Awards honour kindness and community spirit across Cornwall

Wednesday 8 November, 2023

A number of local people and organisations who have made a difference to their communities and neighbourhoods in Cornwall have been thanked by social landlord Coastline Housing.

The Cornish housing charity presented a number of ‘Customer at the Heart’ Awards to recognise the many ways in which people have made a difference to the lives of others by offering their kindness, help and inspiration, with winners voted for by Coastline customers

Receiving the award for Green Champion was Charles Allwright. He has been involved with the Pengegon Allotment Association for 50 years on the Pengegon Estate in Camborne and is currently the Chair. He shares his produce with friends, family and sometimes Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change. Running the allotments gives lots of people in the local community the ability to grow their own food and Charles is always there with some patient advice.

Jack Brown received the Young Hero Award for using his skills and passion to help produce an accredited creative writing course at Coastline’s Homeless Service. This has been an inspiration and motivation to many clients. Jack was praised for his thoughtfulness and empathy to others, always reaching out to connect and help people.

Laura Allsworth has been coordinating the West Cornwall Shoebox Appeal for a number of years and was given the Partnership Working Award. The shoebox project focuses on local communities creating shoeboxes with essential items and gifts for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, to be given out over the Christmas period. Thanks to her hard work, customers of Coastline’s Homeless Service have benefitted from receiving a shoebox at Christmas each year and having something to open during what can be a difficult time for many. Customers thought she was truly an unsung local hero.

Lisa O’Kane and Sian Corban were given the Your Next Step award for a project they have been working on to help families who have children with additional needs. Lisa and Sian are both single parents who bonded through their shared experiences. They created a Community Interest Company called Hidden Treasures thanks to support from the European Social Funded Building Futures programme of which Coastline Housing was a delivery partner. They are planning to provide affordable, inclusive and regulated childcare, overnight short breaks, play schemes and holiday camps for families in Cornwall who have children with additional needs. They also plan to begin a community growing project and donate 50% of all the fresh produce to families identified as in need, living in impoverished areas of Cornwall.

The Community Volunteer award was given to Lynne Cawkwell for the amazing asset she has become to the Miners Court Day Centre Team in Redruth. Lynne retired in 2020 after working for many years in the catering department at Treliske Hospital. She decided a volunteering opportunity with Coastline would be a great way to get back out into the local community and give something back. Lynne now plays a pivotal role in the organisation and running of activities for customers two days a week in the Day Centre. She was nominated for being kind, caring and inspiring others to volunteer too.

Kevin Brennan became a volunteer in the Partner Programme with Coastline’s Homeless Service, working as a garden volunteer and donating his time to allotments every week. He also imparts his knowledge to other customers who want to help out. This led to him being awarded the Partner Programme accolade.

Nigel Trevena was given an award for the work he does with the ‘Miners Minders’ group at Miners Court, befriending other new customers who move into the Extra Care scheme. Customers fed back that they wanted more activities in the evenings so, as Nigel had an interest in playing cards, he volunteered to take on a weekly games night. He has since also helped with weekly coffee mornings and fundraising events.

Wendy James received the Good Neighbour Award after the impact she made since moving into Veor House, Camborne. Wendy is fantastic at communicating with her neighbours, making sure their voices are heard and their questions are answered. She attends meetings between residents and colleagues from Coastline’s Tenancy Team and articulates everyone’s views in a diplomatic and assertive way.

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John Stevens and Wendy James were also presented with Long Service Awards – a category that isn't voted on, but is awarded by Coastline to recognise and value the dedication of volunteers. Both John and Wendy have volunteered for over ten years, and have contributed so much in that time.

Finally, the award for Best Garden was given to Kathryn Dearden of Redruth for having transformed her garden since moving in. The beautiful, colourful space was spotted by Coastline colleagues whilst out in the community, and they nominated her for recognition.

Allister Young, CEO at Coastline Housing, said: "It was truly inspiring to hear all the many ways in which our award winners and runner ups are helping people in their local communities day in, day out. In a time when many of us are bombarded with negative news headlines on a daily basis, it's a heartening reminder of the innate goodness in people and the acts of kindness that happen on a daily basis on our doorsteps. Many congratulations to all our worthy winners."

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