

# Employee Excellence and Learner of the Year Awards 2013

30 April 2014, Pump Rooms and Roman Baths, Bath



**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**





The prestigious Employee Excellence Awards, now in their seventh year, are the Council's way of recognising and thanking those staff who have excelled in embodying our values of One Council delivering quality and value with customer focus.

I am delighted that we recognise the immense value of such a committed and effective workforce, which is achieved by the efforts of individual employees and Council teams.

This year the panel of judges - comprising of councillors and officers - received many nominations from the public and colleagues across the Council and schools. The quality of nominations shows that the services we are delivering are, rightly, appreciated more than ever.

We are also taking the opportunity to recognise our Learners of the Year. These awards recognise the barriers and obstacles a learner may have overcome and /or their exceptional dedication and commitment to achieve the learning. Any learning can be considered, whether or not it has led to a qualification, and the award is open to all directly employed council staff.

Therefore, I am proud to present the final 18 individual, and 4 team winners, all of whom have made a real difference to the lives of people who live in, work in and visit Bath & North East Somerset.

Congratulations and thanks to every one of you.

**Dr Jo Farrar**  
Chief executive

# LEARNER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2013

## **Category 1:**

**An employee who has achieved work based learning leading to a personal breakthrough in self-confidence with significant improvements in performance and attitude.**

## **Special Award:**

**Ralph Hemus, *Receptionist, Resources***

Ralph, a 2012 Project Search graduate employed in Property Services, is on the autistic spectrum. Ralph's autism presented him with a series of significant challenges during his 18 months training; but through his hard work he has achieved a more responsible role as a Receptionist at Northgate House.

He is punctual, reliable, trustworthy, incredibly conscientious, and expertly manages the reception and meeting rooms with only moderate supervision. Ralph makes a major contribution to the team, not just by completing tasks but also by his involvement as the team member with a unique perspective.

Ralph has relished the challenge and thrived since becoming a dedicated Receptionist, and now you could not be greeted by a nicer face in the Council.

## **Category 1:**

**A manager who has given exceptional support and encouragement to learners**

## **Special Award:**

**Alison Thomas,  
*Support Services Manager, Resources***

Alison, Ralph's line manager, was nominated for a Special Award in recognition of the guidance and support she has given Ralph, helping him to overcome the various challenges he faced during his 18 months training, thereby enabling him to become the highly motivated and exceptional employee that he is today.

**Category 1:**

**An employee who achieved work based learning that led to a personal breakthrough in self-confidence and significant improvements in performance and attitude.**

**Learner of the Year Award:**

**Jonathan Carter,**  
*E-Learning Apprentice, Resources*

Jon joined the HR based Corporate Training Team in October 2013 as an E-Learning Apprentice following a period of unemployment.

Within a very short period, Jon had mastered the e-learning authoring tool to produce an e-learning module – now part of the Council's on line induction process. Jon has continued to develop his skills and substantively developed the Council's e-learning programme, significantly increasing the number of users. His achievements were acknowledged by the Council's e-learning provider and led to his nomination and achievement of a national award.

Jon's self-confidence has grown to the extent that he is now a confident professional, comfortable in his role as the e-learning expert in the Council. He is prepared to push himself beyond his comfort zone, attending large conferences, speaking at Council events/meetings and working with subject experts to develop e-learning modules.

He has become an integral part of the team, a popular member, always happy to learn something new and lend a hand.

Jon continues to work towards his NVQ level 3 in Business Administration and is recognised by the learning provider for his diligence, personal organisation and for the quality of the written work/evidence produced.

### **Category 1:**

**A colleague who is a 'Learning Champion' for the team / department, who encourages and supports colleagues**

**Learning Champion:** **Jason Rowland**, *Senior Facilities Officer (Mailroom), Resources*

Over the last two years, Jason has given exceptional support with mentoring and providing learning support for the Department's apprentices. During this period he also mentored a student from Farleigh Further Education College for 12 months, and three work experience students with learning support needs. Jason achieved all this whilst keeping on top of a busy workload, and on occasions working in his own time to support students with their coursework.

Due to Jason's expertise, the Mailroom is supporting Project Search in Bath throughout 2014 and a new apprentice from April.

### **Category 2:**

**An employee who has successfully completed a period of learning and may have obtained a work related qualification (up to Level 3)**

**Learner of the Year Award:**

**Robert John**,  
*Senior Customer Services Officer, Resources*

Rob is responsible for the operational management of the One Stop Shop in Bath. Having successfully completed a Level 3 award in First Line management, Rob was inspired to work with other senior officers and team members in order to identify and implement service improvements for their partners and, more importantly, the customers.

Rob also recognised that in order to support his team he needed to address his own skills gaps resulting from the changes in welfare reform, so he initiated a personal development programme supported by his manager which involved work shadowing other senior officers and attending external courses.

Understanding the benefits of cross-skilling led to Rob developing a training plan - supported by his Team Leader and other senior staff - for some customer services officers to enhance their skills and improve the level of service provided, to free up the benefit specialists to deal with more complex queries.

Rob continues to be proactive in his learning to ensure that he is able to support his team to deliver excellent customer service.

**Category 3:**

**An employee who has successfully completed a period of learning and may have obtained a work related qualification of level 4 and above**

**Learner of the Year Award:**

**Sam Plummer,**  
*Key Worker, People & Communities*

Sam, who works in the Connecting Families team, achieved a first class honours degree in youth work in 2013. He worked hard to complete his course, overcoming barriers of dyslexia and dyspraxia. In the final months of the course, Sam applied for another job in the Council that led to a full-time position at a higher grade. He also managed to get married, bring up a young family and move house!

During the first two years of his degree course, Sam managed the Radstock Youth Hub and in the third year took on additional responsibility as a youth worker, working with troubled families. Throughout this time he applied himself 100% and significantly improved his performance in the practice, knowledge and theory of youth work.

Sam worked hard for the young people and always went the extra mile showing warmth and empathy. He is happy to share good practice with other members of the team and continuously looks for new and innovative ways to support families and young people. He is an excellent role model for colleagues and the young people who often face barriers and feel they cannot pursue a career or further education. Sam is proof that with hard work and dedication it is possible.

# EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2013

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## EXCELLENT SERVICE

### **Karen Giles**

*Team Manager – Passenger Transport, Place*

Karen led on behalf of the Council on the passenger transport requirements for the Special Olympics GB Games and Opening Ceremony, whilst they were hosted in Bath in August 2013. This came at Karen's busiest time of year, which put her under a great deal of pressure.

The plans from Special Olympics came to her in draft form only and changed on several occasions, right up to the day of the event. Throughout Karen remained extremely professional, cool and calm.

Where Karen came completely into her own, was on the day of the Opening Ceremony, where she took control of ensuring 3,000 athletes and support personnel, were transported from the University of Bath to Royal Victoria Park, on time and ensured they were safely delivered back to their beds ahead of schedule, all happy and prepared for the following day's activities.

Karen is a true credit and retained the reputation of the Council at this high profile event.

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### **Graeme Barry**

*Teacher*

*St Andrew's Primary School, People and Communities*

Graeme often goes the extra mile. Last year he took his class to the Egg Theatre for a whole term to give them the opportunity to experience a residency there as part of programme of activity called School Without Walls.

This involved much additional planning and meetings with artists and members of staff from the Egg Theatre which had to be fitted in to his own time. It also meant reduced lunch hours and break times for Graeme. In addition, he kept an on-going blog of the research project which has been widely disseminated and has received considerable interest nationally.

Graeme deserves this award because of his calm and collected manner, his generous insights and perceptions of children, how they learn and what's best for them and his willingness to engage in extraordinary activity.

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## **Kim McGarva**

*Dog Warden, Place*

Kim is a great Dog Warden. She is fantastic with both dogs and owners alike and is able to strike the right balance between providing advice and guidance to those who benefit from an educative approach to taking enforcement action against those who continue to be irresponsible dog owners.

Kim has to deal with a variety of members of the public as well as statutory and voluntary organisations and frequently works with the RSPCA on Welfare cases and the Police Dog Legislation Officers when there is a suggestion that 'Dangerous Dogs' are involved. This nomination stems from when Kim was involved in a meeting that was so contentious that the dog owners reputation was such that the police attended the meeting and one actually donned his riot gear halfway through!

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## **Cindy Aze**

*Assistant Registration Services Manager, Legal and Democratic Services*

Cindy joined the Registration Service in 2004 and has been an outstanding member of staff contributing greatly to the success of the department during her time with us. In particular, she recently submitted an application to the 10 in 100 project team which was chosen as one of the 10 projects which the Council decided could be delivered in the first phase of this project. The project's objective was to increase the number of licensed venues throughout the district at which couples could legally marry or have a civil partnership - the aim being to provide more choice and encourage couples to consider our district as a beautiful destination for their ceremony.

Cindy has worked tirelessly to make the project the resounding success it has become. By the end of the 100 day period she had secured 4 new licenced premises with another six in the pipeline. She has not rested on her laurels and continues to focus on this important area to increase venue choice and diversity for couples planning to marry in our district. This means increased revenue not just for the Council but also for the local economy.

Good customer care and client communication skills, tenacity, and a very positive 'can do' attitude are all traits that Cindy possesses in abundance. She is a great ambassador for the Department and the Council.

## Jim Imeson

*Technical Officer – Bike IT, Place*

Jim has been working as the Council's Cycling Development Officer since July 2012 and has excelled in his role. He has demonstrated exceptional initiative, developing his own objectives to promote and encourage cycling. His commitment and dedication above and beyond his job role has made a positive and noticeable impact on the number of people cycling.

Jim has worked tirelessly with local cycling clubs and developed a new youth cycling club. Using his creative skills across various teams in the Council Jim has delivered an impressive and innovative list of achievements. These achievements have benefited cyclists of all ages and ability. A record that both Jim and the Council can be proud of.

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## Sue Green

*Group Manager – Public Protection and Health Improvement, Place*

Sue Green has been with the Council since 1982. During that time she has built a reputation as somebody who does whatever is required to achieve customer service excellence. After a number of promotions, she now leads the Public Protection & Health Improvement team which delivers a very wide range of services to the public.

In this, she shows a genuine interest in the wellbeing of her staff. She goes out of way to find out how her team members are feeling and takes enormous trouble to support them.

She is a great example of how to empower staff by providing clear leadership and guidance and dealing with everybody fairly, be they staff, the public or Councillors.

Her work as a Change Coach has allowed her to spread her skills and influence across a number of areas of the Council and she leads a highly successful "Innovation Group" which looks for new opportunities and reviews systems across all of Environmental Services.

It is a real accomplishment that, in amongst all of her outstanding management and leadership work, she is also widely considered to be a genuinely nice person.

Her nomination says it all -

"Sue has been very supportive to all staff especially over the last few years with all the changes and cuts that are being made and she has made sure that all her staff are kept up to date with the latest information with regard to the service. In fact Sue is a wonderful role model for a human being not just a Service Manager"

## Tracey Fielding

*Senior Business Continuity & Emergency Planning, Resources*

The welfare of animals is often the first thing to suffer during times of stress. Learning from natural disasters from around the world has highlighted two horrific cases of neglect that could have been avoided. Tracey has worked closely with many partner agencies and other Council services to develop a plan to help assure animal welfare during major emergencies. This plan has also been tested and exercised to ensure it is fit for purpose and also to continually learn and develop the plan for the future.

Tracey's work resulted in the Council being awarded the RSPCA Gold Footprint Award for Contingency Planning and also the RSPCA Innovator Award (runner up) in Animal Welfare. These awards have helped raise the profile of contingency planning within Bath & North East Somerset to a national level.

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## Jessica Fox-Taylor

*Local Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator, Place*

Jessica has been awarded an Employee Excellence award for going the extra mile in delivering excellent service. 'Dinotour', a treasure hunt event with clues distributed along the Bath – Bristol cycle path was held on Sunday 9th June last year to encourage families to cycle. The event was a great success enjoyed by its many participants. Much of this success can be attributed to Jessica, who provided excellent service by going beyond the call of duty, she put in a lot of hard work, much of it in her own time (including on the Sunday of the event), to organise, set up and help run Dinotour.

As well as the Dinotour event, Jessica has worked very hard throughout the year on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund project, where in addition to her job of promoting cycling and walking to people at transition stages of their lives, she has also taken on the responsibility for marketing and communication.

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# EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

## Kate Murphy

*Drug and PSHE Consultant, People and Communities*

Kate's 'day job' as consultant for Personal, Social and Health Education and Drug Education in our School Improvement Team is carried out with huge energy, commitment and professionalism. Kate's work on anti-bullying support has had

a critical impact in improving our children's sense of wellbeing and safety within schools. Bath & North East Somerset's recognition as a Stonewall Education Champion can in large part be attributed to Kate's work on diversity and enabling children and young people to explore how they feel about and react to others of different cultural, heritage, physical or sexual orientation presentations.

Over and above this, Kate has provided exceptional support to pupils and school staff at times of crisis where a tragedy has occurred, leading Headteachers to commend her as an exceptional colleague. Kate is held in immense regard by all colleagues and is an exemplar of public service excellence.

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## CHARITABLE OR EXCEPTIONAL ACT

### **Kris Gardom**

*Parking Engineer  
Place*

Kris has made rapid and considerable progress in his short career with the Council. As a popular, highly motivated and enthusiastic individual it comes as no surprise that Kris has been able to inspire 20 of his colleagues to support and participate in a charitable event and raise a very commendable £700.

Rather than select a charitable event requiring little preparation Kris persuaded his colleagues to participate in the Dragon Boat race. To ensure success he arranged training, designed and hand-made matching fancy dress outfits. He then applied his organisational skills to ensure the event all ran according to plan on the day!

This event has not only benefited charity. Kris' efforts also enabled a significant amount of team building to take place which has had a positive impact on team morale and Kris is a credit to the Council.

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## TEAM AWARDS

### **Bath Parks Grounds Team**

*Manager – Andy Chard, Place*

The Bath Parks & Grounds Team are the staff who care for our parks, gardens and open spaces across Bath. This includes the sports grounds, grass verges, car parks and many schools which together make up the green spaces of the city and form the fantastic environment in which Bath sits and for which it is so well known.

The Team carries out great work away from the public eye before their achievements are revealed in the form of the popular 3D floral displays, wonderful hanging baskets and bedding displays. Plants are grown from seeds, cuttings and plugs and take a lot of skill and attention to achieve the great results that are seen, including the floral arrangements on display here tonight.

The work of the whole Team contributes to Bath's entries into the local and national in Bloom competitions:

In July 2013 the Team helped Bath to achieve Gold award and category winner in South West in Bloom along with an Edible Britain Award for Parade Gardens.

In August 2013 Bath achieved a Gold award in the national Britain in Bloom competition and the RHS Britain in Bloom Edible Britain Award for best use of edible plants in a public/community space.

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## **Civitas/Bath Transport Package Team**

*Manager – Joy Jeffery, Place*

These teams, led by Joy Jefferys, have bid for funding and implemented significant transport projects for the City of Bath. The teams have successfully won substantial resources from the EU and Central Government by their professionalism and dedication.

The CIVITAS team showed an ability to build successful partnerships with businesses both locally and in other EU countries and through their demonstration projects brought significant innovation to transport in the City. The continuation of some of these projects beyond the CIVITAS programme is evidence by the hybrid buses now on the Park and Ride service and by the new cycle hire scheme being extended further in the City. The improvement at St James Rampire has created a new entrance to the City centre.

The Bath Transport Package team have continued to develop improvements to transport within the City over many, many years and have managed to keep the project focused on what is deliverable and acceptable through challenging times when the financial climate has changed. The benefits of this project will become more evident over the next couple of years as the project is completed.

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## **Heritage Services Business Analysis Team**

*Manager – Richard Hartill, Place*

The Heritage Services Business Analysis Team plays an important role within the business by processing, analysing and reporting on the significant income streams generated by the Service, as well as providing technical support across

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the whole of Heritage Services.

Despite having limited resources the team has continued to provide excellent service over the last year, coping with record increases in visitors and income, as well as the design and implementation of major system changes. The team plays an integral part in the control framework and governance of the Service that received an “excellent” rating from Internal Audit during the last year.

Maintaining their excellent performance has involved overcoming not only increases in workload but also a series of unexpected personal tribulations that have tested the team to the limit. The team has managed all of this whilst helping each other and colleagues, and with a smile on its face

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## **Connecting Families Team**

*Manager – Paula Bromley, People & Communities*

The Connecting Families Team is our local response to the national ‘Troubled Families’ initiative; the team is led by Paula Bromley.

The team works with the most complex families facing multiple challenges and the approach is practical and no nonsense. An individual key family worker meets the family to look at the challenges and agrees a family action plan, providing support and challenges to the whole family to take control of their lives and to begin to change those aspects where they are most in need.

They also act on behalf of their families and contact other agencies to seek to resolve some of the issues e.g. debt, rent arrears, accommodation issues, benefit problems, school attendance.

The focus is practical, it uses small steps agreed with the family and the aim is to help the family, particularly parents, to re-establish control and organisation so that the family can begin to function effectively and enable family members to prepare for employment, engage in training, return to school etc.

The team are hard working and enthusiastic, they need to be able to hold difficult conversations with the families and others and therefore need to be skilled at negotiating, and above all else be persistent and have a sense of humour.

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## **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

### **Andy Plummer**

*Enforcement Officer, Place*

Andy received a commendation from the Chief Superintendent for Avon and

Somerset Constabulary to recognise Andy's hard work and commitment in cleaning up the streets of Bath, following a spate of graffiti. Between November 2012 and March 2013 a number of graffiti tags appeared across the City causing considerable damage to buildings. As a result of the time and effort that Andy and his team put into the case, a successful prosecution was made.

It is great that Andy has been recognised in this way, it is thoroughly deserved. 62 acts of vandalism and a huge level of damage was caused by this person so it is really important that Andy helped secure his conviction.

This is a great piece of partnership working which has led to some real benefits for the community.

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## **Paula Bromley**

*Service Manager – Connecting Families, People and Communities*

Paula has led the Connecting Families Team since its formation just over one ago. Connecting Families is the local, B&NES response to the government's agenda to actively intervene with a number of targeted families who have been known to multiple agencies for a number of years. A considerable proportion of these families have a history of being "hard to reach" and may also have received some degree of support/assistance over a considerable period of time. The focus of the Connecting Families Team has been to break these cycles and seeks to work with them in different ways that places an emphasis on engagement, and building relationships, often with a very intensive structure of interventions and support.

The government set a series of ambitious targets in regard to getting young people back to school, back to work and being diverted away from crime in order to qualify as being deemed successful, all of which have to be verified by other agencies.

Over the past year, Paula has led her team with passion, enthusiasm and with a clear purpose about what needs to be achieved. She has developed good working relationships with a large number of the key stakeholders in this process and has fostered and promoted these working relationships with energy and a sense of vision. Her staff are all very committed to the goals of the scheme and this is evident in the way that they have worked with young people and families over the past 12 months.

This energy has translated itself into very positive results for families that previously had been very resistant to any kind of engagement with agencies. This has meant improved outcomes for young people and has brought positive comments and recognition from the national "Troubled Families" Unit.

*Flowers kindly sponsored by the Parks Service.  
For further information about our floral display services provided to the public  
please contact Richard Baulch-Collett on Bath 396880*

This leaflet about the Employee Excellence Awards can be made available in a range of community languages, large print, Braille, on tape, electronic and accessible formats from Communications & Marketing on telephone 01225 477495.

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