

Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee

Title:	Thame Town Awards 2023
Date:	31 October 2023
Contact Officer:	Clare Peacock, Communications and Events Officer

Purpose of the Report

To receive feedback on the 2023 Town Awards and to consider changes for next year.

Background

1. The Town Awards were introduced in 2009 to recognise those have made amazing contributions to the town. This is also a way to promote community spirit.
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, with support from Officers as required. The Town Mayor joins the meeting to update the panel on their Special Award (if awarding).

Nominations

3. This year's nomination period ran from 18 May 2023 to 19 June 2023.
4. The panel met on 27 June to agree the winners:
 - No nominations – Sporting Contribution
 - Boots High Street and East Street – Service with a Smile
 - Ann Midwinter – Volunteer of the Year
 - Tony Long – Creative Arts Achievement
 - Thame & District Round Table – Volunteer Group of the Year
 - BARR Group – Company of the Year
 - Mike Ashford – Mayor's Special Award (note this is funded from the Mayor's Allowance).
5. The nomination form remained the same as last year as the panel felt the questions encouraged more detailed nominations. 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. Overall nomination numbers decreased on previous years.

	2021	2022	2023
No. of total nominations	75	70	40
No. of valid nominations	70	58	31
No. of invalid nominations	5	12	9
No. of people / organisations nominated	40	50	25
Online nominations	69	67	39
Hard-copy nominations	6	3	1

6. The panel were slightly disappointed with this year's numbers and nominations. There seemed to be less detailed nominations and more quick easy nomination reasons. They were also upset that there was not a Sporting Contribution award due to no nominations.

Publicity

7. A range of publicity tools were used including:
 - Social media – including the Town Council’s Facebook / Twitter / Instagram, the Town Awards Facebook page, and the ‘Love Thame’ Facebook group.
 - Town Council’s website and weekly newsletter
 - Posters / leaflets in the Information Centre, noticeboards, and various locations around the town including shops, café’s, dentists, sports venues, and pubs.
 - Radio slots biweekly on Red Kite Radio talking about how to vote, and the categories.
 - Promotional float at the Thame Carnival
8. Unfortunately, due to commitments of panel, we did not host a promotional stand outside the Town Hall or Music in the Park.

Awards Ceremony & Timelines

9. The winners were invited, together with their guests and the people who nominated them, to a presentation evening at the Thame Barns Centre on 20 July 2023 where the Town Mayor presented the Awards. Members of the Town Awards panel, sponsor representatives, and Town Council Officers & Councillors also attended. A complimentary drink and light buffet were served. The event went well and we had a turn out of about 65 which made the place lively, but not crowded as the weather did not allow for socialising outside.

Feedback / Recommendations for 2024

10. The panel and Officers were asked for their feedback. Feedback is also welcome from this committee, so it can be fed into the first panel meeting in January/February 2024.
 - **Nomination form:** To be reviewed, we kept the form the same as last year, however with the decrease in votes we need to look at how we can make the form easy to fill, but with room for a good level of detail to be able to make an informed decision.
 - **Number of nominations:** We were upset with the lack of nominations this year, the awards were promoted weekly in newsletter, on Red Kite Radio and through the panel, however we need to look at how we can make this year’s even bigger. Do we not have categories and instead have a Thame Top 50 (businesses, people, items, whatever makes Thame, Thame) for the 50th birthday of Thame Town Council?
 - **Publicity:** The Town Awards theme worked well; however, it was nearer the end of the voting period. The Communications and Events Officer would like to make a video advert, if possible, which would be very low key. The Communications and Events Officer has also started the process of doing “days in the life” with the 2023 winners which will be used on social media and in the newsletter to promote the awards. We can book a stand for outside the Town Hall and at the market, however we would need the panel to get involved in supporting this.
 - **Panel:** There may be a need to do a recruitment exercise for panel members, depending on how many stay on the panel. A member of the panel who had been on the panel since the start of the awards stepped down at the end of this year’s. The Communications and Events Officer has been in contact with the Library to see if any of the staff there would like to join.
 - **Terms of Reference:** As the Town Awards panel meetings will fall either side of the elections/annual meeting, it is suggested that the ToRs be updated so that we have a

member of council who is on the panel (not necessarily the Mayor, or Chair/Deputy Chair of CLR (this should allow for some continuity for the few meetings the panel undertakes).

- **Aesthetics:** We received feedback that it may be time for a refresh on Town Awards designs and colours within posters and displays (maybe a gold theme for the 50th birthday)
- Additional suggestions were made relating to logistics which Officers will action.

Resource Appraisal

11. Income – The awards were partially funded thanks to sponsorship from Pentangle, The HR Agency and Specsavers – totalling £600. We hope to have £600-£1000 in sponsorship for 2024.
12. Expenditure (excluding staff costs and VAT) came to £960. No budget was set for 2023, as ear marked reserves held were used to fund the event. However, if we are looking for new decorations, banners, designs etc we may need to look at costings.

Legal Powers:

- Local Government Act 1972, Section 145

Recommendation:

- i) To note the report.*
- ii) To feedback any suggestions for ways to improve / change the Town Awards.*