

MAJOR NATIONAL AWARDS FOR FALMOUTH TOWN TEAM



- **RICHARD WILCOX WINS 'UK INSPIRATIONAL LEADER OF THE YEAR'**
- **FALMOUTH VIRTUAL SEA SHANTY FESTIVAL WINS 'BEST DIGITAL PROJECT'**

In a superb double for Falmouth and its proactive Town Team, their work and leadership in supporting Falmouth, its businesses and wider community through the past two years of the global pandemic, was recognised at the key national place management industry awards, facilitated by the Association of Town and City Management, the ATCM.

The awards, which recognise excellence and innovation, both in terms of leadership and projects, are a highlight of the place industry calendar, and are open to hundreds of towns, cities, and councils across the United Kingdom to enter.

And the coveted award of the night – the UK 'Inspirational Leader of the Year' went to Richard Wilcox, Executive Director of the not-for-profit Falmouth BID.

His outstanding work in supporting and lobbying on behalf of Falmouth businesses, delivering a range of trailblazing projects and PR campaigns, nationally championing Cornwall's high streets to Government and political leaders and more, hugely impressed the judges. Of note was the efficiency of this work, ever so important in the current climate of escalating costs and challenges. Many of the competing BIDs, Councils and leaders in this category have much larger resources and budgets, and the fact that Richard has not only established Falmouth BID as one of the best small BIDs in the country through facilitating a huge range of innovative schemes, but does so as the sole employee, blew the judges away.

Commenting on the national awards, Richard Wilcox, Executive Director of Falmouth BID said:

"I am proud and humbled by our recognition. I know that up and down the country, there have been some incredible projects delivered by my colleagues and their teams to support hundreds of thousands of businesses and enable high streets to continue operating through the pandemic. For Falmouth to be acknowledged as one of the best is, as I say, humbling."

Richard continued:

“Projects, ideas, and festivals work so well in Falmouth because of the strength of partnerships and community spirit that exists here. There is such a pride of place, with many individuals and organisations giving up time to work alongside the BID and Town Council to bring creative plans and ideas to life. Our teams are small, and we operate within a not-for-profit framework, with all resource and energy focussed on making Falmouth as vibrant and engaging place as possible. We simply could not do that in isolation, so we look to work collaboratively with many proactive people to make it happen. These awards reflect that teamwork and I’d like to say thank you to everyone who works so hard on behalf of the town.”

In addition, the Virtual Sea Shanty Festival scooped the Best Digital Project of the Year.

Like so many others in the events sector, the decision was made, because of the pandemic, to cancel both the 2020 and 2021 in-person festivals. But knowing that this would have a significant regional impact, given the heritage, scale and reach of the event, the organising team worked tirelessly on finding an innovative solution to showcase the festival to an even wider audience. The technical and logistical complexities involved in attempting to organise a virtual shanty event, aligned with the fact that this was the first of its kind for the south west, hugely impressed the ATCM judges.

Speaking about the judging panel’s decision to recognise Falmouth, Ojay McDonald, Chief Executive of the Association of Town and City Management (ATCM) highlighted:

“Falmouth continues to punch well above its weight. The stresses and strains of the pandemic have created challenges for destinations everywhere, but the hard work, professionalism, and dynamism of the Falmouth team has allowed the town to gain influence on the international stage. Two events really stood out for the judging team in this respect, both indicative of the incredibly high level of work by the Town Team. The Virtual International Sea Shanty Festival created during lockdown, and their crucial work in the supporting the delivery of the global G7 Summit again, right in the middle of the pandemic, will leave a positive legacy, demonstrating what the place management industry is capable of at its best.”

Ojay continued:

“This is alongside Richard Wilcox tirelessly championing public policy on a regional level for Cornwall and the South West, and lobbying for the region nationally, through his work on the Levelling Up agenda. All of which means we are delighted to award Richard Wilcox, Executive Director of Falmouth BID, with the Inspirational Leader of the Year Award and the town of Falmouth with Best Digital High Street Scheme for the Virtual Sea Shanty. Both are thoroughly well deserved.”

And the Mayor of Falmouth, Councillor Steve Eva added:

“Huge congratulations to the Richards! The partnership between Falmouth Town Council and the BID - led so well by Richard Gates and Richard Wilcox, has been vital in supporting many projects and ideas that have had a huge social and economic benefit to the community. We are all at the current time, living and working in such difficult circumstances, and the team work incredibly hard to support our community in as many ways as possible. If only people could see the amount of work and planning that goes into each and every festival, marketing campaign and public realm project to make them the best they can be! And that work was epitomised by the return to an in-person Sea Shanty Festival last weekend. Extremely challenging operational, financial, and even weather conditions, but the event was delivered seamlessly and enjoyed by thousands. Again, congratulations.”

ENDS

Issued on behalf of the Falmouth Town Team by the Falmouth Business Improvement District (BID). For further information, imagery or interviews please contact the Falmouth Town Team office on 01326 313553.

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 operating in over 340 towns across 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.