

Inspire Volunteering Awards 2026

Celebrating the outstanding
volunteers and
organisations making a
difference across
Stirlingshire.

IMPACT REPORT



Purpose of the Awards

Stirling's volunteers are the heart of the community, dedicating time, passion and energy into improving the lives of others. The Inspire Volunteering Awards, run by Stirlingshire Voluntary Enterprise, celebrates these local champions by recognising and celebrating their achievements and contributions.

The Inspire Volunteering Awards aims to:

1

Celebrate

Celebrate the achievements of volunteers and volunteering involving organisations.

2

Raise the Profile

Raise the profile of volunteering in Stirling.

3

Inspire

Inspire people to volunteer in Stirling.



About the Event



Stirling County Rugby Club 3rd June 2026

The Inspire Volunteering Awards is held biennially, and this year took place at the **Stirling County Rugby Club** on June 3rd during Volunteers Week.

Approximately **120 people** attended on the night which included shortlisted volunteers and their guests, nominators, and invited guests from partner and statutory organisations.

The event host for the evening was **Natalie James**, a Glasgow based singer and professional host. Guests were welcomed in by **Piper Callan Taylor** from Stirling High School, and midway entertainment was provided by local community choir, the **Stirling Rock Choir**.

AV support was provided by **Dynamic Live Events**, photography by Julie Howden, and videography by Kippen based organisation, **Blue Juice Media**.



The Inspire Volunteering Award
Presented by Maggie Gorman & Natalie Masterson

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Nomination Process

The decision was taken in 2025 to bring the Awards forward to Volunteers' Week, rather than the usual September timeslot. This change was made to align the Awards with the national Volunteers' Week campaign, celebrating and recognising volunteers. Holding the Awards during this nationally recognised week helped raise the profile of volunteering, linked local celebrations with the wider campaign and highlighted the invaluable contribution volunteers make to communities across Stirlingshire.

Preparation for the Inspire Volunteering Awards started back in November when the sub-group held an initial meeting to discuss the 2026 categories. Using data from previous years to indicate which categories are most popular, as well as looking at recent trends in the sector, enabled the categories to be chosen.



2026 Categories

After deliberation the 2026 categories were:

Young Volunteer of the Year

Sponsored by Loch Lommond & the Trossachs National Park

Environment & Heritage

Sponsored by FEL Scotland

Health, Wellbeing & Sport

Sponsored by NHS Forth Valley

Community Champion

Sponsored by the Thistles Stirling

Heart of Gold

Sponsored by Scottish Fire and Rescue

Outstanding Trustee

Sponsored by STEP

Culture, Arts & Faith Award

Sponsored by Scene Stirling

The Inspire Volunteering Award

Overall award for outstanding volunteering

The Lord Provost Award

Recognising the organisations behind the volunteers

Sponsors & Funders

Once the categories had been decided the hard work started to encourage sponsorship from local third sector and statutory partners. Obviously, this helps to support the Awards financially but also serves to strengthen partnerships with local and national organisations.

8

Award Sponsors

Supporting individual award categories

1

Gold Event Sponsor

NHS Forth Valley

This year, the Inspire Volunteering Awards were proudly supported by our **Gold Event Sponsor, NHS Forth Valley**, and our 2026 Award Sponsors: **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scene Stirling, FEL Scotland, The Thistles Stirling, STEP, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, and NHS Forth Valley**. We also received funding from the **Stirling Council Civic Hospitality Fund**.

- ❑ We are extremely grateful for the generous support of all our sponsors and funders. Their investment makes the Inspire Volunteering Awards possible, enabling us to recognise and celebrate the outstanding contribution of volunteers and the positive difference they make to communities across Stirlingshire.

Judging Panel

Judging Criteria

The 2026 Judging Panel convened on **April 1st** at the Barracks Conference Centre once nominations had closed. The judging panel consists of some of our sponsors and partners, alongside the Provost and local MSYPs. They are each sent the nominations in advance, with judging criteria and scoring sheets.

This year we scored against the following 5 criteria:



Alignment to the category

Does the volunteer meet the award category description?

Impact

Describe the difference that the volunteer has made.

Inclusivity

Does the volunteer make a special effort to include others?

Dedication

How does the volunteer demonstrate their dedication?

Personal Growth

How has the nominee benefited from volunteering?

Our Thanks to the 2026 Judging Panel

Natalie Masterson (Chair)

SVE Chief Officer

The Lord Provost Rosemary Fraser

Maggie Gorman

SVE Chair

Ballie Alasdair Tollemache

Stirling Council

Lieke van de Coterlet

MSYP

Sophie Kerrigan

MSYP

Once the judges decisions had been made all nominees and nominators are informed of the outcome. We then announced the shortlist through our own channels as well as in local press.

Impact: Celebrate the Achievements of Volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations

The Inspire Volunteering Awards celebrate the invaluable contribution of volunteers and the organisations that support and enable volunteering across our communities.

The awards provide an opportunity for volunteers to feel recognised and valued for the time, skills and commitment they give. They also allow organisations to formally acknowledge the dedication and positive impact of their volunteers.

This year, the introduction of the **Lord Provost Award** provided an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the organisations behind the volunteers, acknowledging the vital role they play in creating supportive, inclusive environments where volunteering can thrive. This award highlighted the commitment of organisations that provide excellent support, guidance and opportunities for volunteers to make a meaningful difference.

I am truly honoured and humbled to receive this award. To be recognised alongside so many inspiring volunteers is a privilege.

Inspire Volunteer Award 2026
Winner Richard McLennan



Impact: Celebrate the Achievements of Volunteers and Volunteer Involving Organisations

The impact of the Inspire Volunteering Awards is evident through the pride, confidence, and sense of achievement experienced by shortlisted nominees and winners. The awards also reinforce the value of lived experience, skills and contributions, ensuring volunteers and the organisations that support them feel recognised and celebrated.

Feedback Received

It's fantastic to celebrate the valuable work of volunteers. Events like this really show how much impact volunteers have and the difference they make. It's right to acknowledge volunteer commitment and impact in this way.

A well planned evening showcasing the tireless work of many of the dedicated local volunteers in and around Stirling.

It was great to be recognised and to be made feel special on the night.

I felt a welcomed part of SVE and it was amazing to be nominated.

The feedback demonstrates that the awards successfully create a sense of recognition, pride and appreciation among volunteers and nominees.

Impact: Raise the Profile of Volunteering in Stirling

The Inspire Volunteering Awards help to raise awareness of the valuable contribution volunteers make across Stirling and highlight the wide range of volunteering opportunities available within our communities.

The 2026 Inspire Volunteering Awards received coverage in the **Stirling Observer**, and on **Central FM**, helping to showcase the achievements of volunteers and the positive impact of volunteering locally.

Local media coverage plays an important role in increasing the visibility of volunteering by sharing inspiring stories, celebrating community contributions, and highlighting the difference volunteers make. By promoting the awards and the stories behind the nominees and winners, the coverage encourages greater awareness of volunteering opportunities and can inspire more people to become involved in supporting their communities.

Stirling Observer	Print Readership 13,266
Stirling Observer facebook	25000+ followers
Central FM	45,400 listeners
SVE facebook	25,328 views during Volunteers Week

Impact: Inspire People in Stirling to Volunteer

One of the aims of the Inspire Volunteering Awards is to inspire more people to consider volunteering by celebrating the positive impact it has on both volunteers and the communities they support. The awards provide a platform for volunteers to share their stories, demonstrating how volunteering can build confidence, create connections and make a real difference to people's lives.

- Hearing the amazing stories of the impact on individuals and communities as a result of the hard work of nominees and award winners was inspirational.*
- I felt inspired seeing the other nominees and hearing their stories.*
- The whole evening was so inspirational. It was genuinely an honor to be there amongst such wonderful people.*

Stories of personal growth Hearing about community change and the connections made through volunteering can motivate others to get involved.	Peer recognition sparks enthusiasm Seeing peers recognised for their efforts can spark interest and enthusiasm in those who might be considering volunteering.	Recognition inspires more giving The Inspire Volunteering Awards showcases the impact of volunteering in our community.
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Winners of the 2026 Inspire Volunteering Awards

The winners of the 2026 Inspire Volunteering Awards were as follows:

Category	Winner
Young Volunteer of the Year sponsored by Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park	Ellie Welsh
Environment & Heritage sponsored by FEL Scotland	Fallin Community Garden
Health, Wellbeing & Sport sponsored by NHS Forth Valley	Jamie Cramb & Liz Howie, Dementia Friendly Dunblane
Community Champion sponsored by The Thistles Stirling	Creative Stirling Volunteer Steering Group
Heart of Gold sponsored by Scottish Fire and Rescue	Nelly Little, PLUS Forth Valley
Outstanding Trustee sponsored by STEP	Naomi Ross, Fallin Community Voice
Culture, Arts & Faith Award sponsored by Scene Stirling	Ryan Cotter, Stirling Community Media
The Inspire Volunteering Award 2026	Richard McLennan, Safebase Scotland
The Lord Provost Award	Fallin Community Voice

Saltire Award certificates were presented to Millie Boo Smith, Tobi Guthrie, Daniel Gough and Khayla Lange.

