

Treorchy crowned “UK’s best” in the Great British High Street Awards

- Treorchy in the Rhondda Valley, Wales has been crowned ‘High Street of the Year’
- ‘Rising Star of the Year’ awarded to The Square, Kelso, Scotland
- The 2 high streets, commended for innovation and community engagement, win £15,000 for the local community

Treorchy High Street has been crowned the UK’s best in this year’s [Great British High Street Awards](#), after becoming the heart of community events and digital training.

The high street, in the Rhondda Valley, was named ‘High Street of the Year’ at the prestigious awards, in proud partnership with Visa, and wins £15,000 for the local community.

Boasting an occupancy rate of 96%, Treorchy was commended for its local community led year-round cultural events including an outdoor cinema, an arts festival and an annual Christmas Parade, that are driving footfall.

It was also highly-praised for the digital training and support offered to local businesses. The [Visit Treorchy](#) website and accompanying marketing campaign now provides businesses with an online platform, when only 32% of businesses had a website previously.

It is the second year in a row that a high street in Wales has claimed the top prize, following Crickhowell’s triumph in the 2018 Awards.

The winners were announced at a ceremony in Edinburgh, attended by the High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP and representatives from the 39 shortlisted high streets.

‘Rising Star of the Year’, which identifies the high street taking the lead to adapt and diversify, was awarded to The Square in Kelso, a thriving market town in the Scottish Borders. It was praised for its innovative initiatives designed to drive footfall and consumer spending on the high street.

Congratulating all the winners, Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Congratulations to Treorchy on being crowned the UK’s best high street in this year’s Awards and to Wales for winning the top prize for the second year in a row.

Our Great British High Streets are one of the great cornerstones of our society. They are places where our economies and our communities flourish and key to our levelling up agenda.

This government, Visa and our other partners are committed to helping communities and businesses not just to survive but to thrive by adapting to the changing high street.

I am delighted to see so many other dedicated individuals and organisations recognised for their efforts to secure the prosperity and vibrancy of our high streets, too.

High Streets Minister, Rt Hon Jake Berry MP said:

Every place has its own unique strengths and challenges, but all our town centres and high streets have one thing in common – they are the beating heart of our communities.

The Great British High Street Awards celebrate the grit and determination of local people who are dedicated to supporting their communities, growing their local economy and finding innovative solutions to modern day challenges.

Today in Edinburgh I saw the very best of our high streets and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of this year's winners and to give my personal thanks to the individuals and communities helping to build the future of the high street. I am delighted to see such strong examples of thriving high streets from every nation in our United Kingdom.

High Street of the Year, Treorchy

Adrian Emmett, owner of The Lion pub in Treorchy, nominated the village's high street for the Great British High Street Awards following successful high street initiatives undertaken by the local community, including regular cultural events such as a Christmas Parade and the Rhondda Arts Festival.

A newly launched '[Visit Treorchy](#)' website has also helped give local businesses a greater presence online, while a strategic partnership provides digital training and support to local entrepreneurs.

A 'Hop, Shop and Save' scheme offers businesses advertising space on local buses in return for high street discounts of up to 20% to bus users. The scheme is helping to promote public transport, reduce air pollution and drive footfall to high street outlets – 80% of which are independently owned.

Rising Star of the Year, The Square, Kelso

Tina Newton, of Border Cookware in Kelso, nominated the high street for the Rising Star Award to ensure survival of the community and boost the town's civic pride.

The Square, Kelso aims to launch a bespoke app to showcase all that the area

has to offer by promoting a variety of local events, activities, businesses and organisations in order to raise awareness and ultimately to drive continued footfall to the area.

Within the app will be a local guide, as well as an interactive PDF linking to the [Visit Kelso](#) website and individual business websites.

The initiative offers promotion and mutual benefit for other businesses and local events to drive consumer engagement and interest from locals and visitors alike.

Jeni Mundy, Managing Director, UK & Ireland, Visa, commended the community of Treorchy, saying:

Treorchy and The Square in Kelso are fantastic examples of communities that have made huge strides in transforming their high street to significantly improve the experience for locals and visitors alike. Their success goes to show that where you shop really does matter.

For Treorchy, a rich cultural calendar combined with a desire to experiment with new ways to drive people to shop local shows how independent businesses can come together to make the high street a better place for all. The Square, Kelso showcases a clear understanding of its community and drive to innovate to help the high street thrive.

Visa's research reveals four in five consumers (80%) say that a thriving high street makes a town or village a more appealing destination, underlining why we all need to get behind our local businesses.

Speaking at the Awards ceremony, Adrian Emmett of The Lion Pub, Treorchy, commented:

We are honoured to be named the UK's best high street and hugely grateful to both the Great British High Street Awards and Visa for putting our beloved high street on the map! It is undoubtedly the commitment, hard work, dedication and drive of the whole community of Treorchy and the surrounding area that has helped us to win this!

Tina Newton of Border Cookware, Kelso says:

We are delighted to be recognised as Rising Star of the Year. The Award is testament to the hard work of our community team in encouraging people back to the high street through innovation and customer experience! We are excited to deliver the initiatives

during the year ahead and are extremely thankful to the Great British High Street Awards and Visa for the opportunity.

Eight high streets, 2 from each Home Nation, also won awards in the Champion High Street and Rising Star categories, winning £5,000 for community initiatives. High Street Heroes – those individuals who have gone above and beyond for their local high street – were also recognised.

The full list of winners is as follows:

High Street of the Year:

Rising Star of the Year:

Champion High Streets:

- England: Belper Town Centre, Belper
- Scotland: Main Street, Prestwick
- Wales: High Street, Treorchy
- Northern Ireland: High Street, Newtownards

Rising Star High Streets:

- England: Yarm High Street, Stockton-on-Tees
- Scotland: The Square, Kelso
- Wales: Palace Street, Caernarfon
- Northern Ireland: Newry City Centre, Newry

The winning high streets across all the categories were commended for demonstrating their commitment to their local community, improving customer experience, having an environmental mind-set, an innovative approach to retail and providing community leadership.

The Great British High Street Awards 2019, run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in proud partnership with Visa, recognises and celebrates local achievements on the UK's high streets and supports the communities in which we live and work.

For more information about the Great British High Street Awards 2019 and details on all the winners, visit: www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk

[Environment Minister Rebecca Pow visits Wallasea Island](#)

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow visited the Wallasea Nature Reserve today to see first-hand the extensive efforts to help the coast and its wildlife adapt

in the face of climate change.

The Minister was touring the Essex site ahead of the introduction of the landmark Environment Bill in the near future, which will address the biggest environment priorities of our age – including restoring and enhancing nature.

[RSPB's](#) Wallasea Island Nature Reserve, home to the Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project, was created using more than three million tonnes of earth from the tunnels and shafts created by the Crossrail scheme in London. Spanning 900 hectares, it is Europe's largest coastal habitat restoration project, aiming to restore marshland lost due to coastal erosion and rising sea levels, helping to reduce flood risk.

The habitats – mudflats, saltmarsh, brackish marsh and saline lagoons – provide an increasingly popular home to a wide range of birds, including waders and migratory species such as brent geese and avocets, and other wildlife. The site also locks up two tonnes of carbon per hectare per year.

The Environment Minister also visited nearby Allfleet Marsh, part of the Wallasea site, to see the local Special Protection Area (SPA). The SPA was designated in 2018 as an extension to the Crouch and Roach Estuaries SPA. The area spans 119 hectares, and as well as supporting migratory species such as dark-bellied brent geese, is also permanent home for 20,000 waterbirds, including lapwing, shoveler and golden plover.

During the visit, the Minister met with RSPB representatives, including Martin Harper, RSPB's Director of Conservation, to discuss the Government's views on environmental protection and efforts taken to date by the charity to restore coastal environments. Joining the Minister and RSPB were [Natural England](#) Area Manager, Aidan Lonergan; and the [Environment Agency](#) Project Manager, Paul Miller.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

This Government is committed to tackling the climate and nature emergency and leaving our precious environment in a better state than we inherited for future generations to enjoy.

Our commitments to the environment are ambitious and our forthcoming Environment Bill – the first in over 20 years – will drive a world-leading programme of reform to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age.

It was inspiring to see first-hand the remarkable success story at Wallasea – a world-leading example of coastal restoration – and to discuss with RSPB their ambitions not only for the Wild Coast Project, but for other coastal schemes and wider environmental protections for the UK's nature into the future.

RSPB's Director of Conservation, Martin Harper said:

Wallasea Island is the largest coastal habitat creation of its kind in Europe. It's an example of how we must adapt to rising sea levels by recreating an ancient wetland landscape of mudflats, saltmarsh, lagoons and pasture that store carbon, support wildlife and benefit the local communities.

It's a beacon of hope, perfectly highlighting how we should respond to the ecological and climate emergency.

The visit comes as yet another step that follows the Government's commitment to marine protection and follows a recent announcement of two new and extended SPAs in Solent and Teesmouth. It also follows [the announcement of the upcoming Seabird Conservation Strategy](#) and comes ahead of the introduction of the Environment Bill.

[Crime news: police station telephone advice tender launch](#)

We will shortly invite tenders to provide telephone advice to members of the public detained in police stations on suspicion of certain criminal offences.

The Crime Defence Direct (CDD) work will be delivered under a contract which will last for 12 months from 1 June 2020.

This new contract will be in addition to the one already existing contract for the delivery of CDD services.

Who can apply?

The procurement process will be open to any organisations able to meet our minimum requirements.

Once the tender is open organisations wishing to apply will need to submit a response to the:

- selection questionnaire
- CDD invitation to tender

The procurement process will assess tenders on both quality and price.

Tender requirements

We are seeking a contractor who can deliver a high quality service and mobilise quickly to deliver the service from 1 June.

Organisations will need to have the ability to operate a 24 hour service. This includes having the necessary staff and infrastructure in place to deliver the service in accordance with the contract.

Any organisation wishing to tender will also need to meet specific requirements when submitting their bid. These include:

Organisations will also be assessed against criteria which explore how they will deliver the CDD service.

Further information

Details will be published on GOV.UK when the tender opens:

[GOV.UK: tenders](#)

Nigel Topping appointed UK High Level Climate Action Champion

Nigel Topping has today been appointed by the UK Government as its High Level Climate Action Champion ahead of UN climate talks, COP26.

Mr Topping will help drive action from businesses, investors, organisations, cities, and regions on climate change and coordinate this work with governments and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Champion role was created in 2015 at the climate talks in Paris to help realise ambitions to lower carbon emissions and build resilience to climate change.

It is held for two years and Mr Topping will work alongside the Chilean COP High Level Climate Action Champion, Gonzalo Muñoz.

Mr Topping was most recently CEO of We Mean Business, a coalition of businesses working to accelerate the transition to a zero carbon economy. Prior to that he was Executive Director of the Carbon Disclosure Project.

He brings valuable expertise from 18 years in the private sector, having worked across the world in emerging markets and manufacturing.

COP26 High Level Climate Action Champion Nigel Topping said:

I am thrilled to be taking on the role of High Level Champion to support a successful COP26.

I will work tirelessly with the non-state actor community to help bring the very best of their work to Glasgow.

2020 is the year for us all to become climate champions and the start of a decade in which we reduce emissions by at least 50 per cent. This will require each one of us pushing our actions to the limit, then taking another step.

COP26 President-Designate Claire O'Neill said:

I am so pleased that Nigel Topping has agreed to play this vitally important Champion role in the year where we have to motivate everyone, from governments and businesses to regions, cities and citizens to commit to urgent climate action.

Nigel's incredible experience in building coalitions and driving the focus on targets and actions means he is the best person we could possibly have in this job and I'm so looking forward to working together this year.

UNFCCC Executive Secretary Patricia Espinosa said:

I am very pleased to welcome Nigel Topping as the new High-Level Champion. We have seen incredible momentum from non-state actors as we work towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and continue to boost climate ambition in all sectors of society.

I'm confident Mr Topping brings the skills and experience needed to keep the momentum going and achieve the deep transformation to reach a zero-carbon future.

Extension of Peter Clarke's tenure as HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

The Secretary of State has announced a short extension to Peter Clarke's term of office as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, from 31 January 2020

until 30 April 2020.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons is a Royal appointment.

Extensions are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and have been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

HMIP is an independent inspectorate, reporting directly to Ministers, but operating independently of government and the services under its scrutiny. HMCIP has a duty to report on conditions for and treatment of those in prisons, young offender institutions, secure training centres, police and court custody suites, customs custody facilities and military detention in England and Wales, and immigration detention facilities within the UK.

Biography

Peter Clarke was appointed to the role of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons on 1 February 2016. Mr Clarke is a retired senior police officer, who served in the Metropolitan Police Service for more than 30 years. He rose to the rank of Assistant Commissioner and also served as Head of the Anti-Terrorist Branch and National Co-ordinator of Terrorist Investigations. In 2014 he was appointed Education Commissioner for Birmingham to conduct an inquiry into the allegations concerning Birmingham schools arising from the 'Trojan Horse' letter. Mr Clarke also served on the Board of the Charity Commission until January 2016.