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Congratulations to all winners at the **Clare Business Excellence Awards**

‘Amazing’ honour for Torpey after challenging year

by Stuart Holly
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● Mary Jansen (second from left) of Tierneys IT presents Sharon Connellan (far left) and BEO The Well with Best New Business; (below left) Seán Torpey and Myles Higgins of TORPEY receive Innovation in Business award from Fiona Biggane of PTSB; Bernadette Haugh, Head Of Enterprise at Clare LEO, presents Bernard MacOscair and Katja Wittmer of Berka Solutions with Best MicroBusiness; (bottom) Des Regan, Rengen Power, presents Best Green & Sustainable Practices to Bronagh & Cathal O’Rourke of Burren Beef Farm Expereince **Photos by Mike Mulcaire**







THE dust has settled on an unforgettable night at the annual Clare Business Excellence Awards ceremony held at the Rine Hotel last Thursday, where Clare sports equipment specialist Torpey emerged as the top winner of the evening, scooping both the prestigious ‘Innovation in Business’ award and the crowning title of overall Clare Business of the Year 2026.

Speaking in the immediate aftermath of the presentation in an exclusive interview with media partner *The Clare Echo*, an emotional Seán Torpey reflected on what he described as an “amazing” achievement for a local enterprise with Clare blood in its veins.

“It just feels amazing,” Seán remarked as celebrations got underway. “Here at Torpey, we just love what we do in terms of sports products. Every day we get out of bed, we just love sport. To win these two awards tonight as a local Clare business, founded in Clare with Clare in our veins, is absolutely brilliant.”

There was a hugely warm reception when Torpey was announced as the overall winner at the Rine Hotel, and observers noted tears in Seán Torpey’s eyes as he walked to the stage — a moment he explained was deeply tied to the memory of his father, John Torpey, who passed away in August 2026.

John established the business, going on to earn a national reputation as what his son proudly called “the king of hurley making.”

“It’s been a challenging year,” Seán shared during the post-awards interview. “My father started our business. He made huge amounts of hurleys for people across the country and was absolutely innovative in a sport that is so culturally important to Ireland. I feel like he’s been looking down on me because he passed away in August of this year.”

Torpey emphasized that carrying forward his father’s vision remains the driving force behind the company’s evolution. “It feels nice and satisfying to have these awards and to be building on his legacy. He was never short of ambition. He came from a small village of Kilkishen in East Clare, wanted to be the best hurley maker in the country, and I think he achieved that.”

While Torpey’s heritage is steeped in hurling craft, the business has continued to push manufacturing boundaries. Alongside its renowned hurley production, the company recently expanded its sports equipment line into Padel.

Operating out of Belvoir just outside Sixmilebridge, Torpey proves that world-class manufacturing does not require an urban setting.

“We’re not in a city, we’re not in an urban environment,” Seán noted. “But what we do bring to our part of the world is innovative thinking. We’re delighted to be putting Belvoir in East Clare on the global map every time we release a new product or sell a product.”

Accepting the accolades, Seán insisted that the recognition belongs first and foremost to the workforce operating behind the scenes in East Clare. He described a company culture grounded in plain speaking, mutual respect, and open innovation.

“We pride ourselves on a no-bullshit culture,” Torpey explained. “You come into our place and every idea counts. No matter what level you are, you’re given the same respect as everybody else.

“I try and lead a team where everybody has a say, and over the last number of years, we’ve built a very strong team.”

He credited the full spectrum of company staff for driving the business forward, noting that customer loyalty stems directly from their daily dedication.

“These two awards are more about them than they are about me. At the end of the day, I’m at the top of the business, but they’re the people who actually get things done on a day-to-day basis—right from our retail staff to our sports engineers.”

Looking ahead, Torpey expressed confidence that the business will build on its double award win while expanding its global reach. “We’re taking our brand a little bit more global now. With no shortage of ambition, hopefully that will bring us some more awards, but also some more great moments along the road.”