Press Release

8th June 2019

**2019 NW Business Awards winners revealed!**

Celebrating the best in business throughout the Derry and Strabane Council area, the 2019 North West Business Awards took place at the Whitehorse Hotel on Friday 7th June.

It was an evening celebrating youth, experience and innovation in the North West with lots of surprises and recognition for local businesses.

The awards were sponsored by Derry City and Strabane District Council and invited nominations from businesses and entrepreneurs operating within the council area.

The award organisers, City Centre Initiative (CCI) thanked everyone who nominated, supported and attended the event this year and said it was an evening of celebration, respect and appreciation for some of the most industrious businesses and entrepreneurs within the region.

Jim Roddy, Chief Executive of CCI said “I think everyone tonight would agree that we have some of the finest examples of business in the North West here this evening, celebrating everyone from the young and not so young doing their best in enterprise. Our winners and nominees are very deserving of these awards.

“I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Derry City and Strabane District Council and all our sponsors for supporting local business and their achievements, without them we would not be able to host these awards.

“Selecting winners from the nominations we receive is always very difficult and our panel of judges worked rigorously through the nominations to select very worthy winners for these 2018/19 awards. Not only our winners, but those shortlisted should be very proud to represent the best of the North West this year. To those who didn’t make the shortlist this year, we would encourage you to keep applying, 2020 could be the year for you all!”

The big winner of the evening in the Business/Entrepreneur of the Year category was John Harkin of Alchemy Technology Services. The company is a resourcing operation, that works with Insurance Software Providers and System Integrators to deliver new talent and much needed certified expertise directly into the Insurance market.

Founder and CEO John Harkin launched Alchemy in September 2018, with a vision of creating long lasting, fulfilling careers for the people of the North West by equipping them with the skills and knowledge that are in demand in the marketplace.

Since the launch 8 months ago, Alchemy has recruited and provided permanent roles for over 40 local people. By the end of 2019, Alchemy is expected to employ 80 full time, permanent employees.

Congratulating the winners, Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Councillor Michaela Boyle, said: “I want to extend my congratulations to all who were shortlisted for the NW Business Awards and all who picked up accolades this evening. These businesses are playing a hugely important role in driving the local economy and adding to the diversity of exciting products and services available here in the North West. They are an inspiration to anyone setting out in the business world. This is an exciting time for Derry and Strabane as we look forward to progressing our City Deal, our Strategic Growth Plan, and all the opportunities they will bring for both local business and those who choose to invest in our skilled and talented people.”

Other award winners included; Allstate, who scooped up Large Business of the Year and MPA recruitment who took the Small Business of the Year award.

**The 2019 NW Business Award Winners…**

**Creative Industries Business of the Year**

* Fashion and Textile Design Centre

**NW Pub of the Year**

* Guildhall Taphouse

**Restaurant of the Year**

* Soda and Starch

**Hotel of the Year**

* Shipquay Boutique Hotel

**Retailer of the Year**

* Sproules Jewellers

**Business Hero of the Year**

* Sean Dillon

**Young Business Person of the Year**

* Gerard McElwee – McElwee Custom Motorcycles

**NW Award for Environmental Excellence in Business**

* Seagate

**Contribution to NW Economy**

* North West Regional College (NWRC)

**NW Excellence in Innovation**

* Joule Group

**NW Excellence in Leadership**

* Garvan O’Doherty

**Best use of Marketing, Digital and/or Social Media**

* North West Regional College (NWRC)

**Best NW Small Business**

* MPA Recruitment

**Best NW Large Business**

* Allstate

**Overall Business/Entrepreneur of the Year**

* John Harkin – Alchemy Technology Services

**Visit Derry Conference of the Year**

* Jude Anderson – Community Dental Service Annual Presidential and Scientific Meeting.

Further information on the awards can be found at the Facebook and Twitter pages @NWBizAwards or via the websites [www.cciderry.com](http://www.cciderry.com).

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