



HOUSING EXECUTIVE RURAL COMMUNITY AWARDS 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Executive is delighted to launch our 2017 Rural Community Awards competition. We recognise the importance of contributing to sustainable rural communities - places where people want to live and work, both now and in the future.

This competition seeks to reward and encourage those rural communities who protect and enhance their built and natural environment and make efforts to reduce their carbon footprint and promote energy efficiency. We also want to celebrate the work of volunteers and community champions who go above and beyond to run group activities, social events and support services helping to make life better for all residents.

For the chance to win one, two or all of the awards we have to offer, simply read the guidance overleaf and complete the attached application form.



Housing
Executive

**HOME ENERGY
CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY**

 sustainable
RURAL
communities

THE CATEGORIES

The competition offers three awards with two categories for each award:

CLEANER AND GREENER RURAL COMMUNITY AWARD

Large Village - population of 1000-5,000;
Small Village - population of less than 1000

The aim of this award is to encourage and celebrate the effort which is made by rural communities to improve the outlook of their settlement. Consideration will be given to activities such as: litter pick-ups, painting/maintenance of buildings, street planting and community gardens. Applicants will also be scored on any environmental activities which they have undertaken such as recycling, reducing waste etc.

RURAL COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

Large Village - population of 1000-5,000;
Small Village - population of less than 1000

The aim of this award is to focus on and reward those communities who work together to make their village or small settlement a better place to live. Consideration will be given to any aspect of community work which has been undertaken to improve the quality of life of residents with particular emphasis on facilities, services and activities which have been made available for specific groups within the community eg elderly people, young people, ethnic minorities etc. Recognition will be given to any initiatives which contribute to the improvement of health and well-being and to initiatives which aim to increase access and safety within communities.

SUSTAINABLE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Large Village - population of 1000-5,000;
Small Village - population of less than 1000

The aim of this overarching award is to acknowledge and celebrate the vital contributions made by a community who has gone 'above and beyond' to help make their village a better place to live through developing and engaging residents in activities to encourage environmental, social and economic sustainability.

In order to be eligible to apply for this award, the community group must have made an application for **both** the Cleaner and Greener Award and the Community Spirit Award and also provide a short written account of why they think they should win the overarching award.

In line with the NISRA default urban/rural definition, the Housing Executive considers all settlements with a population <5,000 as rural. For confirmation that your village is eligible please contact rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk or alternatively visit the NISRA website.

Community groups can enter either one, two or all three categories. Initial assessment will be based on the information included in the entry form but groups are also encouraged to submit supporting information such as photos, newspaper clippings or any other evidence of community activity.

Winners will be announced in October 2017 and presented with a cheque and plaque at an Housing Executive event at a date yet to be confirmed.

PRIZE MONEY

There will be £1,000 prize money available for each of the 6 categories listed above. Prize money should be used to support and extend activities/projects which benefit the rural community.

We will promote the competition throughout the year on our website and through relevant rural publications but community groups should also involve the Housing Executive in any publicity they carry out locally.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The Housing Executive Rural Community Awards are open to all community groups, residents groups, voluntary groups or other groups having a constitution and acting in the interest of a rural settlement (as defined by NISRA) providing that they meet the following criteria:

- They must be properly constituted and provide evidence of a constitution/articles of association;
- They must operate on a not-for-profit basis;
- They must demonstrate appropriate financial management eg manage finance through a bank account specifically in the name of the group.

In assessment of entry forms, additional points will be awarded to community groups who can demonstrate that activities undertaken within the village will benefit the residents of a Housing Executive estate or/and if there is Housing Community Network (HCN)/District Inter Agency (DIA)/Area Scrutiny Panel (ASP) involvement in the community group.

The competition is all about recognising your village as a whole and so consideration will only be given to one application per village. If there is more than one group operating within the village then we suggest that a collective application is made.

Please note that previous award winners will not be considered for the same award for two years following their successful application. However you must still submit an application for both the Cleaner and Greener and Community Spirit Awards in order to be eligible for the Sustainable Village of the Year Award.

ASSESSMENT

Completed application forms should be returned to the Housing Executive by 4pm on Friday 16th July 2017.

Entry forms will be reviewed by an assessment panel comprising both Housing Executive representatives and independent representatives from Supporting Communities NI. Following the initial assessment, site visits of the shortlisted applicants will be arranged in order to determine overall winners. Site visits are likely to take place throughout August 2017.

APPLICANT DETAILS

Name of village/small settlement	
Name of lead community group	
Contact name	Contact address and postcode
Email	
Tel no	
Proof of constitution is attached	Group operates on a not-for-profit basis
Group has a specific bank account	Is Group affiliated to HCN/DIA/ASP?

THE CLEANER AND GREENER AWARD

(Assessment based on application and site visit of short listed villages - submission of supporting information encouraged eg photographs). **Please outline below how your group has addressed the following:**

1. Removal of litter/reduction of general waste

2. Enhancement of natural environment eg street planting

3. Enhancement of built environment eg painting buildings

4. Maintenance of communal areas such as play parks

5. Environmental Measures eg recycling

6. Community involvement in the above activities

7. The potential impact of activities on Housing Executive estate residents

THE RURAL COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

(Application based assessment - submission of supporting information encouraged i.e. photographs, minutes, promotional material). **Please outline below how your group has addressed the following:**

1. Community events/initiatives undertaken by your Community Group

2. Efforts made to include specific and/or vulnerable groups eg elderly or young people

3. Efforts made to improve community safety eg to tackle anti-social activity

4. Efforts made to improve community health and well-being

5. Efforts made to communicate with residents on the above activities

6. The potential impact of activities on Housing Executive estate residents

SUSTAINABLE VILLAGE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Application based assessment - to be eligible applicants must have applied for both the Rural Community Spirit and the Cleaner and Greener Award. Submission of supporting information encouraged eg photographs, minutes, promotional material.

Please outline below (300 words or less) why your group should be considered for this overarching award. Please list any projects/initiatives which:

- a) Reduce fuel poverty eg oil buying club;
- b) Reduce the carbon footprint of the village eg recycling, upcycling;
- c) Encourage biodiversity and protect eco-systems eg bee keeping;
- d) Create jobs, increase local skills and capacity.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the information contained in this form is accurate and I accept that this information may be published by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Signed	Name	Date
	Position in organisation	

The form should be completed in black ink or online, printed out, signed and returned to:

The Rural Unit, Northern Ireland Housing Executive, The Housing Centre, 2 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8PB

Email: rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk Tel: (028) 9598 2502

All applications must be returned by Friday 14th July 2017 at 4pm