

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Amazing stories of bravery and selflessness at Pride in Fenland Awards

Sisters aged nine and ten who've dialed 999 numerous times to save their diabetic mum and a dedicated octogenarian who has spent decades running her chapel – and still varnishes the floors herself - were among those recognised as Fenland's finest at an awards ceremony.

The Pride in Fenland Awards was bigger than ever this year attracting 117 nominations for 79 incredible groups and people who do wonderful things in our community.

Among the winners were groups and individual volunteers who go to amazing lengths to get food to struggling families, elderly people and the homeless. There was a nine-year-old who tirelessly raises funds and awareness for a friend and his brother who have an incurable disease. And a man who picks litter every day to keep his village looking good.

Cllr Sue Wallwork, Fenland District Council portfolio holder for community, said: "Tonight we met the people we all want to be – young and older. People who put others first, thrive on supporting their communities and those less fortunate and children who are brave, loyal and determined to make a difference.

"It's impossible not to be moved and inspired. We could only tell the specific stories of the few picked as winners and runners-up, but all of the nominees take home our gratitude and respect. We celebrate and thank them all. They are proof of how much greatness there is in Fenland. They all show what a difference every individual can make in the world."

All the nominees were invited to the awards ceremony at Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre on Wednesday, March 13, where there were certificates for all and trophies for winners in six categories. They all received £75 prize money too and three runners up got trophies and £50.

The Pride in Fenland awards is organised by Fenland District Council in partnership with the Fenland Citizen. There have been 15 previous annual events, with the last held in November 2022.

Tesco Extra, Wisbech, sponsored hot drinks at this year's event.

Hosts for the evening were Cllr Wallwork and Cllr Sam Clark. Cambridgeshire High Sheriff Dr Bharatkumar Khetani kindly attended and presented some of the prizes.

Winners and runners-up at the 2024 event were:

Community group volunteers

Winner – Helping Whittlesey Community Pantry. The pantry, supported by 20-plus volunteers, launched last year (2023) to redistribute food that would otherwise go to waste, nominators said. At Christmas, it made an additional difference by collecting toys and gifts for more than 100 children,

providing Christmas dinner ingredients to struggling families and cooked meals for elderly people who would have otherwise been alone.

Runner up – All Seasons, Chatteris. Nominations said the group has supported ‘so many children and families – providing activities, meals, support and guidance, free swimming sessions. It is inclusive of children with additional needs and the group leader Sam Baker has also provided emergency support to families hit by the cost-of-living crisis, with deliveries of nappies and essentials.

Young Individual or Youth Group Volunteers

Winner – Shyla Brown. Shyla is a nine-year-old, who has worked tirelessly to raise money and awareness for a friend from Peckover Primary School, Wisbech, and his brother, who both suffer from the incurable degenerative Batten Disease. Shyla, of Newton in the Isle, raised more than £2,000 by walking a marathon as well as running a cake and lemonade stall and is now training to cycle 100 miles in 24 hours, her nominations said.

One nomination said: “Shyla is always thinking of new ways to help others less fortunate than herself. We need more Shylas in the world!”

Runner up – Jack Page, of Whittlesey, is just six-years-old, but is already a serial fundraiser, supporting lots of different causes. He makes and sells jewellery and has raised a total of more than £900 for his school – Coates Primary School – and veterans with his sights now set on supporting wildlife, rescue animals and the homeless, nominations said. One nomination described Jack as a “remarkable young man.”

Individual volunteer

Winner – George Broughton, of Feed Fenland, which provides hot meals to anyone in need six days a week in Wisbech and weekly in March. One nomination said: “George is the heartbeat of Feed Fenland. He devotes all his free time to help the most vulnerable in our communities. He’s truly phenomenal. In the hardest of times (sister’s funeral) he came to serve and even apologised for not being his normal self. Him and his amazing wife give so many hours to grow this incredible charity.”

Runner up – Geoff Howes. Geoff set up Manor parkrun, Whittlesey, four years ago after being forced to retire from being a headteacher for heart surgery, a nomination said. He volunteers at parkrun every Saturday whatever the weather as well as doing lots more for the community as a Whittlesea Station Adopter and coaching junior runners.

Environmental Volunteer

Winner – David Rose, was nominated by Leverington Parish Council, for his tireless efforts to litter pick in the village keep, which he does not only as a dedicated member of Leverington [Street Pride](#) group, but daily.

Special Judges Award

Winner – Alyssa and Scarlett Bass, Whittlesey Alderman Jacobs Primary School pupils, aged nine and ten, have had to call 999 on four occasions as their mum who has complications with type 1 diabetes. One time, their mum wasn’t breathing and had to be airlifted to hospital where she spent three days in critical care. “The girls were extremely brave and continue to care for their mum,” said their grandmother Pennie Alexander, who nominated them.

Lifetime Volunteer Award

Winner – Evelyn Hamps, aged 88, has spent decades running the methodist chapel in Doddington and continues to be caretaker, fundraiser and organiser, her nominator said.

Adding: “Raising funds for its upkeep by tirelessly taking in sewing and repairs, baking cakes and pies, and using the chapel facilities for community services such as mother and toddler groups village horticultural show, organising refreshments for the village fete as well as running regular services for worship.

“The chapel building is a village landmark near the Jubilee clock tower and as a listed building its upkeep and maintenance need constant funding. Evelyn has been known to do many of the jobs herself like recently varnishing the floors. I doubt the chapel would thrive without her dedication over many years.”

After the event Evelyn said: “It’s just my life. It’s most enjoyable. I get up at 6.30 every day and go to bed at a quarter to 11.

“I usually varnish the school room floor on Boxing Day every year.”

- What could you do for your community? How about joining a Street Pride group to holding clean up events and getting involved in environmental enhancement projects? See: www.fenland.gov.uk/streetpride Or search for a local charity or group aligned with your interests and offer your time – and if there’s not one, perhaps take inspiration from our Pride in Fenland Award nominees and consider being the one to launch it!

ENDS

Photos: Must please carry the line ‘courtesy of the Fenland Citizen’ see link WeTransfer link <https://we.tl/t-D9G9P8jJ7I>