

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Title:	Thame Town Awards 2021
Date:	26 October 2021
Contact Officer:	Lizzie Fuller, Committee Services Officer

Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the 2021 Town Awards and to consider changes to the 2022 Awards.

Background

1. The Town Awards were introduced not only to recognise those within the parish who have made an outstanding contribution but also to promote the whole ethos of community involvement. The first awards were presented in 2009.
2. The Awards Panel consists of 9 members who represent businesses, churches, schools, community support groups, sports clubs, and emergency services, and includes the Chairman of the Community, Leisure and Recreation Committee and the Town Mayor, with support from Officers as required.
3. Following the previous CLR committee meeting, the nomination period ran from 22 July to 19 August 2021. The panel met on 2 September via Zoom to review the nominations and agree the winners. 7 winners were chosen – one for each of the six categories except Volunteer of the Year where there were two winners. The awards ceremony took place on 29 September 2021.

Publicity

4. A range of publicity tools were used including:
 - Social media – including the Town Council’s Facebook page which launched last year, the Town Awards Facebook page, and the ‘Love Thame’ group.
 - Town Council’s website and weekly newsletter
 - Posters / leaflets in the Information Centre, noticeboards, and various locations around the town
 - Pull-up banner in the Information Centre displayed during the nomination period.
 - Advertising boards / banners at the town entrances and Montesson Square railings.
 - Press releases sent to local media outlets including Thame Hub, Thame.net and Red Kite Radio.
5. Nominations numbers remained fairly similar to last year. This may be in part due to the Thame Neighbourhood Plan consultation running at the same and that the nomination period took place over the summer holidays, both of which limited promotional opportunities. Not all Officers had returned to the offices due to Covid-19 which made it harder to distribute flyers.
6. The Thame Out Magazine was not used this year due to timings not coinciding.

Nominations

7. The questions on the nomination form remained the same as last year as the panel felt this improved the quality of the nominations received and, hence, enabled them to make an informed

decision. Although there were still some variances in the level of detail provided. Generally, the more detailed nominations scored higher as the Town Awards is not intended as a popularity contest, however some weight is given to the number of nominations.

	2019	2021
No. of total nominations	88	75
No. of valid nominations	62	70
No. of invalid nominations	26	5
No. of people / organisations nominated	42	40
Online nominations	76	69
Hard-copy nominations	12	6

8. The panel were generally impressed with the quality of nominations received in most categories. It was disappointing that the Creative Arts and Sporting categories continue to struggle to receive nominations (although they do tend to receive the more detailed nominations). There was some overlap with the two volunteer categories.

Awards Ceremony & Timelines

9. The winners were invited, together with members of their family, to a presentation evening at the Chinnor Rugby Club Marquee on 29 September 2021 where the Town Mayor presented the Awards. The Mayor also presented his Special Award to Linda Newton (note this is funded from the Mayor's Allowance). Members of the Town Awards panel, sponsor representatives, and Town Council Officers & Councillors also attended. The marquee was kindly provided free of charge and worked well overall as an alternative venue.
10. The awards ceremony took place in September as this enabled Officers to plan an in-person event with greater confidence given that the relaxation of most Covid-19 restrictions was delayed until 19 July 2021.
11. In April 2019 it was agreed that the Awards Ceremony would take place in July annually. Next year's Town Awards ceremony has been booked for Thursday 14 July 2022 at Thame Barns Centre.
12. The first panel meeting will take place in March 2022 in time for proposals to be presented to the CLR meeting on 5 April 2022. This may mean that the Mayor and Chair of CLR will change on the panel during the 2022 awards.

Feedback

13. The panel have been asked for their feedback:
- More direction needed on questions so that nominations are more balanced in terms of their level of detail and content.
 - More people from the community (such as others nominated and local businesses) be invited to the ceremony to make it more of a community event.
14. Feedback is welcome from this committee, so it can be fed into the first panel meeting in March 2022.

Resource Appraisal

15. The Town Awards did not take place during the 2019-20 or 2020-21 financial years – the 2019 awards took place in the 2018-19 financial year (March 2019) and no awards took place in 2020 due to Covid-19. The 2021 awards took place in the 2021-22 financial year (September 2021).
16. £1,000 was allocated for 2019-20 however this was unspent and carried forward to 2021-22.
17. The awards were partially funded thanks to sponsorship from three local businesses / organisations – Rhubarb Seating, Pentangle Technology, and Red Kite Radio – totalling £600.
18. Expenditure this year (less staff costs) came to £1,075 (ex. VAT), leaving an underspend of £525 to carry forward to next year.
19. No budget has been allocated for the Town Awards for 2022-23. Costs may be slightly lower next year due to the Barns Centre being free-of-charge and the town entrance boards purchased this year (totalling £100) not being date-specific enabling them to be reused each year. Additional sponsorship would be achievable given no clash with other sponsorship opportunities (Christmas / Town Guide).

Legal Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972, Section 145

Recommendation:

- i) To note the report.*
- ii) To note next year's award ceremony will take place on Thursday 14 July 2022 at the Barns Centre.*
- iii) To feedback any suggestions for ways to improve / change the Town Awards.*