



PRESS RELEASE

2 April 2012

2012 Halton's Business and Tourism Award Winners

Paragon PE, an innovative germ-killing manufacturing firm from Widnes, has made a clean sweep of the top awards at the 2012 Halton Business and Tourism Awards.

The founder Paul Ward, who twice turned down investment offers from the BBC's Dragon James Caan, was presented with the coveted Business of the Year and Innovation Awards at a glittering awards ceremony held at The Heath Business Park's newly refurbished Orchard Suite on Friday.

Paul, a former British Army medic, came up with a ground-breaking formula for cleaning products which destroy 99.99% of superbugs. He launched his own company in 2004 and his rapid success was recently sealed by a deal with the Tesco supermarket chain worth more than £500,000pa.

The awards, which included 13 separate categories, were organised jointly by Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and Runcorn & Widnes Tourism Business Network, supported by Halton Borough Council.

A record 220 guests from the worlds of business and tourism enjoyed a three course meal and an inspiring after dinner speech from guest speaker, Olympic athlete Colin Jackson CBE.

Addressing the packed hall, Colin praised the award winners and encouraged businesses to work hard and dare to dream. "Consistent application at what you want to achieve will it make it happen," he said.

Two other double award winners were also named at the event. De Vere Village Daresbury Park celebrated after their sales team was named Visitor Economy Team of the Year and Joshua Williams won Young Tourism Professional.

And Daresbury Dairy Ice Cream scored success in two categories - Innovation in the Visitor Economy and Entrepreneur of the Year, won by Claire Whitlow.

Paula Cain, chief executive of Halton Chamber of Commerce, said: "We have had a record number of high quality entries this year and a record number of sponsors. Despite the challenging economy, Halton has produced some superb business successes this year."

And Tim Leather, chair of the Tourism Network, added: "This year's awards were an opportunity to showcase not only the major new visitor attractions which have been developed in Halton in the last twelve months, but also to celebrate the countless unsung heroes whose work, either behind the scenes or in customer service roles, really makes a difference to the quality of the experience enjoyed by visitors and residents".

The event was sponsored by Reel Cinemas, Ineos Chlor Vinyls, Mexichem, Virgin Trains, CD &P Media, ABB, Halton Borough Council, Medicash, Prologis, Selwyns Coaches.

2012 Award Winners

Halton Business of the Year: Paragon PE (Paul Ward and team presented by KC Suri, of Reel Cinemas)

New Business of the Year: Edge Equipment Hire (presented by Sarah Hughes of Mexichem)

Social Enterprise: Special Recognition - Power In Partnership (Clare Bradbury presented by Sue Weir of Medicash)

Entrepreneur of the Year: Claire Whitlow, Daresbury Dairy Ice Cream (presented by Mohammed Faizul of Reel Cinemas)

Innovation Award: Paragon PE (Paul Ward and team presented by Val Allen, Chamber Vice Chair)

Outstanding Customer Service: Beautiful You (presented by Chamber chairman Peter Cook)

Positive Environmental Impact: Karalius Brothers (not present on the night)

Exporter of the Year: Conren (Veronica Dawson presented by Paula Cain, Chamber chief executive)

Visitor Economy Team of the Year: Sales Team, De Vere Village Daresbury Park (presented by David Parr, Halton Council chief executive)

Outstanding Customer Service in the Visitor Economy: Sam Elwell, Frankie & Benny's (presented by Halton Mayor, Cllr Keith Morley)

Young Tourism Professional: Joshua Williams, De Vere Village Daresbury Park (presented by Cllr Rob Polhill, Leader Halton Council)

Innovation in the Visitor Economy: Daresbury Dairy Ice Cream (Claire and Matthew Whitlow presented by Keith Millard of Virgin Trains)

Recognition of Tourism Support: Lynn Steadman, Catalyst Science Discovery Centre (not present)

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