

*Ballymena*  
**BUSINESS  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS**  
2018

CELEBRATING THE BEST OF BALLYMENA BUSINESS

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# Welcome to the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards

Ballymena Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry is delighted to present the 2018 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 and agricultural 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 18th 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.



**Robin Cherry MBE**

President  
Ballymena Area Chamber of  
Commerce and Industry



NI Hospice Care is our  
chosen charity for 2018

# 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.

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

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.

Earlier this year Council launched an exciting new strategy to boost the economy across the Borough, called 'Amplify'. Amplify aims to support the development of Mid and East Antrim right through until 2030.

The Manufacturing Taskforce was also formed by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council with the aim of reinvigorating the sector in the area following the economic loss of both Michelin, JTI-Gallaher and others in recent years.

There are ambitious plans for the Borough and with these in place, we will be able to support indigenous manufacturing businesses and encourage inward investment in the coming years.

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.

It is vital that we use the expertise and skills of our local businesses and talent in this area to help deliver change and further economic growth.

Ballymena Area 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 celebrate 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 Lindsay Millar**  
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.

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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.

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Energy is essential and at Power NI, we believe in keeping it simple. You can trust us to give you great discounts, make it easy for you to manage your account and have expert, local support on hand when you need us. We are 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.

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 Samuel Cumming & Son Solicitors

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 entrants 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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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Samuel Cumming & Son Solicitors has been in practice in Linenhall Street, Ballymena since 1932. The firm also incorporates Ian Kerr LLB and John P McCann & Son Solicitors. The firm was recently acquired by Karen Cherry who is continuing this long tradition of providing a full range of legal services to the wider Ballymena area.

Samuel Cummings provides clients with expert legal advice on their doorstep at affordable rates. The firm can deal with a wide range of legal needs including residential and commercial conveyancing, probate and wills, litigation and matrimonial law.

Karen, who is an Advanced Advocate, is a past pupil of Ballymena Academy and a graduate of Trinity College Dublin and Queen's University Belfast.

Karen Cherry trading as Samuel Cummings is delighted to sponsor the award for 'Best use of Digital and/or Social Media Award.'



# 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 award will be judged by mystery shoppers who will be looking for the provision 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.

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RiverRidge is regarded as Northern Ireland's largest independent waste management company servicing over 4,000 customers across Northern Ireland.

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 a cost effective waste management solution based on the most innovative waste treatment process in Europe.

RiverRidge is dedicated to improving Northern Ireland's waste management infrastructure, as illustrated by their investment in Full Circle Generation. The hospitality sector is one that they have a vested interest in and supporting growth and providing services to the leading establishments within this industry will ensure a reduction in food waste and a sustainable future for all.

Fully compliant with environmental guidance and regulation, RiverRidge believes in celebrating the accomplishments of local businesses and will continue to support those who excel in their field.

The Borough is filled with exceptional eateries and RiverRidge is very proud to sponsor on this occasion the award for Best Eating Establishment.



# 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.

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firmus energy is one of Northern Ireland's leading natural gas suppliers with over 86,000 customers across the province. Established in 2006, firmus energy has invested over £120 million in local communities outside of greater Belfast, having laid over 1,200km of natural gas pipeline.

Michael Scott, Managing Director at firmus energy said, ' We are delighted to once again be sponsoring the Ballymena Business Awards. These prestigious awards recognise the quality customer service within the Borough and at firmus energy good customer service is something we take great pride in. Based in Antrim and with just under 100 staff we are dedicated to serving our 86,000 customers every day. 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.

We wish all of our shortlisted businesses the best of luck this evening and we look forward to seeing you all there."



# 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.

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We are delighted to be supporting the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards again. As previous winners of the customer service category, Riada Resourcing believes in exceeding expectations.

Riada's purpose is to drive your business growth, our team of experienced consultants are knowledgeable industry specialists who source permanent and temporary staff. As a family run business we expect to go that extra mile for our clients, it is all about delivering the very best talent to fit your business.

Riada Resourcing supports businesses across Northern Ireland in all major business sectors including, HR, Accountancy, Engineering, Production, Sales, Hospitality and Office services.

Awarded with Investor in People Gold, BSI Quality and Environmental Management standards, our business is committed to quality and excellent customer service, this is key to our continued growth and sustained success.

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, Hospitality, Office 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](mailto: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.

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Over the past 43 years, Autoline Insurance Group has become one of the fastest growing financial services companies in Northern Ireland by focusing on one thing, our customers.

In that time, we've grown strong relationships with some of the world's largest and most respected insurers to give our customers the best possible cover at the best possible price. We employ dedicated, specialist teams to service our customers across multiple product areas such as Car, Young Driver, Home, Business and Farm Insurance. We've grown our people so they can give the best advice and really understand what our customers want. And we've grown our network, making sure we're there when our customers need us: on the phone, on the high street and online. As an award winning innovative insurance broker, we listen to our customers to give them more of what they want: exceptional products delivered by way of personal, local service.

Autoline currently employs 210 staff in 5 locations across Northern Ireland with branches in Newry, Coleraine, Ballymena, Downpatrick and Enniskillen. At Autoline we are focused on delivering exceptional service to the people who have made us an industry leader: our customers.

At Autoline, we're with you.



# Business Premises Award

## Sponsored by Galgorm Resort & Spa

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.

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.

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As previous winners in the prestigious Ballymena Business Excellence Awards, Galgorm Resort & Spa are delighted to sponsor the Business Premises Award for 2018. This highly coveted category enables businesses to showcase the considered initiatives, innovative design, and layout excellence that demonstrates a commitment to delivering an exceptional experience for its customers; a mantra that Galgorm Resort & Spa fully subscribe to.

Customer experience is at the heart of Northern Ireland's premier luxury Hotel and Spa, with design and visual appeal of the environment playing an intrinsic role in delivering a mission to leave each guest with a desire to return. Whether it be the exuberance of Ireland's largest Thermal Spa Village, the spectacular structure of the Halodome, or the opulence of The Conservatory, luxurious facilities and a renowned warm welcome make Galgorm the perfect escape.

As proud supporters of the Ballymena Business community, we are honoured to be involved in recognising and celebrating those who are committed to delivering an environment that matches the requirements of its customers. We would encourage businesses to enter and would like to take the opportunity to wish all entrants good luck.

**GALGORM**  
RESORT & SPA

# Innovation Award

## Sponsored by The Gallaher Trust

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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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The Gallaher Trust is an independent charity which has the objectives of promoting job creation and skills development and providing support to disadvantaged adults in the wider Ballymena community.

The Trust was created to administer a £5 million legacy from Japan Tobacco International (JTI), donated in response to the impact of the closure of the JTI (former Gallaher) Lisnafillan Factory in Ballymena.

The Trust will offer its long-term support to the local community through charitable and not-for-profit partners who have expertise in creating and delivering projects which support the Trust's objectives.

The Gallaher Trust is delighted to be part of the annual Ballymena Business Excellence Awards for the first time and we wish all entrants every success with their businesses within the local community.



# Best Business Website Award

## Sponsored by Country Garage Ballymena BMW

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.

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As a Northern Ireland Authorised BMW Centre since 1974 The Country Garage, Ballymena is a family owned business which is sure to offer you the warmest of welcomes if you are looking for a New BMW or Approved Used BMW in Ballymena, Antrim, Templepatrick, Ballyclare, Larne or beyond. We showcase the latest new BMW models along with an extensive range of BMW Approved Used Cars and are an authorised MINI Service dealer.

We know the needs of BMW and MINI drivers are highly specialised. Our commitment to our customers is to maintain the highest possible dealership standards at all times, whether you are searching for a New or Approved BMW or MINI Service support you will always be able to rely on us to find what you are looking for.

So, if professional customer services matters to you, talk to us at the Country Garage, Ballymena.

The Country Garage



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# 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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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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 world famous Causeway Coastal Route 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 our Port of Larne.
- Earlier this year Council launched an exciting new strategy to boost the economy across the Borough, called 'Amplify'. Amplify aims to support the development of Mid and East Antrim right through until 2030.
- The Manufacturing Taskforce was formed by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council with the aim of reinvigorating the sector in the area following the economic loss of both Michelin, JTI-Gallaher and others in recent years.
- The Taskforce aims to capitalise on strong investor confidence in the area and will be a central plank in the Council's aim to increase Gross Value Added, create jobs and drive productivity.
- Other initiatives in the Borough include Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's involvement in the Belfast Region City Deal, within which it has four projects.
- Mid and East Antrim is leading a bid for one of the biggest UK government contracts, the Heathrow Hub.



- Work is complete on Ballymena's iconic new bandstand, with the state-of-the-art outdoor entertainment, creativity and performance hub's installation marking the conclusion of a multi-million pound investment in the town.
- It provides the ideal venue for a host of exciting events and performances aimed at showcasing up-and-coming talent from Mid and East Antrim and further afield, and promote the very best of culture and the arts in the Borough.
- 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.
- On your way to Slemish, stop off at the newly crowned UK Village of the Year Broughshane. Other award-winning villages include Ahoghill, Glenarm and Whitehead.
- Mid and East Antrim boasts a thriving Food and Drink Network, with the area home to a superb array of excellent food producers, chefs, hospitality providers and food retail businesses.
- Although the spectacular 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 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 boost 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 shopping 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.
- Multiple organisations from across Mid and East Antrim have come together to roll out activities that will benefit the citizens here. The first Community Plan for Mid and East Antrim, 'Putting People First', was published last year after residents set out their shared vision for the area and the response to date has been superb



1 Slemish Mountain 2 Shopping in Ballymena 3 Wrightbus manufacturing



**Working together to create a better future for all**

[www.midandeantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk)

# Most Promising New Business Award

## Sponsored by Bank of Ireland UK

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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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 2015.  
Businesses entering Best Small Business can NOT enter this category.

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Bank of Ireland UK is delighted to be working in partnership with Ballymena Area 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 Development Fund

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

All interviews will be held on Monday 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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Michelin Development Ltd, is proud to be associated with the Ballymena Business Excellence 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 SME growth, creating new employment by providing unsecured competitive loans and business advice free of charge.

Over the past 14 years, Michelin Development Ltd has provided financial support and expertise to more than 130 local businesses, helping them to potentially create over 690 new jobs in the area. We look forward to continuing this support in the future.

We'd like to extend our best wishes to all the entrants 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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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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](mailto: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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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Ballymena Business Centre is a registered Northern Ireland Charity and Social Enterprise helping individuals to start and grow their business in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council area. Ballymena Business Centre is making a difference to the local economy by...

- ✓ Inspiring people to be enterprising
- ✓ Encouraging the creation of new business and social enterprise
- ✓ Supporting growth within existing businesses and business tenants
- ✓ Providing a nurturing environment for businesses to start and businesses to grow in our town centre, rural community and neighbourhood renewal areas
- ✓ Promoting our enterprise hub model in the project management of new employment space and the regeneration of existing employment space
- ✓ Ensure enterprise is accessible to all within our community

To find out how we can help you and 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](http://www.ballymenabusiness.co.uk) [melanie@ballymenabusiness.co.uk](mailto:melanie@ballymenabusiness.co.uk) Tel 028 2568 9430



# Involvement in the Community Award

## Sponsored by McKeever Hotel Group

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

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The Adair Arms Hotel as part of The McKeever Hotel Group is extremely proud to be sponsoring this award.

The hotel has been doing business in Ballymena for over 170 years and has often been described as being at the heart of the town centre.

As a well-established business we understand the importance of community and commend those organisations who consistently contribute and become involved with the local area.

This contribution not only increases business levels but encourages everyone to take pride in Ballymena and what it has to offer.

We wish all participants in this prestigious category the best of luck.



# 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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September in the Pentagon Room at the Adair Arms Hotel Ballymena. Appointment details will be forwarded on receipt of entry.

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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](http://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
- ✓ Designing and implementing business strategy
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Business achievement and financial success
- ✓ Vision and leadership
- ✓ Sustainability and plans for the future

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

All interviews will be held on Monday 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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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 at [Business.support@nrc.ac.uk](mailto:Business.support@nrc.ac.uk)

**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 6th September.

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Grafton Recruitment is delighted to sponsor the Employee of the Year category in the 2018 Ballymena Area 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](http://www.graftonrecruitment.com) or call 028 2564 2699.



# 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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 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.

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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.

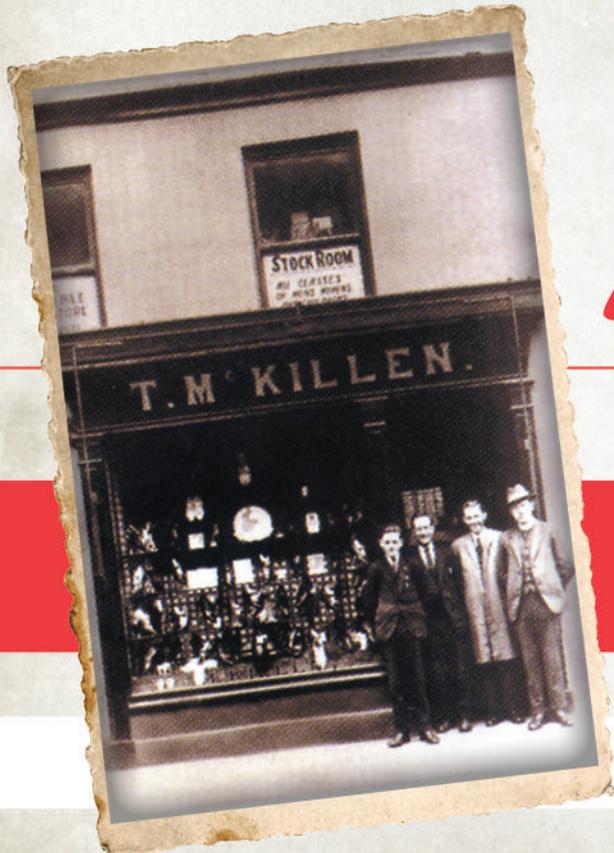
Sponsoring the Ballymena Business Excellence Awards is another expression of our commitment to the Ballymena community. We know that there are fantastic companies and individuals doing innovative things to boost their business who should have a platform to be recognised which is why we are delighted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

**Help for what matters**  
 **Ulster Bank**



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McKillens of Ballymena

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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, and Mid and East Antrim as a whole.

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.



# 2018 Ballymena Business Excellence Awards Gala Evening

**Thursday 18th October 2018** is the date to put in your diary **NOW**, as this is the date for the presentation of the 2018 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 local personality Liam Beckett. Music will be provided by award winning 'The Manouche Boys'.

**Dress:** Formal

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

**Tom Wiggins**

**Email:** [tom@ballymenachamber.co.uk](mailto:tom@ballymenachamber.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 07801 738 359



# 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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19h September 2018 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 21st September 2018**. 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](mailto: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 15th August 2018**.

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](mailto: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 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th September 2018 in the Pentagon Room at The Adair Arms Hotel, Ballymena.**

**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 6th September 2018.**

**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 21st September 2018. The judges' decision is final.**

## Five Reasons to Join Chamber...

Become Better Connected...

Have Your Voice Heard  
(Lobbying and Representation)...

Give Back to Your Local Area...

Promote Your Business...

Business Solutions...

Become part of an organisation that  
is working for you...

[www.ballymenachamber.co.uk](http://www.ballymenachamber.co.uk)

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