Winners crowned at Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards 2023

South Bank business success has been celebrated in spectacular fashion.

More than 400 people enjoyed a powerful West End performance as ‘Les Miz’ combined with biz and fizz for a night of celebration in Scunthorpe.

Organisers of the Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards had hoped the theme would reflect how courage, passion and resilience of human spirit was as evident in the region’s commerce and industry as it was in early 19th century Paris. And it was lapped up by a delighted crowd packed into The Baths Hall.

Read more: Humber Renewables Awards 2023 winners and reaction

A “shining example of what a thriving business community can achieve”, was how Albert Weatherill, Hull and Humber Chamber of Commerce president described it, praising entrepreneurs and leaders for the “incredible work accomplished” in “pushing boundaries, embracing change and making invaluable contributions to the local economy”.

The overall winner selected from the 13 categories was Scunthorpe packaging specialist CorrBoard, a business that has undergone a huge transformation under recent new leadership.

The 320,000 sq ft plant is closing in on a decade’s operations at Normanby Enterprise Park, and secured the Forrester Boyd Business of the Year Award, after wowing with The HETA Green Sustainability accolade.

Rob Burgin took the helm just over a year ago. The managing

director, also a finalist in the Wilkin Chapman Business Person of the Year category, said: “We have a fantastic team and this is brilliant for our business. We are progressing, and the way our people are progressing makes me extremely proud. This reflects on how sustainable we are, how we support a circular economy, reducing carbon to become a really responsible manufacturer. We are not a huge employer – we have just under 100 people – but they all live in Scutnhorpe and this is fantastic for everyone back in the business.”

With a £7 million anaerobic digestion plant on-site, food waste is taken in to power the sprawling operation to make the boxes used by the industry and its supply chain, alongside other fast-moving consumer goods, as well as industrial packaging.

“The green award is so important to us as a manufacturer, and being recognised for excellence is just the icing on the cake,” Mr Burgin added.

Work underway at Rocal Group’s Endurance factory.
(Image: Jamie Bubb)

Unlocking success

Winners say recognition opens doors, but it was manufacturing them that brought the accolades for two companies.

Scunthorpe’s Bradbury Security won The Technical Absorbents International Trade Award while Brigg’s Rocal took The North Lincolnshire Business Investment Award.

For Bradbury a contract on a global stage wowed judges.

It provided the security doors for the 80,000 capacity Lusail Stadium in Qatar, the venue for the 2022 World Cup Final, and the first ever temporary stadium used on such a stage, Stadium 974.

Anil Patel, group sales and marketing director, said: “It was

a fantastic prestigious contract for us. To have a Scunthorpe family-owned business on a world-stage like that was incredible."

Relations with contractors it had previously served and the holding of advanced manufacturing standards at the Foxhills site paved the way for the proud firm, with chairman Tim Strawson having picked up the Lifetime Achievement award last time the event was held in Scunthorpe, back in 2019.

"We work to a very high quality, these were manufactured during Covid, so it was a big prize for us when things were tough, and we got them all out on time," Mr Patel said.

Rocal at Brigg may well have eyes on that prize in the coming years too.

The North Lincolnshire Business Investment Award was won by the firm, which also specialises in extrusions. Under its Endurance Doors trading brand it supplies a wide range of premium, solid timber core composite doors to more than 1,000 installers across the UK, and was the subject of a management buy-out two years ago.

Managing director Stephen Nadin, said: "We have grown considerably over the past five years, we have expanded the factories, invested in sustainability, and are continuously investing in people, training and the community.

"It is going really well, we have a really good team, we're at 250 people now, and we're looking at exporting to the US."

Ciaran Savage has taken Card Industry Professionals international.

Transactions transfix judges

Cash may be king, but card payment processing and funding provision saw crowns taken at the Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards.

Ciaran Savage, a fintech services entrepreneur recognised by Forbes, was named Wilkin Chapman Business Person of the Year.

His Card Industry Professionals business has grown significantly in six years of operations, providing small businesses with the means to take payments.

From a managed office on Grimsby's Europarc the company now has its own base in Aylesby, with hundreds of agents working remotely, and internationally, having entered the Irish market

after strong early success in the UK.

Shortlisted last year, since then Mr Savage has attracted significant equity investment into the business, specialising in terminals, point of sale and online solutions for retailers, hair and beauty salons and hospitality businesses.

He said: “From nothing just over five years ago we now support thousands of businesses and process millions of transactions. I had the dream and the ambition, but lots of people have worked hard for it, they have joined the company and supported the growth.

“There are lots of talented, hard-working loyal people who want to make national businesses and success stories. This has given us the scale to grow. To get such recognition tells us we’re heading in the right direction.”

The University of Lincoln Small Business Award went to Brigg-based broker Victor Finance. Launched almost 40 years ago by John Williams and specialising in asset finance, refinancing and invoice discounting, the second generation business – now headed by sons Gareth and Stuart – took on the market town’s imposing NatWest Bank as its base in 2020, acquiring East Yorkshire Asset Finance late last year.

“Since our Dad started in 1985, we’ve always helped businesses, whether they were growing, expanding or struggling and needing a lot of assistance,” Gareth said.

“We are relationship driven, we want to look after our clients in the good times and the tough times,” Stuart added. “We’ve seen clients win several times before, but we’ve never put ourselves forward, we’ve always watched on and stayed under the radar!”



Drax biomass wagons arrive at the power station’s reception facility.
(Image: Drax Group)

Customer service the key – whatever the sector

Going the extra mile for the end customer saw success on track, in the labs and shining from the rooftops.

Major developments alongside Drax to keep the biomass wagon fleet in fine working order saw Davis Wagon Services Ltd win the HBP Systems Business Growth Award.

John Hall, managing director of the Immingham-headquartered firm, has seen a dedicated maintenance facility grow at Ferrybridge, as the company’s commitment has expanded with the volume requirements of the power giant.

The head of a 72-strong team said: “This award is down to

values and vision, and collaboration over a period of time, but it is all about our employees. We have people in the field working 365 days a year in all weathers. A lot of jobs weren't recognised until Covid, that key-worker status highlighted a lot, and it made us realise how valued we were. It perhaps felt like a forgotten industry, so recognition now, and recognition for what we did though Covid is tremendous.

"We continue to grow, though it is not all about that, it is about client retention too. It is easier to keep a customer than get a new one, so while it is a small market, we have a good market share."

Grimsby's Technical Absorbents – overall winner in 2021 – was back again to take the Pepperells Innovation Award.

The Humber Bank operation has developed a low shrink medical dressing fibre that can sustain sterilisation.

John Rose, product development director, said: "What would seem very simple was technically very difficult. It is now going into commercialisation and it opens a lot of doors that were previously shut to us. A lot of technology was factored in and it has been amazing, a game-changer for us."

Super absorbent fabrics produced by Technical Absorbents Ltd. (Image: TAL)

Having triumphed at the Humber Renewables Awards last week, Grimsbys' RSUK Group made it quite a start to May with the Bridge McFarland New Business Award.

A building maintenance specialist with a strong solar installation offering, it is enabling smaller companies to embrace green technology and the energy savings and efficiencies it brings.

Bruno Hickson, managing director, said: "We're having a brilliant time! The renewables award was great recognition for what we are doing, to be alongside some of the bigger companies, whereas this shows people in wider industry we are being recognised for the important role we are playing. Ultimately we are offering bespoke solutions to people, showing it isn't just bigger firms that can spend the money and benefit from it. We can work with home-owners and SMEs."

Landmark Cafe and Restaurant, Ashby-cum-Fenby.
(Image: GrimsbyLive/Donna Clifford)

Winning in hospitality

A duo of awards were dished out for South Humber hospitality stars.

While the Healing Manor top team delivered fine dining for the 400 guests at The Baths Hall ahead of next month’s Visit England Awards for Excellence for which they are shortlisted, accolades were heading back to the Landmark Cafe and Restaurant at Ashby-cum-Fenby and San Pietro in Scunthorpe.

The venue with a view in the foothills of the Lincolnshire Wolds picked up the North East Lincolnshire Business Development Award.

Lawrence Marsh’s recent addition takes in a sweeping view of

North East Lincolnshire, the estuary and near North Sea beyond, and he told how initial employment expectations to gain ERDF support have been smashed.

“I’m absolutely delighted, it was just a great moment to recognise all the effort that has gone in,” he said. “It is going very well, the original objective was to create six-and-a-half full time jobs, now I have five full time chefs, about five full time front of house staff and another 15 part time staff.

“It has been very well received, it was built by a local developer, based on produce sourced locally wherever wecan, and serves the local community.”

Jenna Shelby Bird was in shock at her award. Named Dataplan Employee of the Year, judges heard how she had joined San Pietro in the very early days of the restaurant adding function facilities and hotel rooms.

“I’ve been there seven years and worked my way up the business,” she said. “I started as a waitress, on work experience, and now I’m events manager, helping build up that side of the business. It is incredible to be recognised like this, I really love doing what I do.”

Another individual accolade was The Sylvester Keal Young Business Person of the Year Award, with Redbourne blacksmith Cameron Huggins the recipient. “I was just pleased to be here, so I’m chuffed to bits to win,” he said. “It is a rare trade, a bit niche, and the team is me, pretty much, so to achieve at something that is often done by hordes of people, is great.”

Alongside the mainstays of gates and railings at the 300-year-old forge he brought back to use in 2018 after more than 60 years of sitting idle, he completes heritage work and teaches the trade offering blacksmithing experiences.

YMCA Humber’s 74-bed 2021 Freeman Street addition, which

includes a community hub alongside the supported accommodation offer, won it the Hull & Humber Chamber of Commerce Excellence in the Community gong. Scunthorpe vocational training provider Plus Skills Development Ltd was recognised with The Grimsby Institute Training Excellence Award. It offers a motor vehicle and costruction workshop, hair and beauty salon, and enterprise site, the latter within Normanby Country Park.

Pictures to follow – please check back.

The 2023 Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards roll of honour

The University of Lincoln Small Business Award

Winner: Victor Finance.
Finalists: AmbiSpace Ltd, KnowFilm.

The HBP Systems Business Growth Award

Winner: Davis Wagon Services Ltd.
Finalists: Card Industry Professionals, The Positive Co.

The Wilkin Chapman Business Person of the Year Award

Winner: Ciaran Savage
Finalists: Rob Burgin, Lawrence Marsh

The Technical Absorbents International Trade Award

Winner: Bradbury Group
Finalists: Medibiosense Ltd, The Positive Co

The Bridge McFarland New Business Award

Winner: RSUK Group
Finalists: CineShow UK, Grimsby Fish Ltd

The North East Lincolnshire Business Development Award

Winner: Landmark Cafe and Restaurant
Finalists: St Andrew's Hospice Ltd, Stallingborough Grange Hotel

The North Lincolnshire Business Investment Award

Winner: Rocal Insulating Panels Ltd
Finalists: HBP Systems Ltd, San Pietro, Scunthorpe

The Grimsby Institute Training Excellence Award

Winner: Plus Skills Development Ltd
Finalists: Creating Positive Opportunity, DSV Transport Ltd

The Pepperells Innovation Award
Winner: Technical Absorbents
Finalists: AmbiSpace Ltd, Harrisons Laser Technology

The HETA Green Sustainability Award

Winner: CorrBoard UK
Finalists: PPS Midlands Ltd, Rocal Insulating Panels Ltd

The Dataplan Employee of the Year Award

Winner: Jenna Shelby Bird, event manager, San Pietro
Finalists: Katie Evans, Knapton Wright; Paul Walker, The Positive Co

The Sylvester Keal Young Business Person of the Year Award

Winner: Cameron Huggins, Cameron Huggins Blacksmith
Finalists: Bailey Greetham-Clark, BeGreat Fitness; Jack Lobaczewski, RSUK Group

The Hull & Humber Chamber of Commerce Excellence in the Community Award

Winner: YMCA Humber
Finalists: Creating Positive Opportunity, St Andrew's Hospice Ltd

The Forrester Boyd Business of the Year

Winner: CorrBoard UK

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