

2022 Clare Business Excellence Awards

Introduction

Welcome to **Clare Business Excellence Awards 2022**.

Ennis Chamber demonstrated resilience when staging Clare Business Excellence Awards last year and thankfully, even with restrictions adhered to and reduced numbers, the Awards Gala night, held in glór, was a great success. This year, with restrictions lifted we can look forward to an even better night of celebration on November 24th.

Before we get to the Awards Gala there are a few hurdles to jump! We need businesses from every corner of Clare to enter (as usual). Our trusted independent professional judges from SpotCheck Northern Ireland will then play their part, rigorously assessing written submissions and providing mystery shoppers and reviewers to check quality and experience first-hand. Next comes the short-listing of finalists in late September, then we can start planning the party!

2022 marks the 12th Clare Business Excellence Awards and it goes without saying that it would not be possible to run these awards without the generous support of our sponsors. We thank Clare County Council for once again stepping up to the plate as overall sponsor, and we also thank all category sponsors, listed in this brochure.

I encourage businesses to enter Clare Business Excellence Awards 2022, not least because it is a great benchmarking exercise. Application forms are available online at www.ennischamber.ie/services/business-awards

I thank all entrants and wish you the very best of luck.

COLIN RYAN President, Ennis Chamber | 2022



Colin Ryan

President | Ennis Chamber

2022

2022 has once again been an exceptionally challenging period for businesses in Clare. Just when we thought we had overcome the economic impact of Covid-19, the war in Ukraine has had a detrimental effect on the global economy resulting in supply chain constraints, labour shortages and rising costs. The capacity and resilience of our business leaders to overcome these challenges is to be respected and admired.

We are fortunate to have the opportunity to celebrate the success and fortitude of such businesses through the Clare Business Excellence Awards. In this the 12th year of these awards, it is fitting for Clare County Council to once again step into a leadership role as the awards main sponsor.

In sponsoring these awards, Clare County Council acknowledges and celebrates the contribution businesses make to the local economy across County Clare through providing employment and supporting our local communities.

We congratulate Ennis Chamber for bringing these awards to life and for continuing to provide a platform to profile the achievements and successes of the impressive variety of businesses based in County Clare.

Clare Business Excellence Awards offer a broad range of awards, suitable for start-ups to established SMEs, from hospitality businesses to professional services and industry to retail. We know from previous years that entrants are drawn from across the entire county as reflected in the annual shortlisted finalists. I'm sure it will be no different this year.

It is important that businesses avail of the opportunity to celebrate their own success by entering these awards. I wish all entrants the very best of luck and look forward to meeting you in glór, Ennis, in November, for a night of celebration at the awards ceremony.

CLLR. TONY O'BRIEN Cathaoirleach, Clare County Council | 2022



Cllr. Tony O'Brien

Cathaoirleach | Clare County Council

2022



ENTRIES & JUDGING

Why Enter the Clare Business Excellence Awards 2022?

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

Cost Per Entry: €50

Can you enter more than one category? Yes

NB: □ FREE entry for Best Voluntary/Community Group category

Entries Deadline (mystery shopping categories) August 15

Entries Deadline (written submission categories) September 12

Judging the Winners



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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

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Bank of Ireland is committed to supporting Irish SMEs 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.

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

Noel Crowe, Manager Ennis & Ennistymon
email Noel.Crowe@boi.com

CLARE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022

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 Vitalograph



BEST TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN CLARE

Sponsored by TUS



BEST HOSPITALITY PROVIDER IN CLARE

Sponsored by Shannon Group



BEST USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sponsored by Clare Echo



CLARE RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Ennis Chamber



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants



BEST SME IN CLARE (Up to 250 employees)

Sponsored by Cup Print



BEST PLACE TO EAT (2 Sub-categories)

Sponsored by AIB

BEST PLACE TO EAT - RESTAURANT

BEST PLACE TO EAT - BISTRO/CAFÉ



BEST VOLUNTARY/COMMUNITY GROUP IN CLARE

Sponsored by St Francis Credit Union



OVERALL WINNER CLARE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022

Sponsored by the awards lead sponsor - Clare County Council



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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?
- Does your organisation's commitment to Green Practices help you attract and retain talent?
- Does your organisation's commitment to Green Practices help you to attract new customers?

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

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

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A promotional poster for the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) in Clare. The top left features the LEO logo, a stylized 'C' made of two overlapping circles, and the text 'Local Enterprise Office'. To the right of the logo, there are two small banners: a blue one with the text 'Difig Fiontair Áitiúil An Chláir' and a green one with 'Local Enterprise Office Clare'. The main title 'Making It Happen' is written in a large, bold, blue font. Below this, the text 'STARTING OR GROWING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?' is in a smaller, bold, blue font, followed by 'WE PROVIDE INFORMATION, EXPERT ADVICE, GRANT AID, TRAINING & MENTOR SUPPORTS' in a smaller, blue font. The bottom left of the poster contains contact information: 'localenterprise.ie/clare', 'Making It Happen', 'Telephone: 087-4648402', 'Email: localenterprise@leo.clarecoco.ie', and 'www.localenterprise.ie/clare'. The bottom right of the poster is divided into three colored sections: 'Pre-Start' (blue), 'Start' (green), and 'Grow' (green). Each section contains a small photograph of people. At the bottom of the poster, there are logos for the Irish Government, the European Union, the Clare County Council, and Enterprise Ireland, along with the text 'In partnership with'.

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 on-going and recent community support projects. Judges are looking for evidence regarding specific community project(s) either initiated and led by your organisation or supported by your organisation through fundraising and other activities (e.g. by providing volunteers).

Community support projects delivered at local, national or international level all qualify for this category. Written applications in the form of a case study, will be judged on how the company embraced its social 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
- Please indicate the timings, how the project evolved. Who led it? Who delivered it? What were the goals and impacts?

Sponsored by Essilor

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

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES EXCELLENCE AWARD

Sponsored by Vitalograph

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 Vitalograph

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

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BEST TOURISM EXPERIENCE IN CLARE

Sponsored by TUS

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 will be followed up by a mystery visit.

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 TUS

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



www.tus.ie

**Start Exploring,
Start Learning...
Start with TUS**



BEST HOSPITALITY PROVIDER IN CLARE

Sponsored by Shannon Group

This award is designed to celebrate the best hospitality in Clare and is open to any hospitality business that can demonstrate how they have successfully created an attractive and guest friendly environment which exceeds expectation and delights customers.

This 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

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants are 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 Shannon Group

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



www.shannongroup.ie

BEST USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING/SOCIAL MEDIA

Sponsored by Clare Echo

Digital marketing and social media took centre stage in recent years. In particular, 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 allows 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 makes clever use of digital marketing/social media as business building tools 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 how your business has integrated/adopted digital/social/marketing into its overall marketing plan?
- Map your progress. Did you invest in training? Did you apply grants to help develop a website or stronger digital presence?
- Have 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 take on more importance within your marketing strategy going forward?

Sponsored by Clare Echo

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

CLARE RETAILER OF THE YEAR

Sponsored by Ennis Chamber

2020 and 2021 were stressful years 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.

With Covid in the rear view mirror, 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 Ennis Chamber

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

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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.

Sponsored by McKeogh Gallagher Ryan Accountants

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

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BEST PLACE TO EAT - BEST RESTAURANT BEST PLACE TO EAT - BEST BISTRO/CAFÉ

Sponsored by AIB

Best Place to Eat has two sub-categories to reflect the breadth of eating experiences. They are:

1. 'Best Place to Eat – Best Restaurant in Clare'
2. 'Best Place to Eat – Best Bistro or Café in Clare'

Both of these awards are judged by mystery diners who will visit each business to sample the unique customer experience and savour the quality of the food served.

Each entrant to this category will be judged across all aspects of services and facilities with particular emphasis on the food offering.

The mystery diner will pay particular attention to:

- The initial impact of the business/ ambience and character
- How staff interact with customers and enhance the customer experience
- An uncompromising commitment to flavour and quality of food
- Interesting and innovative menu choices
- Excellent and appropriate food service

Company size, available finance and resources will be taken into consideration by the judges. Entrants are 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.

Entrants are asked to provide a voucher with agreed limited value to be used by the mystery diners.

Sponsored by AIB

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

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Best of luck to all participants
in **Clare Business
Excellence Awards 2022**
from all in AIB Clare.



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BEST SME IN CLARE

Sponsored by Cup Print

This year, Clare Business Excellence Awards introduces a new category 'Best SME in Clare'. Businesses with less than 250 employees are eligible to enter this category.

In a time when talent is difficult to attract, winning the inaugural 'Best SME in Clare' award will provide the winner with a valuable differentiator to attract new talent, a morale boost for existing employees, and will give confidence to existing and potential clients.

Growth: This award is designed to identify businesses that can demonstrate consistent growth across broad business metrics including, but not limited to, financial performance, investment, growth in employees, growth in product lines or in the case of a services business growth in location/locations where services are delivered.

Success: There should be evidence of a sound strategy, considered business structure, product/service development, marketing, and business development as well conversion rates/retention rates.

Culture: The entrants should describe their culture, decision-making processes, communication, training, staff acquisition/retention metrics, and business cycles where relevant.

Customers and Market differentiation: If relevant the entrants should showcase differentiation from competitors including but not limited to unique selling points, demonstrable competitor advantage, for example customer service, and showcase go-to-market/marketing strategies etc where appropriate.

Sponsored by Cup Print

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

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:

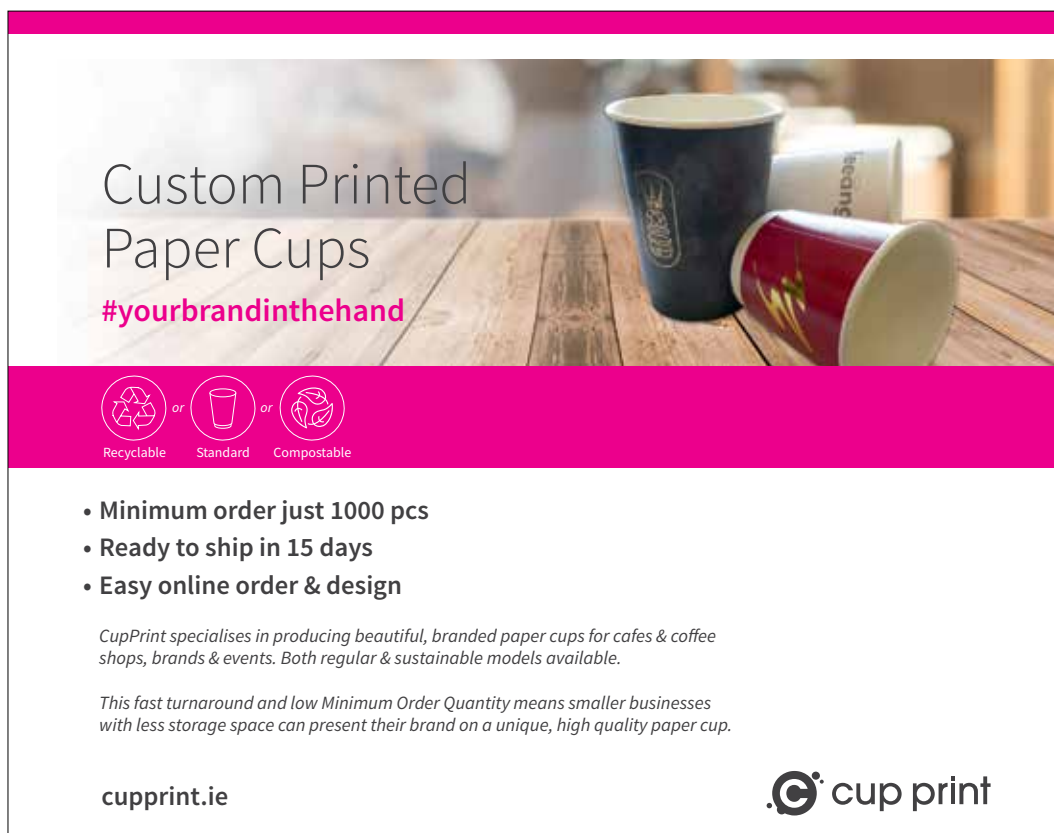
- ☐ If you represent a sports club or local voluntary group who has supported people living in their community
- ☐ You are part of a long-standing community group such as Tidy Towns or a local tourism community group etc
- ☐ You organise local festivals and events to help boost your local economy
- ☐ Your group launched a new community/voluntary initiative in the past year

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GALA AWARDS EVENING

Clare Business Excellence Awards 2022 gala ceremony will take place at glór theatre, Thursday, November 24, 2022

Tickets on sale through glór box office from Monday, October 3, 2022.

Ph: 065 684 3103

Expect a great night out!



Gala Awards Reception Sponsors: BWG Food Service & Value Centre

