





COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL



CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

is delighted to sponsor the Clare Business Excellence Awards

Supporting Local Businesses - Enabling Jobs



🕿 065 6821616 🗡 customerservices@clarecoco.ie 🕏 www.clarecoco.ie







Introduction

Welcome to Clare Business Excellence & Resilience Awards 2021.

After a year's absence due to the Pandemic, we were determined not to let a second-year slip by without celebrating the achievements and resilience of Clare Businesses.

These awards are about focussing on the positive. Every business was impacted by the Pandemic, even those that remained open throughout had the stress of protecting staff or were forced to pivot their business model, to survive. The agility and drive for survival was immense.

Of course, we must remember and wish well to those who had no choice but to shutter their business. As a publican I know first-hand how tough that has been on owners, staff, and their families, but the tide is turning, and we must look forward.



Darragh McAllister
President | Ennis Chamber
2021

We added the word 'Resilience' to our awards, accompanied by a dedicated category to celebrate the businesses that pivoted their model substantially in the face of adversity. What better company to sponsor the special 'Resilience' category than Ennis-based manufacturing company Cup Print, who led by example.

Another new and timely category is 'Commitment to Training' sponsored by Mid-West Regional Skills. We have already learned that businesses who engaged with training opportunities have reaped reward

We welcome the team at the Clare Echo as our Awards Media Partners, we know we will get energetic support, especially across social media platforms, where they excel.

With 12 individual categories this year, there is plenty of scope for businesses to enter. I hope our paths cross at the Gala Awards Ceremony on October 28th at glór.

DARRAGH MCALLISTER President, Ennis Chamber | 2021

It has given Clare County Council great pleasure and pride to be overall sponsor of the Clare Business Excellence Awards in recent years. We welcome the return of the awards and congratulate Ennis Chamber in bringing these awards back so promptly after a year's absence, due to the pandemic.

We are delighted to see the word 'resilience' included in the new title, because businesses throughout 'The Banner' showed tremendous resilience and courage in keeping their businesses going against the challenging backdrop of coronavirus. We have lived through the toughest of times for businesses and society. Our admiration for entrepreneurs across Clare who kept their doors open throughout or who opened when they were permitted to do so, is without bounds.



Cllr. PJ Ryan

Cathaoirleach | Clare County Council

2021

Clare County Council is very proud of the role its own staff played in supporting those businesses and we commend their hard work during stressful times. Clare County Council were relentless in their drive to create and deliver appropriate training and mentoring opportunities, and to administer grants and supports.

The fact that County Clare was amongst the leading counties in terms of uptake of grants and supports speaks volumes of the team at Clare County Council and so too of the businesses who refused to let their heads drop and instead kept looking forward to and preparing for a brighter future.

The light at the end of the tunnel is closer now. It is time to celebrate the achievements of our business community and to look forward with hope, courage, and conviction. I wish all businesses entering Clare Business Excellence & Resilience Awards 2021 the very best of luck. In my book, you are all winners.

ENTRIES & JUDGING

Why Enter the Clare Business Excellence & Resilience Awards 2021?

It makes good business sense on many levels, it provides:

- ☐ A benchmarking opportunity
- □ Independent judges feedback
- ☐ A means to differentiate you from competitors
- □ Brand awareness building
- Recognition of your businesses achievements and successes
- Access to new customers (opens doors)
- Boost to staff morale and helps attract and retain talent

€50 Cost Per Entry: Can you enter more than one category?

FREE entry for Best Voluntary/Community Group category

Entries Deadline (mystery shopping categories)

Entries Deadline (written submission categories) August 23

Judging the Winners **Spotcheck**



Spotcheck

ABOUT THE JUDGING PANEL

Spotcheck has successfully measured businesses performance and customer perceptions for over ten years and provides a wide range of business consultancy, customer measurement and training services. Spotcheck currently provides independent judging for business awards throughout Ireland - from local business awards to nationwide industry sector awards, making sure all entrants are judged fairly, consistently and independently.

For more info visit www.spotcheckni.co.uk or T: 00 44 28 90 454 062. E: jbeasant@spotcheckni.co.uk

Bank of Ireland



LAUNCH SPONSOR

Bank of Ireland is committed to supporting Irish SMS and helping them get the lending they need. We have a banking relationship with one in three Irish enterprises in the country and we talk to 2,000 plus SME customers weekly. This gives us a real insight into what is happening on the ground with Irish businesses. We receive on average 1,000 credit applications each week and over 80% of these are approved.

Our growth objectives for the SME sector are also very important in the context of the overall environment, given the vital role which SMEs are playing in the recovery and growth of the domestic economy.

Through trained staff in our nationwide branch network and sector specialist teams, our online capabilities and specifically focused supports,

we are constantly engaging with existing and potential customers and their advisors to learn how best we can meet their needs.

We also engage with communities throughout Ireland through our highly successful national Begin Together Awards.

With 300 business advisors located in over 250 branches nationwide we are well-placed to meet with you to discuss your banking needs.

To arrange a meeting, please contact Gerard O'Donnell 076 6242439 email gerard.o'donnell@boi.com Caoilfhionn Hogan 076 6242410 email caoilfhionn.hogan@boi.com Branch Manager Colin Ryan 076 6242412 email colin.ryan@boi.com

CLARE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE & RESILIENCE AWARDS 2021 Categories & Sponsors

BEST GREEN & SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Sponsored by Rengen Power



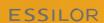
BEST MICRO BUSINESS (employing 10 people or less)

Sponsored by Clare Local Enterprise Office



BUSINESS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

Sponsored by Essilor



CLARE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by AIB



BEST TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN CLARE

Sponsored by L.I.T.



BEST HOSPITALITY

Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau



BEST USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sponsored by Clare Echo



CLARE RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Ability IT Solutions



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants



COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

Sponsored by Regional Skills Mid West



RESILIENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Cup Print



BEST VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY GROUP IN CLARE

Sponsored by St Francis Credit Union



OVERALL WINNER CLARE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2021

Sponsored by the awards lead sponsor - Clare County Council





BEST GREEN & SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Sponsored by Rengen Power

This award is open to businesses small or large, from across all sectors that demonstrate meaningful commitment to the implementation of green and sustainable practices within the organisation.

Applicants to this category are required to demonstrate a proven commitment to environmentally friendly and ecologically responsible business decisions to help protect the environment and sustain its natural resources for current and future generations.

This award is independently judged by written submission. Judges will look for evidence of elements of the following:

- Details of specific steps your business has taken to be more environmentally-friendly
- ☐ A proven commitment to green procurement
- ☐ Has better environmental performance led to improved resource efficiency/ direct cost savings?
- ☐ Has a commitment to green practices improved access to customers?
- ☐ How the business exceeds customer expectations.
- □ Does your organisation's commitment to Green Practices help you attract and retain talent?

Sponsored by Rengen Power

Please download the entry form from

www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards





BEST MICRO BUSINESS IN CLARE (EMPLOYING 10 PEOPLE OR LESS)

Sponsored by Clare Local Enterprise Office

This award is open to all small independently owned businesses who employ 10 staff (FTE) or less, whose growth and quality of management has enabled it to out-perform the competition.

This award is judged by written submission and judges will be looking for evidence of the following:

- □ Evidence of key growth areas for the business and how these have been identified
- ☐ Evidence of robust management systems appropriate to the operation of the business
- □ Evidence of innovation in terms of the product or service provided
- □ Evidence of a carefully planned growth strategy to sustain current success

Sponsored by Clare Local Enterprise Office





BUSINESS SUPPORTING COMMUNITY

Sponsored by Essilor

This award celebrates businesses that invested time, effort, and resources to support communities over the past year. Entries are encouraged from businesses operating across all sectors, large and small.

We welcome entries that reflect an ongoing CRS projects already in place pre-Covid, as well as entries that reflect a direct response to Covid, through specific community project(s) and supports.

Supports/fundraising and other activities at local, national or international community level, all qualify for this category.

Written applications in the form of a case study, will be judged on how the company embraced its responsibility:

- □ What role did management play in encouraging employees to get involved in community activities/project?
- ☐ The positive impact those activities have had on the community
- If your project was initiated in response to Covid, please indicate the timings, how the project evolved. Who led it? Who delivered it? What were the goals and impacts?

Sponsored by Essilor





PROFESSIONAL SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by AIB

This award is open to all businesses in the professional services sector that can demonstrate excellence in business practice across the full range of their activities.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- □ Robust and sustainable management systems and procedures.
- ☐ Clear evidence of ongoing employee development
- ☐ A planned growth strategy in terms of all areas of the business and suitability to service users.
- □ Evidence of a customer focused culture that is reinforced at all levels of the business.

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants will be asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Sponsored by AIB

Please download the entry form from www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards



Best of luck to all participants in The Clare Business
Excellence & Resilience
Awards 2021
from all in AIB Clare.



BEST TOURISM EXPERIENCE

Sponsored by LIT

This category is open to any tourism or hospitality business including visitor attractions, activity based or guided experience, museums, historic houses, gardens, exhibition centres, hotels, conference and banqueting venues.

This award will be judged initially by written submission and a brief mystery visit will form part of the judging process.

Judges will be looking for evidence of:

- ☐ Commitment to excellence across all areas of the business
- □ Sustainable and environmentally sound practices across all areas of the business, supporting and involving the local community
- □ A range of marketing activities which provide visitors with comprehensive and accessible information

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants will be asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria. Please provide recent photographs and brochures to support your application and where appropriate reviews and ratings.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Sponsored by LIT

Please download the entry form from www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards







Supporting Ennis, Ireland's next university town

#makeitLIT

lit.ie

BEST HOSPITALITY PROVIDER IN CLARE

Sponsored by Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau

What a roller-coaster year for hospitality and what a courageous response from one of our strongest and most resilient sectors.

Every hospitality business in Co. Clare had to completely review how it delivers its service over the past 12 months. Social distancing, indoors, outdoors, sanitisation, mask wearing – every single trapping of Covid has had to be dealt with head-on and proactively by this sector. And through it all, our hospitality sector has been exemplary.

This award is designed to celebrate the very best of our excellent hospitality providers. Those who continue to smile behind their masks and to deliver a guest experience expected of them, regardless of the challenges placed upon them through the pandemic.

The category will be judged by mystery guests who will pay particular attention to:

- ☐ The quality of the experience
- ☐ The range of facilities and the overall appeal to a broad range of visitors.
- The initial impact of the business.
- ☐ How the staff interact with customers and enhance the customer experience
- ☐ How the business exceeds customer expectations

Sponsored by Shannon Region Conference & Sports Bureau





















BEST USE OF DIGITAL MARKET/SOCIAL MEDIA

Sponsored by Clare Echo

Digital marketing and social media took centre stage over the past year, driven by Covid circumstances. The lockdowns, remote working and other pandemic developments highlighted the importance of having a targeted digital plan and an engaged social media presence across relevant platforms.

A good digital strategy and execution across platforms including website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok allowed business to raise awareness, communicate with customers and stakeholders and most important, continue trading behind closed doors. Businesses with an established digital presence ramped up while those without a meaningful presence invested in or applied for funding to ensure they too could compete.

If your business made clever use of digital marketing/social media as business building/survival tools over the past year, this is the category for you.

Judging will be based on written submission and audit of your digital assets.

Areas of consideration will include:

- Outline where your business was regarding use digital marketing/social pre-Pandemic? How does that compare to where you are today?
- ☐ Map your progress. Did you apply for/receive funding/training? Did you encourage staff training? Did you apply for an online trading voucher/grant, or other funding sources to help develop a website or stronger digital presence?
- Did you run an attention-grabbing campaign? If so, tell us about it and please include any supporting stats. Which platforms worked best with your audience?
- □ Will digital marketing/social media continue to hold its place in your marketing strategy going forward?

Sponsored by Clare Echo





CLARE RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Ability IT Solutions

It was a stressful year for retailers, but you soldiered on, you embraced and invested in change, and you went the extra mile to ensure you stayed connected to your customers.

Some of you had your doors open throughout the darkest days of the pandemic, while others were asked to shutter their business. Both situations carried their own levels of stress. Thankfully, all doors are now open, and business is settling down to a new kind of normal.

This award will recognise and celebrate businesses with an exceptional customer offering, individuality through innovation in merchandising, product range, services, and a real understanding of their customer needs.

Mystery shoppers will visit each entrant and will look for:

- ☐ How well the product range and services reflect the type and size of the store.
- ☐ The provision of value -added services which customers may not expect to find
- ☐ Excellent retail standards in all areas of the store
- ☐ Innovative and exciting product range
- ☐ Excellent merchandising and display
- ☐ Welcoming and well-informed staff

Sponsored by Ability IT Solutions

Please download the entry form from www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards





Market Street Carpark, Ennis, Co. Clare. V95 F30C Tel: 065 6810068

Email: sales@abilityit.ie

www.**abilityit.ie**

IT Infrastructure
Networking
Managed IT Services
Office Equipment
Epos & Merchant Services
VoIP Telephone Systems
Software
Supplies & Consumables
Sales & Support

Get The Right
Solution
For Your
Rusiness









CUSTOMER SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants

This category is open to any business that can demonstrate their focus on, and excellence in customer service. Mystery shoppers will look at all aspects of the service provided in terms of staff interaction and the range of services on offer as appropriate to the needs of customers.

The mystery shopper will pay particular attention to:

- ☐ The initial impact of the business
- ☐ How the staff interact with customers and enhance the customer experience
- ☐ How the business exceeds customer expectations
- ☐ How the services provided delight the customers

Company size and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants will be asked to complete an application form to provide evidence to support their submission and give the judges a clear understanding of how they meet the award criteria.

Please note that the judges are aware of the commercial sensitivity of information provided and all submitted material will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

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Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants



COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

Sponsored by Regional Skills Mid West

Savvy businesses used the past year to ramp up training to improve management and staff skills and education. It was the perfect opportunity to do so, with quality, accredited training available free of charge from many education and skills training providers.

Covid taught us that change can happen even faster than we previously anticipated. It also taught us we need to be prepared for and be agile and imaginative in our response to change. Accredited training is key to that preparedness.

This category is open to businesses from all sectors and to companies large and small.

Judging for this category is based on written submission.

- ☐ We want to hear about your training journey. How did you identify your training needs? What training supports did your business avail of?
- ☐ Which training and education providers fulfilled your training requirements?
- ☐ How have training/skills acquired over the past year (and on-going) benefitted your business to date and into the future?

Sponsored by Regional Skills Mid West





RESILIENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Cup Print

It was the year of the pivot and this award, open to businesses of any size from any sector reflects that trend. The award aims to recognise businesses that changed their business model in response to the Pandemic in order to survive/thrive.

- □ Did Covid put your business in a tailspin?
- ☐ Are you a manufacturing business that invested in new machinery/new product offering?
- ☐ Are you a retailer who moved your business online?
- ☐ Are you in the food sector? Did you embrace Click & Collect?
- □ Did you have to find a new client base?
- □ Did you introduce a product or service geared towards Covid as a temporary survival tactic?
- ☐ How quickly did you respond to the changes forced upon your business through Covid?
- □ Did you access supports (if so from whom)?
- ☐ How did your staff respond?
- ☐ What was the investment in changing your business model?

Sponsored by Cup Print

Please download the entry form from www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards





- Minimum order just 1000 pcs
- · Ready to ship in 15 days
- · Easy online order & design

CupPrint specialises in producing beautiful, branded paper cups for cafes & coffee shops, brands & events. Both regular & sustainable models available.

This fast turnaround and low Minimum Order Quantity means smaller businesses with less storage space can present their brand on a unique, high quality paper cup.

cupprint.ie



BEST VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY GROUP

Sponsored by St Francis Credit Union

The Best Voluntary/Community Group award is FREE to enter and carries a cash prize of €500 to the winner.

The purpose of this award is to acknowledge groups, powered by volunteers, who have played a significant role in enhancing the quality of life in their local community.

Judging is via written submission – a short case study will suffice. The judges simply want to hear what your group did over the past year that made your contribution to your local community special.

We want to hear from you if:

- You represent a sports club or local voluntary group quick off the blocks to provide practical supports to isolated or vulnerable people living in our community during those early days of Covid
- You are part of a long-standing community group such as Tidy Towns, and your group remained active throughout the Pandemic
- ☐ You kept your local volunteer-led festival alive by taking it online
- ☐ Your group launched a new community/voluntary initiative in the past year

Sponsored by St Francis Credit Union





GALA AWARDS EVENING

Clare Business Excellence & Resillience Awards 2021 gala ceremony will take place at glór theatre, Thursday, October 28, 2021

We are delighted to confirm stand-up comedian, best-selling author, award-winning broadcaster and all-round funny guy, Colm O'Regan as this year's Awards MC.

Expect plenty of laughs!

www.colmoregan.com



Colm O'Regar Awards MC



The Early Bird..... Catches a Break!!!

As an incentive to get your entries in on time, businesses that meet the deadline will be entered into a draw to win a break for two at one of three Flynn Hotels (the winner's choice). Up for grabs is a 2-night break for two people (sharing) at a Flynn Hotel of your choice – see below.

Don't be late!



IMPERIAL HOTEL & ESCAPE SPA, Cork

Ideally located in the heart of Cork City, the Imperial's charm lies in its intimate atmosphere, stylish décor and personalised hospitality.

Tel: 021 4274040

Email: reservations@imperialhotelcork.ie



THE PARK HOTEL, Dungarvan

The family-friendly Park Hotel, Holidays Homes & Leisure Centre is situated on beautifully landscaped grounds in County Waterford.

Tel: 058 42899

Email: reservations@parkhoteldungarvan.com



THE NEWPARK HOTEL, Kilkenny City

The 4 star Newpark Hotel & Leisure Centre has a tradition of Irish hospitality in the historical and cultural gem that is Kilkenny.

Tel: 056 7760500

Email: reservations@newparkhotel.com





As a Member of Ennis Chamber you can:

- Are part of a strong proactive and influential group of businesses.
- Contribute to the promotion of local business and industry.
- Input to policy decisions and influence the business environment.
- Input the town's tourism offer through Promote Ennis a partnership between Ennis Chamber and Clare County Council.
- Access lobbying and representation opportunities at local, national and European levels.
- Participate in tailored training programmes.
- Access business advice, information and grant opportunities.
- Tap into networking opportunities and make business contacts through the Chamber's regular networking meetings, and events.
- Be part of Clare Gift Card
- Avail of exporter Certificate of Origin service

To join Ennis Chamber, request an application form from

- info@ennischamber.ie
- **6** 065 6842988











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Ennis Chamber

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