outline specific actions or activities of the business/individual(s) nominated.

These should clearly demonstrate their contribution and underline how they have proven themselves to be ambassadors for the entire area of Ballymena.

The nominator will therefore be required to provide specific evidence to support their nomination.

The judging panel will be looking for a business, individual or individuals who, through continuing endeavour, successfully boosted the image and overall profile of Ballymena and its status across Northern Ireland and beyond.

Ballymena has grown over the years to become a major contributor for the Northern Ireland economy. This growth has not just come about by chance but through drive and dedication of both individuals and their organisations.

It is therefore appropriate that Council recognise this dedication and effort through the *Commitment to Ballymena Award*.

This Award allows Council to publicly praise and reward such efforts.

- No reference will be made to the nominating party although the judges, to substantiate any statements made within the submission, may contact them.



2017 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards Gala Evening

Thursday 19th October 2017 is the date to put in your diary **NOW**, as this is the date for the presentation of the 2017 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards. This glittering Gala will take place in the Clock Tower Suite of the Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena commencing at 7.00pm with a sparkling wine reception. You will then be seated for a 5 course banquet with wine on all tables.

We promise you a night to remember with good food and sparkling company; great entertainment and excitement; recognition and reward for all our award finalists; fun and networking!

The compere for the Gala is the hugely popular Sarah Travers and there will be a live band – The Bizz – for your entertainment to round off the evening.

Dress: Formal

Tickets are priced at £550 for a table of 10 (individual tickets £55) and can be obtained by contacting:

Chris Wales

Email: office@ballymenachamber.co.uk

Telephone: 07876 758 797



About the Judging Process

The judging process is crucial to the awards program as it provides the independence that is necessary in the overall selection of the award recipients. **Insight Mystery Shopping** will facilitate the adjudication of the awards through mystery shopping visits, on-site visits, judging panels and face to face interview panels.

The judging panel is made up of experienced and respected judges from a variety of industry sectors and disciplines. The panel is carefully selected to ensure the selection process is fair and objective and that each entry is judged on its merits.

The judges are bound by a strict confidentiality agreement and are required to declare any conflict of interest in entries over which they deliberate and to stand aside from deliberations concerning those entries.

In the event of extraordinary interest we reserve the right to shortlist entrants by a process of a brief written submission.

The Interview Process:

An email will be sent to all entrants in September detailing time, date and venue of their interview and/or on-site visit. **Interviews will be held on Monday 18th, Tuesday 19th and Wednesday 20th September 2017 at the Pentagon Room in The Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena.**

A maximum of **two** people may represent your organisation at the interview panel. Interviews will last approximately **15 minutes** and it is suggested that you prepare responses to the listed criteria in each award category. During the interview the judges will ask you to describe your business and state why it should win the award. Although not essential it may also be beneficial to provide a PowerPoint presentation.

The panel of judges will collectively arrive at the decision on the winner of each category. The finalists from each category will be notified on **Friday 22nd September 2017**. The judge's decision is final. The judging panel is not obliged to enter into communication with entrants.

Mystery Shopping:

All mystery shopping entries will receive two mystery visits by a team of highly trained and experienced mystery shoppers.

On-site Visits:

All businesses entering the Business Premises category will receive a visit from the judges in **September**. Entrants will be emailed in advance with appointment details.

If you have any queries regarding the judging process please contact Catherine Scott, Insight Mystery Shopping at catherine@insightmysteryshopping.com or on 078 9427 4146.

The Awards Process

Step 1: Read the awards brochure and decide which categories you would like to enter. Insight Mystery Shopping is happy to assist you in this decision.

YOU MAY ENTER UP TO 2 CATEGORIES and the DEADLINE for Entry Forms is **Wednesday 16th August 2017**.

In addition to the 2 categories you may also enter the **Young Business Person of the Year Award** and/or make nominations for the **Employee of the Year** and **Commitment to Ballymena Awards**.

Entries are welcomed from all businesses in the former Borough and from Chamber members. **All entries are treated in the strictest confidence.**

Organisations that have been successful in winning a particular category for three consecutive years will not be permitted to enter that category. A period of 12 months must pass before that organisation is eligible to enter that category again. These organisations are however welcome to enter other categories.

Step 2: Complete the enclosed Entry Form and return it by email or post to:
info@insightmysteryshopping.com or:
**Ballymena Business Excellence Awards,
C/o Insight Mystery Shopping, Mallusk Enterprise
Park, 2 Mallusk Drive, Newtownabbey, BT36 4GN**

Step 3:

If you have entered a MYSTERY SHOP category you do not need to do anything else. You will receive confirmation and a mystery visit will be conducted.

Step 4:

If you have entered a JUDGING PANEL category, details of interview times will be forwarded at the beginning of September. The judging panels will sit on **Monday 18th – Wednesday 20th September 2017 in the Pentagon Room at The Adair Arms Hotel.**

Step 5:

If you have made a nomination for **Employee of the Year** a brief application form will be forwarded to you requesting details of the employee and their contribution to the business. Completed forms must be returned by **Thursday 7th September 2017.**

Step 6:

Don't forget to make nominations for the **Commitment to Ballymena Award**. A letter of endorsement will be required to assist judges in their decision.

Step 7:

Results for all categories will be collated and finalists will be notified on or before **Friday 22nd September 2017. The judges' decision is final.**

Five Reasons to Join Chamber...

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