

REPORT TO COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

TOWN AWARDS: VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Report Reference	COM-24-11
Meeting Date	30 th September 2024
Agenda Item	8
Prepared by	Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Town Awards was introduced in 2013 to recognise the contributions of individuals (civic award), businesses (business award) and community groups (community award) to the local community. It was later expanded with the addition of the Youth Award (2014) and Extra Mile Award (2019).

The scheme has been sponsored since its inception by the Forum of Private Business, which has provided funding to sponsor the scheme until 2028. Decisions on awards are made by a panel comprising the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, Community Committee chair, award sponsor and Town Clerk with nominations opening in January each year.

2.0 PROPOSED NEW CATEGORY

Under the Town Awards, the council makes three Civic Awards to individuals or groups of individuals who give their time voluntarily to undertake work in the community. The bar for this award is usually quite high, with past winners being recognised for particularly exceptional, long-standing or wide ranging community support and often in a leadership role (e.g. committee members). This is the Knutsford equivalent of an MBE.

At the same time, there are a number of dedicated volunteers who support the operation of charities and community groups across the town and upon whom these organisations depend for their success. The proposed new category for the 2025 awards is *Volunteer of the Year*. This award would aim to recognise individuals for their volunteering support to a specific organisation, this would be the Knutsford equivalent of a BEM.

The category would only be open for nominations from the organisation for which someone volunteers, not the wider public. It would be designed to recognise everyday volunteers for the support they have given to an organisation in the past year (so 2024 for the 2025 Town Awards) and it would be open for the promoting organisation to say why they are the volunteer of the year – for example it could be dedicated volunteering over the year or something outstanding for that volunteer pool. The award itself would be a framed certificate.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should consider if it wishes to introduce a *Volunteer of the Year* award as part of the 2025 Town Awards.

Subject to the committee's decision the Town Clerk would update the Town Awards Scheme policy to include the award as set out in section two.