



# 2025



## INTRODUCTION

**The Housing Executive is delighted to launch our 2025 Rural Community Awards competition.**

We want to continue to celebrate the work of volunteers across NI who are quite often the 'unsung heroes' within our communities, going above and beyond to promote health and well-being, individual and community development, social inclusion and to help make life better for all residents.

**There are three awards on offer:**

Our **Community Champion** award is open to extraordinary individuals nominated by the rural community group they represent.

The **Rural Community Spirit award** is open to all community groups based in rural areas who work together to make their village or small settlement a better place to live.

Our **Cleaner & Greener** Rural Community award seeks to reward and encourage those rural communities who have come together to protect and enhance their built and natural environment and to promote sustainability with their residents. This year the NI Housing Council are sponsoring the Cleaner & Greener Award.

For the chance to win any of the three Rural Community Awards on offer, simply read the guidance overleaf and complete the attached application forms.



Sponsored by:

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**The Rural Community Spirit, Community Champion and Cleaner & Greener 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 within Northern Ireland (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. This year the NI Housing Council are sponsoring the Cleaner & Greener Award.

**The Community Champion Award** is open to all community groups who nominate an individual. The groups must adhere to the conditions set above.

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.

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.

All prize money is aimed at supporting and extending activities/projects which benefit the rural community.

### *Rural definition*

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](mailto:rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk) or alternatively visit the NISRA website.

**Please note that previous award winners will not be considered for the same award for two years following their successful application.**

## ASSESSMENT

Entry forms will be reviewed by an assessment panel comprising both Housing Executive representatives and independent representatives from Supporting Communities.

Completed application forms & supporting information should be returned to the Housing Executive by

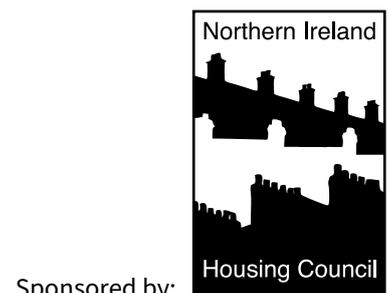
**Friday 27th February at 4pm.**

**Entries should be emailed to:**

[rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk)

Alternately, entry forms can be returned by post to:

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



**APPLICANT DETAILS** (for Community Spirit/Community Champion and Cleaner & Greener awards)

Name of village/small settlement	
Name of community group lead	
Contact name	Contact address and postcode
Email (optional)	
Tel no	
Proof of constitution is attached <input type="checkbox"/>	Group operates on a not-for-profit basis <input type="checkbox"/>
Group has a specific bank account <input type="checkbox"/>	Is Group affiliated to the HCN/Interagency Forum? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

**Please download this form to complete the boxes. If you are having issues completing please email the rural unit on [rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk) and we can send it to you in an alternative format**

## THE RURAL COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

**Category 1:** North Region (Rural areas within Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim, Causeway, Coast & Glens, Derry & Strabane)

**Category 2:** South Region (Rural areas within Ards & North Down, Newry, Mourne & Down, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Mid Ulster, Fermanagh & Omagh and Lisburn/Castlereagh).

**Prize: £1000 to the winning community group from each of the above categories.**

**Name of rural community/residents group:**

**Name of village/small settlement you represent:**

**Tell us in 300 words or less how your rural community group has worked together to make your village or small settlement a better place to live and to encourage community spirit.**

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 i.e. elderly people, young people, ethnic minorities etc. Recognition will be given to any group-led initiatives which contribute to the improvement of health and well-being through the organisation of activities or the provision of services which seek to reduce social isolation and loneliness and/or which aim to increase inclusion, accessibility and safety within communities.

**Please provide details of how you have involved the wider community in these activities with emphasis on the benefits to the tenants and residents of Housing Executive estates in your area.**

We would welcome the inclusion of photographs, promotional material, social media pictures, local press clippings etc which support your submission.

## RURAL COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD

**Category 1:** North Region (An individual living in a rural area within Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim, Causeway, Coast & Glens, Derry & Strabane)

**Category 2:** South Region (An individual living in a rural area within Ards & North Down, Newry, Mourne & Down, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Mid Ulster, Fermanagh & Omagh and Lisburn/Castlereagh).

**Prize: £500 to the community group associated with the regional winner plus an individual prize.**

**Name of person you wish to nominate for the Community Champion Award:**

**Name of rural community/residents group they represent:**

**Tell us in 300 words or less why you consider this individual to be a ‘Community Champion’.**

Please provide details of the ways in which this person shares their time, skills and knowledge of their local community, to identify what is needed and how this need can be addressed. Examples could include the organisation of community events and activities, the sourcing of available grants for community projects, sacrificing free time to help those in need and encouraging others to do the same.

**Please provide details of how this individual has involved the wider community in their activities with emphasis on the benefits to the tenants and residents of Housing Executive estates in your area.**

We would welcome the inclusion of photographs, promotional material, social media pictures, local press clippings etc which support your submission.

## CLEANER & GREENER RURAL COMMUNITY AWARD

**Category 1:** North Region (Rural areas within Antrim & Newtownabbey, Mid & East Antrim, Causeway, Coast & Glens, Derry & Strabane)

**Category 2:** South Region (Rural areas within Ards & North Down, Newry, Mourne & Down, Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon, Mid Ulster, Fermanagh & Omagh and Lisburn/Castlereagh).

**Prize: £1000 to the winning community group from each of the above categories.**

**Name of rural community/residents group:**

**Name of village/small settlement you represent:**

**Tell us in 300 words or less how your rural community group has worked together to enhance the appearance of your village and to promote and encourage sustainability among residents.**

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.

**Please provide details of how this individual has involved the wider community in their activities with emphasis on the benefits to the tenants and residents of Housing Executive estates in your area.**

We would welcome the inclusion of photographs, promotional material, social media pictures, local press clippings etc which support your submission.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the information contained in this form is accurate .

Signed	Name	Date
	Position in organisation (if applicable)	

The form should be completed online and emailed to: [rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:rural.housing@nihe.gov.uk)

Alternately, the form can be completed in black ink, printed out, signed and returned to:

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

## All applications must be returned by Friday 27th February 2026 at 4pm.

The Housing Executive will be in contact with winning individuals and/or their legal guardian to discuss potential promotional activities.

## YOUR INFORMATION

### What we do with your information

The Housing Executive collects the information on this form for the purposes of assessing your application for the 2025 Rural Community Awards. Your personal data will be used to determine your eligibility for the competition, to contact you in relation to the success of your application and for related promotional activities e.g. social media, local press, NIHE website.

The lawful basis for processing your personal information is **Consent** under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) **Article 6 (1)(a)**: *“The Data Subject has given consent to the processing for one or more specific purposes”*

### Contact permission

We would like to be able to contact you with information on further Rural Community Awards, competitions, funding opportunities, information on or invitations to events and to provide copies of our Rural Matters magazine.

If you would like to receive this information, please confirm your consent by ticking this box

### Withdrawal of Consent

You can withdraw your consent at any time by contacting us by phone on 028 95982764, email at [Rural.Housing@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:Rural.Housing@nihe.gov.uk), by post, social media or verbally to a member of staff.

### Sharing your information

Your information will be shared with the members of the Rural Community Awards Assessment Panel for the purposes of assessing your application. This will include the NIHE Rural Unit, two NIHE Area Managers and a representative from Supporting Communities and the NI housing council for the leaner and greener award.

### How long we hold your information for

Your application will be held on file for three years in line with our Data Retention Policy.

### Privacy Notice

To find out how we use your personal information and your individual rights you can view the full version of our Privacy Notice at [www.nihe.gov.uk/privacy\\_notice](http://www.nihe.gov.uk/privacy_notice)