



History of the Civic Awards

The first Midsomer Norton Civic Awards took place in 2008, and with two missed years in 2020 and 2021, this is the 14th award ceremony. This is an opportunity for The Town Council to recognize and say thank you to members of our community who have shown kindness, carried out good work, and achieved great things for Midsomer Norton.

There are lifetime awards for those who contribute over a longer period, individual awards, and awards to recognise the good work of groups. The people and groups who are recognised in this way are appreciated both for their service, and for their willingness to come forward and accept the symbolic thanks of the town, which helps to build community pride and resilience over time.

Everybody here tonight has received a nomination from the public.

Congratulations on your nomination and welcome to the Midsomer Norton Town Council Civic Awards 2023.

**1. SWALLOW | Enabling people in England with learning disabilities to live independently.
Community Group of the Year
Presented By:**

SWALLOW (South West Action for Living and Learning Our Way) has been providing support, training, care, activities and some housing for adults with learning difficulties in the Bath and North East Somerset for 30 years.

SWALLOW was established by a small group of people with learning difficulties and their families. Since 1993, it has grown to the point where it now has over 150 members who are supported in their day to day lives in many different ways. With learning, skills training and development, and to having fun with activities such as dancing, football, excursions, cooking, craft, SWALLOW Art sessions and Boogie Nights and the local cafes.

The video on the website celebrating 30 years I think says it all.

SWALLOW has consistently been judged excellent by those charged with inspecting its work and organisation, and over the decades has served many hundreds of families.

A highly talented, professional, dedicated, caring team that helps members achieve their goals. A long-serving and highly effective senior management team, SWALLOW has become very well recognised in the local community for all the help it provides to their members. They intend to continue growing to provide support to as many as they are able persons in the locality with learning difficulties.

This award is for the wonderful work of the charity and members and the significant and important contribution they all make in the local community.

2. Helen Green (Methodist Church)

Contribution to Civic Life

Presented by :

Helen Green has been nominated for a civic award this year for:

- Throughout the pandemic she was a regular volunteer at various vaccine centres in the area.
- She did weekly shopping for at least three households and continues to do so for two of them even now.
- She is a volunteer driver for the Midsomer Norton community minibus.
- At The Methodist Church she -
masterminds the twice monthly community meals
helps to run the Mother and Toddler group,
is part of the leadership team,
organises the annual shoebox appeal, gathering in and delivering up to 70 boxes each year,
oversees the preparation of funeral refreshments.
- After Christine Coram, the Methodist Minister, had a Stroke, Helen supported her by taking her to medical appointments and providing any other help which was needed.
- She regularly gives people lifts to and from the airport when required.

She happily helps out in any difficult situation.

3. Welton Rovers Social Club

Contribution to Civic Life

For providing weekly affordable community events at Welton Rovers Social Club. Friday nights feature family discos, quiz nights, and bingo. Generations of local families track Santa on Christmas Eve, celebrate New Year, Halloween, and Easter. Celebrations were held for the Jubilee and the Coronation. It is the venue for monthly Senior Social events in collaboration with the Community Trust. The social club offers free venue hire for any event. These events are run by a handful of volunteers who staff the bar, kitchen and decorate the club house.

4. Alastair Slade

Contribution to Civic Life:

Presented by:

Alastair is an ex Town Councillor and this award is for his continuing efforts to make Midsomer Norton more accessible for people with disabilities, particularly those who use wheelchairs and mobility scooter. He is passionate about improved access to roads, pavements, buildings and our outside spaces.

5. Nick Sperring

Contribution to Civic Life.

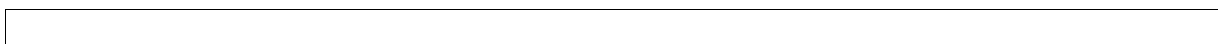
Presented by Cllr Lynda Robertson and Cllr Mike Moxham

Those Clouncillors who have worked with Nick cannot speak highly enough of him. He is responsive, and solves problems swiftly and often in his own time. He works for B&NES Highways and has made a great contribution in Midsomer Norton to improve access and safety.

6. 1st Midsomer Norton Scout Group

Community Youth Group of the Year:

Presented by: Cllr Gordon Mackay



Every week 1st Midsomer Norton Scouts educates and entertains around 150 people (young members, leaders and helpers), developing skills for life on their scouting journey. It's so important to have community groups like these in Midsomer Norton, run by the volunteer leaders who give so much of their time.

They are currently fundraising to patch-repair the hall roof so all the fun of scouting can continue without needing strategically placed buckets and frequent mopping. When the roof is watertight once more, the Scouts plan to make the hall available as a community resource when they're not running scouting activities.

7. Welton Church Runners

Community Group of the Year

Presented by:

Members of Welton Church Runners have been involved with the development of the Town Park from the outset, and always hoped for a space to hold a regular run to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and visitors. They have created the monthly 5K event in the Town Park, after investing huge efforts to establish a parkrun. They have worked with The Community Volunteers digging and laying paths and continue to push the Town Council to improve access. We are grateful for their hours of service and for breathing life into the Town Park.

**8. Midsomer Norton Community Association
Community Group of the Year
Presented by:**

The Charity was registered in 1996 and have provided vital space for community members to enjoy U3A meetings, short mat bowls, table tennis, judo, dance, Christmas Parties, Town Fayres. They have worked hard to maintain an attractive and inviting community centre and given their time to improve the lives of many.

**9. Winter Warmers Volunteers
Community Group of the Year
Presented by:**

Every Saturday this winter, Unit 14 Midsomer Norton opened its doors from 11am to 2pm, offering a warm welcome, device charging, WiFi, hot drinks and snacks, books and magazines, and creative activities (lantern making, corn crafting, letterpress printing, and more!).

By making these facilities available for FREE, our aim was to provide much-needed support and comfort to families facing the cost-of-living crisis.

[Midsomer Norton Community Trust](#) recruited local volunteers to help host the Winter Warmers sessions. Volunteers gave their time to meet and greet, serve refreshments, manage the space, and assist creative facilitators with setting up and running their activities.

A most heartfelt THANK YOU to everyone who supported and enjoyed our Winter Warmers over those five months.

They welcomed hundreds of visitors to Unit 14, distributed hundreds of hot drinks, pieces of fruit and snack bars, celebrated Carnival, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day, and together learnt a whole load of new skills along the way... including corn weaving, origami, letterpress, lantern making, and loads more. Our facilitators were Little Lost Robot, Jo Corbett, Susan Burnett, Molly Mural, the Letterpress Collective, Kelly Hall, Jax Williams, Creative Space, Gemma Esclarin Gros, and Studio Meraki. They led their sessions with compassion and creativity and we wouldn't hesitate to recommend them.

Our visitor welcome volunteers - Kathryn, Ann, Pat, Iris, Caroline, Mandy and Jo - were wonderful from start to finish and we can't thank them enough for all their hard work, each and every Saturday.

Thanks must also go to the National Grid Community Fund and to Midsomer Norton Town Council for making this project possible.

10. Midsomer Norton Community Trust - Cultural Consortium

Community Project of the Year

The Local Cultural Programme is run by Midsomer Norton Cultural Consortium, a group led by Midsomer Norton Community Trust with representatives from Midsomer Norton Town Trust, Midsomer Norton Town Council, High Street businesses, Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust, Midsomer Norton & District Carnival Association, Merriman Theatre Group, Midsomer Norton Schools, the Friends of St Chad's and Chilcompton Surgeries, Churches Together, and Somer Valley FM.

Kicking off in February 2022 with the re-launch of the Midsomer Norton Wassail and the first Midsomer Norton Window Wonderland, the project included High Street activities for [Heritage Open Days](#), the creation of a Midsomer Norton Brand. High Street Heroes Award Winning Films, Arts Trails, Artist Benches and Murals

Beth Whalley, Midsomer Norton Community Trust, was the part-time Engagement Coordinator for the Local Cultural Programme and cannot be here tonight as she is on maternity leave.

11. Jo Davis – Somer Valley FM

Community Volunteer of the Year
Presented by:

From Richard Burgess:

As Station Manager at Somer Valley FM, I led and managed over 70 volunteers. In March 2020, when the first Covid lockdown was announced, my predecessor Dom Chambers asked Jo whether she would consider presenting a Breakfast Show, to help spread some cheer whilst keeping listeners updated on the latest pandemic news. As a Community radio station, it was permissible to travel to our station and work in a voluntary capacity.

When I took over Dom's role in August 2020, Jo was going strong, entertaining, informing, and educating our local listeners.

Finally, lockdown restrictions eased in early 2022, and Jo returned to work for the Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership. But this did not deter her radio desires. Jo continued to awake every weekday morning, diligently and faithfully at 5.45am, or after two snoozes at 5.51am, gets ready, travels in from Peasedown St John, and presents two hours of consistently fabulous radio from 7am until 9am every weekday. Then she goes to work! And for even more fun, she also presents a Sunday show for a further two hours.

Her achievements are remarkable. The dedication and commitment to producing 12 hours of radio every week, within a very early morning start from Monday to Friday, few could do. The quality of her shows, daily, is at least the equal of any local or national radio presenter broadcasting during these hours. Her online and on-demand listening figures are our highest, which reflects what great shows she broadcasts to our listeners, and if people can't listen live, then they want to catch up to hear her. Listener engagement is frequent, as she receives many requests whilst on-air, from around the UK and beyond.

We attend numerous outside events, which includes every Farmer's Market, along with all Midsomer Norton Festivals. Jo always attends, which several councillors can testify to.

I am very lucky with having so many willing and able volunteers. Jo typifies this. She is a credit to her family, Somer Valley FM, and the Midsomer Norton area.

With her commitment and dedication to our local area, day-in-day-out for over 3 years, she is a worthy candidate for your category.

12. Hugh Jeffery - Midsomer Norton Rugby Club

Sports Achievement of the Year.

At the time of nomination Hugh had scored 30 tries in 18 games making him the 5th highest male scorer in country and 2nd at amateur level. He is a consummate team player and his team mates were proud to nominate him.

13. William Weller

Lifetime Achievement Award

William Weller has been running the free legal advice surgery at Thatcher + Hallam LLP for almost 40 years, volunteering his own time between 5pm and 6pm every Thursday, and at all hours during the pandemic lockdowns.

His free legal advice initiative has helped hundreds of people in the local MSN community and he himself has always been a driving force between all the ways the firm tries to help locally with free legal advice and legal aid for family law. It has been a wonderful and significant contribution whilst at the same time making legal advice easily accessible to those in need who otherwise would probably not be able to afford it.

14. Roger Bowring

Lifetime Achievement Award

Roger has volunteered for SWALLOW Charity for 10 years this month! Roger helps to run two singing sessions each week at SWALLOW on a Wednesday and a Friday. Roger supports people with a learning disability to choose their songs and to join in the ruckus "Songbirds" Sessions.

Despite having a mild learning disability himself and a wife with learning disability and physical disabilities Roger never misses a session at SWALLOW and he always remains calm despite frequent arguments over song choices and let's just say that some of the singing is an "acquired taste" Roger has the patience of a saint.

15. Rosemary Blatchford

Lifetime Achievement Award

As well as her contribution to the Community Trust, Paradis Trio Concerts, Community Cinema, National Theatre Live, and Midsomer Norton Fayre. Rosemary raised £4108.50 for the RUH Breast Cancer Care unit this year at her ladies who lunch garden party. One hundred and twenty ladies attended, which was a record and she has now raised over thirty five thousand pounds in ten years.