

Press release – June 2019

Falmouth Town Team scoops top UK award

Move over Manchester City and England Lionesses, Falmouth's strong management partnership has been recognised this week as the UK's best team!

The Falmouth Town Team received the top industry accolade at the annual Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) awards in London, beating hundreds of other towns and cities in the process.

The Falmouth Town Team is the innovative public/private sector partnership between the Falmouth BID, managed by Richard Wilcox and the Town Management function of Falmouth Town Council, overseen by Richard Gates. Both not-for-profit organisations understood several years ago, the most efficient path would be to pool modest resources, so that an integrated service could be delivered more effectively and include a year-round festivals calendar, destination marketing campaigns and business support for Falmouth.

The Town Team has, over the past ten years, revamped and delivered the town's major events programme that includes the Sea Shanty Festival, Spring Festival and Falmouth Week, undertaken national PR and digital marketing campaigns, rolled out business upskilling programmes, instigated public realm and inward investment schemes, lobbied Government on behalf of the business community and more besides, with the aim over that time, of reenergising and profiling the town, in what of course is a challenging economic landscape.

As the largest membership body of its kind in Europe, the Association of Town and City Management or ATCM, recognises excellence in place management across the UK and Ireland every year at its prestigious annual awards ceremony in London.

The evening's biggest award, the Partnership of the Year, saw the Falmouth Town Team winning the prize ahead of two major city partnerships representing London and Belfast.

Speaking about their decision, the ATCM judges said of Falmouth's Town Team:

"In a difficult climate, it is clear to see that by working together we can improve our town centres and tackle our shared challenges head on, and Falmouth has risen to the challenge superbly. Facing major infrastructure works, the loss of traditional retailers, and with comparatively limited resources, the team have built critical partnerships and strong relationships with a host of stakeholders that have delivered real outcomes, and surely built the foundations for future success."

The evening was a double whammy for Falmouth's award-winning team, as they were also recognised for their Falmouth Free WiFi project, an innovative idea that was rolled out in 2018, with support from Falmouth University and in partnership with WiFi Spark. In what is a first for the region, the availability of free WiFi across the town's main streets and squares, has been very well received with an average of 250 daily users, over 90,000 device sessions and 30,000+ sign-ups to the portal since its launch nearly a year ago.

That scheme was crowned the UK's Best Digital High Street project at the awards function, with the ATCM judges highlighting that the "Falmouth Free WiFi is so much more than the title suggests. They have overcome some significant technical and physical challenges to develop a platform to future proof their scheme and ensure that Falmouth takes advantage of opportunities that arise from being identified as a 'digitally smart' town."

Commenting on the two national awards, Richard Wilcox Falmouth BID Manager said: "This is great news for Falmouth and Cornwall and bears testament to the value of partner-working especially where resources are modest. Vibrant places are those that bring together all elements of their community to help shape them and Falmouth is a brilliant example of a town that does just that. It's clearly a tough trading landscape out there and thriving town centres of the future will be those where community groups, management teams and planning organisations work closely on developing spaces that work seamlessly for visitors, residents and businesses alike."

Richard Gates, Falmouth Town Manager added:

"These awards highlight the hard work of the Falmouth Town Team and so many others. A huge thank you to Naomi Morant and Ruth Abraham of the Town Team office, Ruth Thomas, Mark Williams and all the Falmouth Town Council staff, the Falmouth Town Councillors, community volunteers and the Falmouth BID Board who all work extremely hard alongside us to help deliver supportive town schemes."

Councillor Steve Eva, Falmouth Town Mayor said:

"Falmouth we know is a vibrant place, and that doesn't just happen. I am very pleased that we have been recognised for the forward-thinking partnerships we have created, with inclusive working together to ensure we can weather the difficult times and sustain the town centre that our residents, traders and visitors can continue to enjoy. I am also pleased for the Town Team individuals that have been recognised for their hard work"

Richard Thomas, Chairman, Falmouth BID said:

"This is an absolutely stunning result. The ability and dynamism to go that extra mile is one of the key reasons the Town Team has been successful. Furthermore, in this changing landscape of provision of local resource, it is a unique example of collaboration that has hugely benefitted Falmouth. Congratulations to both the Richards!"

Ends

Notes for Editors

About the Falmouth Town Team

Falmouth has the joint management resource of a Town Management and Business Improvement District (BID). The Town Management is funded through Falmouth Town Council while the BID is financed by 400 businesses, part of a national scheme now operating in over 300 towns in the UK.

A strong public/private partnership has been developed over the past ten years between the two bodies to provide award-winning destination marketing, year-round festivals, business support and public realm improvements.

The partnership has been highlighted as an example of best practice, invited to Parliament to present on high street issues and ideas, and advised numerous other areas across the UK looking to set up similar effective arrangements.

Further information via www.falmouth.co.uk/media or 01326 313553.

