

The award categories – are you in the running?

Best Growing Business (Sponsored and judged by NatWest)

Is your company experiencing rapid growth in turnover versus prior years and/or business targets? Have you increased the range of products or services offered, or perhaps grown in personnel or created strategic alliances with partners? To enter, you must have been trading for at least two years at June 2011.

Best New Business (Sponsored and judged by Genesa Ltd)

This category is aimed at new businesses that will have been trading for no more than two years at September 2011. Having entered the market during particularly difficult economic times we are interested in recognising companies that are managing to achieve growth and are on track towards long-term profitability.

Best Retailer (Sponsored and judged by Henry Paul Funerals)

This category is aimed at retailers, large or small, independent or chain, high street or retail park, who offer outstanding customer service and who have been trading for at least two years as of September 2011.

Community Award (Sponsored and judged by Town & Country Housing Group)

This award is aimed at recognising the excellent work that companies, charities and other organisations do to help improve their local communities. This could be by improving the quality of life of particular groups of people who are perhaps disadvantaged in some way, or by supporting projects that benefit the community as a whole.

Customer Care and Service (Sponsored and judged by Halliwell/Elizabeth Finn Homes)

Does your company policy place the customer at the very core of everything it does? Do you strive to do more for your customers than other companies in your line of business? This award is aimed at companies who are truly focused on the customer.

Employer of the Year (Sponsored and judged by Loch Associates and Enablise Ltd)

This category is open to any

organisation that can demonstrate commercial success and strategies for growth while achieving excellence in its commitment to the support and development of its workforce.

Enterprising Business (Sponsored and judged by Bridge Business Recovery)

This award will go to businesses that can demonstrate success, outstanding initiative and imagination while contributing to the economic growth of West Kent. We are looking for entries from both established businesses and those new to West Kent.

Excellence in Marketing (Sponsored and judged by Deeks Evans)

Have you created imaginative and successful marketing ideas that have led to sales growth within the campaign period, or a specified time frame, in the past year? Your marketing activity could be part of an overall marketing strategy or the implementation of a specific campaign, using traditional forms of marketing or electronic media.

Innovation (Sponsored and judged by West Kent Partnership)

Innovation comes in all shapes and sizes. It could be that your innovation is a high-tech software solution to a complex process, a very simple but creative new product, or it could be a process improvement to an administrative, commercial, manufacturing or other process.

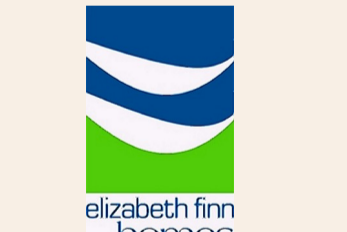
Outstanding Business Person (Sponsored and judged by Synergee)

Are you that special kind of entrepreneur who pushes obstacles to new ideas aside, is prepared to take calculated risks, and achieve success against the odds? Do you lead and motivate people to exceed mundane goals and targets?

Young Entrepreneur of the Year (Sponsored and judged by Kent Trainers)

We are looking for an entrepreneurial businessperson, aged between 16 and 30, who identifies market opportunities, overcomes obstacles and challenges, is prepared to take calculated risks, and can demonstrate success. In addition, the entrepreneur will be dynamic and have a "can-do" approach.

The awards are organised by the Courier Media Group in association with the West Kent Chamber of Commerce. We are also delighted to have the support of our ambassadors BSK-CIC and Heart Kent



Main judge The Courier Media Group is delighted to have secured the services of local businessman Simon Hume-Kendall as the main judge of the awards programme for the third year running.



Simon, who owns Bewl Water and Lamberhurst Vineyard, and who has significant interests in many more ventures, brings a wealth of experience gained over many years across several business disciplines.

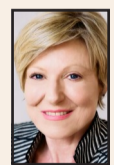
As well as selecting the 2011 West Kent Business of the Year, Simon chairs the panel of judges who are responsible for choosing the finalists in each of the eleven categories and will attend the awards event when the winners will be announced.

Category sponsor David Thorniley is a licensed insolvency practitioner and partner in Bridge Business Recovery, which is a category sponsor in the Business Excellence Awards 2011. Based in Tunbridge Wells, Bridge Business Recovery is an owner-managed firm that specialises in business reviews, corporate restructuring, funded solutions and insolvency assignments.

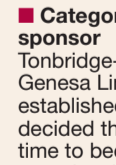


Many of the businesses with which it comes into contact go on to become thriving, innovative organisations. Its involvement with the awards will provide the company with the opportunity to meet some of the firms in West Kent that are helping lead the way in such challenging times.

Category sponsor Chartered accountants Deeks Evans has a history of providing personal service to its clients stretching back 50 years. The awards represent an opportunity not only to meet other influential people in the local business community, but also to become involved in a process that helps encourage smaller firms to grow and develop. Deeks Evans has developed a wide range of specialisms, including will drafting, lasting powers of attorney and probate, which it regards as natural extensions of inheritance tax planning. Karen Braddell, who will be judging entrants in its category, is the firm's private client partner.



Genesa, which also has an office in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, is a cable installer for Openreach, but also develops bespoke software applications to manage business processes. The company has an e-commerce website for security-related products.



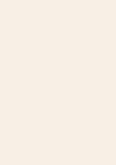
As both a past winner and sponsor of the Business Excellence Awards, Halliwell is well-qualified to judge entrants. General manager Gillian Forsyth and her team are looking forward to meeting the 2011 candidates. Halliwell, part of Elizabeth Finn Homes, has built an enviable reputation for providing exceptional service to residents and families by continually seeking opportunities to create happy and fulfilling lives for its guests. It goes to great lengths to ensure the comfort and dignity for all in a pleasant environment. Halliwell's newly enlarged and refurbished building is set in its own grounds in Tunbridge Wells.



Henry Paul Funerals believes that championing and inspiring local companies during hard economic times enables everyone to share experiences and trade ideas for mutual benefit. Learning from others and expanding business networks leads to the formation of valuable alliances that help to create a thriving and prosperous local community, improving everyone's quality of life.



Based in Pembury, Henry Paul Funerals is an independent funeral director, providing bespoke commemoration to Tunbridge Wells and its surrounding communities. The ethos of the firm is to celebrate individuality in death as in life.



Category sponsor As a previous winner of a West Kent Business Award, Kent Trainers knows the prestige and benefits of such an accolade and so has welcomed the opportunity to be sponsor for 2011. Keith Merrin and the other directors consider entrepreneurial spirit to be crucial to growth and employment in the UK, and feel that those who are brave enough to take calculated risks should be encouraged. As one of the leading training providers in the South East, Kent Trainers has met these aspiring individuals through its own scheduled and bespoke in-house training and development courses.



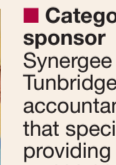
Loch Associates employment lawyers and its sister company enablise are sponsors of the awards for the second year running. Having seen some excellent entrants in 2010, Pam Loch expects it to be more challenging this year. Due to the economic climate and the financial difficulties facing employers, not just in the corporate sector, but also within other organisations, such as charities, many have had to carefully consider restructuring their staff. Organisations have risen to the challenge to retain the best talent in tough conditions. The sponsors are hoping those employers who can show how they have succeeded in motivating staff will step forward as entrants.



NatWest Bank is again sponsor of the Best Growing Business category of the Business Excellence Awards. The local Tunbridge Wells relationship team, headed by director Andy Thomson, supports the SME market place across West Kent. The Nat West team are keen to engage with businesses on all levels and provide proactive solutions that can really help local businesses grow.



As a relatively new firm itself (it was formed only four years ago), Synergee is one of the champions of the "paperless" office, having developed its systems to make this a reality. In addition to producing accounts and other routine management information, the company has a range of business development tools such as benchmarking.



Town & Country Housing Group, a previous winner in the competition, is one of the leading housing associations in the South East, providing more than 8,300 affordable homes. Given its own area of experience and commitment to the community, Town & Country feels that it is particularly appropriate to sponsor the Community Award category. It provides good-quality housing and excellent customer service. Its charity arm – Town & Country Foundation – works towards making a positive difference to community and family life. It runs initiatives on financial inclusion, learning and skills, health and well-being, neighbourhoods and community cohesion.



The West Kent Partnership has supported the West Kent Business Excellence Awards since their inception four years ago. Celebrating the success, creativity and innovation of local businesses fits with the partnership's vision of supporting the creation of a stronger local economy. The partnership has been able to forge stronger links with local businesses as a direct result of its sponsorship. This has helped to ensure the West Kent Investment Strategy and ongoing action plan is informed by the views of West Kent's leading businesses.



# Award will add 'real value to your business'

## Calling the brightest and best companies

By Keith Lewis  
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PRESTIGE: Awards co-ordinator Alan Pocock urges businesses to register for a shot at the award

THE West Kent Business Excellence Awards programme for 2011 is now officially under way.

This year's competition, held in association with the West Kent Chamber of Commerce, will mark the Courier Group's fourth year of running the awards.

The process of gathering, visiting and assessing entries will carry on throughout the summer months, culminating in a list of finalists being selected for the various categories in October.

Awards co-ordinator Alan Pocock said: "West Kent's thriving business community is brimming with success stories, so I would urge you all to take a few minutes to enter."

"Filling out an entry couldn't be simpler and all our previous winners will agree that it is well worth it – a West Kent Business Excellence Awards trophy is a prestigious accolade that adds real value to a local business."

### Gala dinner

A gala dinner and awards ceremony will take place in November when the winners will be announced. Readers will be kept up to date by regular progress reports.

Panels of judges for the various categories will be drawn from this year's competition sponsors.

They will operate under the guidance of previous winner and successful local businessman Simon Hume-Kendall, who has agreed to act as main judge for the third year running.

The awards programme is open to any business in West Kent in both the private and public sectors as long as they meet the criteria.

Participation brings its own rewards.

Those entering will be offering themselves and their organisations up for serious inspection by professionals – claims will be validated, staff will be consulted and company visits made by the judges in order to identify deserving finalists.

Make no mistake, the winners will have earned their accolades.

### Register

Full details of the criteria, categories and how to enter can be found on these pages, together with a list of sponsors, judges and ambassadors.

Alternatively, you can visit the website ([www.thiskent.co.uk/businessawards](http://www.thiskent.co.uk/businessawards)), where you will be able to register and enter online. The details will be repeated in future editions of the paper.

The closing date for entries is August 5.

### How to enter

It's really easy to enter – there are just five questions to answer.

To register and enter online, go to [www.thiskent.co.uk/businessawards](http://www.thiskent.co.uk/businessawards)

To register and enter by post download the forms from the website (on the awards homepage under enter by post) or order forms from Jenny Walker on 01245 605301 or [jenny.walker@essexchronicle.co.uk](mailto:jenny.walker@essexchronicle.co.uk)

In case of any difficulties, contact programme organiser Alan Pocock on 01245 400877 or [alan@apteventspro.co.uk](mailto:alan@apteventspro.co.uk)

## WEST KENT BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2011



SEEKING EXCELLENCE: The

West Kent Business Excellence Awards 2011 launch meeting at the Courier Media offices in Tunbridge Wells

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Advertisement for West Kent Business Excellence Awards 2011 featuring logos of sponsors (NatWest, Synergee, Town & Country, Enablise, etc.) and category winners with their photos and brief descriptions.