



GUIDANCE FOR NOMINATORS

The Mid Ulster District Council's Business and Environment Awards 2026 aim to recognise businesses, groups and individuals who make a valuable contribution to the economy and the environment.

The awards are designed to recognise and celebrate the contributions of businesses, organisations and individuals across Mid Ulster who are driving positive change. They will showcase exceptional performance across a range of categories supporting economic growth and environmental responsibility.

We look forward to receiving your nominations. The process is simple and costs nothing. Just complete and submit an entry form right away.

The winners will be announced at Mid Ulster District Council's Business and Environment Awards 2026 on 19 February 2026 in Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Burn Road, Cookstown.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations must be received by 12 noon on the 15 January 2026 in order to be considered for the Business and Environment Awards 2026

Any nominations received after this date will not be considered. The Judging Panel's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Please read the criteria carefully before making an application. If you feel that the business, organisation or individual meets with the criteria then select the category and that best applies to the business /organisation /individual you have in mind.

Please note the Judging panel (at their discretion) may change the category to that deemed most appropriate to fit your nomination.

Judging will be a 2 stage process with Stage 1 Eligibility Assessment and Stage 2 Assessment Scoring.

Please ensure when completing your application that it is as accurate as possible and within the word limit provided.

The decision of the judging panel is final.

NOMINATIONS

- 1. Nominees' contributions must demonstrate a positive impact on the economy, environment, or community within the Mid Ulster District.
- 2. Nominations are confined to performance/achievements between 1st January 2025 31st December 2025.
- 3. The judging panel reserves the right to move nominees to other categories as required.
- 4. Nominations will be assessed by a judging panel which may include independent representatives and external advisors.

AWARD CATEGORIES

| No. | CATEGORY | DESCRIPTION |
|-----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Best Small Business Award | This award celebrates an outstanding small business that demonstrates innovation, and resilience, while making a meaningful impact within its sector, customers and the economy. Entrants should demonstrate the following:- • Financial Performance & Stability: Showing effective financial planning, budgeting, and sustainable growth. • Innovation & Flexibility: Demonstrating innovative products/services, use of technology, and problem-solving approaches. • Customer Experience: Highlighting a strong presence, and customer loyalty. Additional Eligibility Criteria: • Small Business defined as having between 1 - 49 full time equivalent employees. |
| 2 | Best Medium Business Award | This award celebrates an outstanding medium business that demonstrates innovation, and resilience, while making a meaningful impact within its sector, customers and the economy. Entrants should demonstrate the following:- Financial Performance & Stability: Showing effective financial planning, budgeting, and sustainable growth. Innovation & Flexibility: Demonstrating innovative, use of technology, and creative solutions to challenges. Customer Experience: Having a strong brand presence and customer base. Organisational Development: Being an inclusive workplace, encouraging staff growth, and positive leadership. Community Engagement & Impact: Highlighting a contribution to job creation and local community initiatives. Digital Innovation: Implementing effective use of digital tools or platforms for business growth. Additional Eligibility Criteria: Medium Business defined as having between 50 – 249 full time equivalent employees. |

3 Best LargeBusiness Award

This award celebrates a large business that demonstrates exceptional leadership, innovation, and sustained growth. The organisation should make a significant contribution to its sector, workforce, and wider society, driving economic progress both within Mid Ulster and beyond.

Entrants should demonstrate the following:-

- Financial Performance & Stability: Showing strong financial planning, budgeting, and evidence of sustainable growth within Mid Ulster and beyond.
- Innovation & Flexibility: Demonstrating innovative products/services, strategic use of technology, and adaptability in a changing market.
- Customer Experience & Market Performance: Identified as having a significant brand presence, strong customer loyalty, and collaborate with local businesses or industry leaders.
- Organisational Development & Culture: Promoting a positive, inclusive workplace culture, encourage staff development, and strong leadership.
- Community Engagement & Impact: Actively contributing to job creation and local community initiatives.
- Digital Innovation: Being a leader in digital innovation, using advanced tools and platforms to drive efficiency, growth, and customer experience.
- Industry Leadership: Contributing to setting industry standards, collaborating with industry bodies or government, manage large multi-site operations, and demonstrating a long-term strategic vision.

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

 Large Business defined as having 250+ full time equivalent employees.

4 Best Independent Retailer / Service Award

This award celebrates independent retailers and service businesses that provide exceptional and vital services to their local community. These businesses will offer unique and memorable customer experiences while demonstrating a strong commitment to their local area.

Entrants should demonstrate the following:-

- Contribution to local retail or service excellence
- Unique product offerings, services, or in-store/venue experiences
- Evidence of technological innovation within the business.
- Provides a valuable role to their local community.

5 Apprentice of the Year Award

This award celebrates an outstanding apprentice who demonstrates exceptional, commitment, initiative, and contribution to their role. The winner will show strong potential for future career progression and the ability to work effectively both independently and within a team.

Entrants should demonstrate the following:-

- Outstanding Achievements: Notable accomplishments in the workplace or training programme.
- *Personal qualities*: A well-rounded individual showing initiative, resilience, and professionalism.
- *Teamwork*: Effective collaboration and contribution to team success.
- Commitment to development: Dedication to learning, growth, and career progression.
- *Innovation and initiative*: Creative thinking and proactive contributions in the workplace.

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

- Apprentice who has completed or is nearing completion of their apprenticeship at time of nomination.
- Must be nominated by their employer or training provider.
- Undertaking an apprenticeship with a Mid Ulster employer.

6 Employer of Choice Award

This award celebrates an organisation that prioritises the wellbeing, development, and satisfaction of employees. It recognises inclusive and supportive workplaces where employees feel valued, motivated, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Entrants should demonstrate the following:-

- Inclusive and encouraging leadership: demonstrated commitment to listening, supporting, and empowering staff at all levels.
- Positive workplace culture: evidence of a respectful, collaborative, and motivating environment; uphold the principles of partnership working and promote a sense of shared responsibility among employees and the organisation
- Company commitment to employee development: evidence of investment in training, mentoring, and continuous learning opportunities; demonstrable career development and a strong record of retaining talent
- Diversity and inclusion: Policies and practices that promote equality and an inclusive work culture.
- Work-life satisfaction: Policies and practices that promote flexibility and employee wellbeing enabling individuals to achieve a healthy worklife balance.

 Fair pay: Commitment to pay all employees a fair and competitive wage based on the principle of equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Where possible, pay real living wage.

The awards framework and assessment criteria are built around the five principles of Mid Ulster District Council's Good Employment Charter to ensure they reflect and reinforce good employment practice https://www.midulstercouncil.org/your-council/good-employment-charter

7 Best Social Enterprise Award

This award celebrates social enterprises that go beyond profit to make a meaningful difference in their communities. It recognises an organisation that delivers impactful initiatives, champions ethical practices, and leads with purpose creating lasting social value across Mid Ulster.

Entrants should demonstrate the following:-

- A clear social focus that drives the organisation's work.
- Key achievements and milestones that show how the business contributes to the local community.
- Ethical and sustainable practices that support long-term viability and positive change.
- Collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, such as community groups and charities.
- Evidence of outcomes from social responsibility efforts, showing realworld impact.
- · Reinvestment of profits or resources into the local community.
- Active employee involvement in community-focused initiatives.

8. Rising Star Award

The Rising Star Award celebrates an individual who shines brightly within their chosen career path. This award recognises those who have shown exceptional promise, ambition, and growth within their role in business. It highlights those who are not only developing their own skills and knowledge but are also making a real impact and inspiring those around them. Whether through personal drive, innovation or leadership potential, this award recognises the rising talents of today who are destined to shape the future of business tomorrow.

Entrants should demonstrate the following;

- Is thriving in the workplace and has the potential to become a future leader.
- Demonstrates commitment to personal development and progression.
- Shows outstanding contribution to the workplace in particular, areas or projects where they have exceeded expectations.

| | | Demonstrates inspirational levels of achievement and attainment. Is a role model for peers. |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | Individual must be nominated by their Mid Ulster based employer. |
| 9 | Mid Ulster Climate Champion(s) | This award celebrates an individual or team that has shown exceptional leadership, innovation, and commitment to tackling climate change. This award recognises those taking action to reduce carbon emissions, build resilience to climate change, and inspire others to do the same. |
| | | Entrants should demonstrate the following: Demonstrated, measurable action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance climate resilience, or support adaptation within their organisation or community. |
| | | Impact relative to the size and capacity of the nominee (i.e. both large-scale and grassroots efforts are valued) |
| | | Shown leadership and influence in promoting climate action within their organisation, sector or the wider community. |
| | | Development or application of innovative solutions or ideas to address climate challenges. |
| | | • Effective engagement with stakeholders, partners, or communities to drive climate action. |
| | | Worked to raise awareness, educate others, or share knowledge about climate issues and solutions. |
| | | Please note that this category is open to applications from individuals or teams within businesses, schools, community groups and sports clubs. |
| 10 | Net Zero Project of the Year | This award celebrates organisations that are leading the way toward a greener, more sustainable future. It recognises outstanding projects or initiatives that demonstrate measurable progress in reducing environmental impact, promoting renewable energy, and advancing the district's journey toward net zero by 2050. Entrants should show how their actions contribute to lasting environmental, social, and economic sustainability. |
| | | Entrants should demonstrate the following: Tangible environmental benefits, such as reduced carbon emissions, energy or water use, waste generation, or pollution. |
| | | Integration of renewable energy, including solar, wind, hydro, geothermal, hydrogen, or energy storage solutions. |
| | | Leadership and advocacy in promoting sustainability and renewable energy adoption within their organisation, sector, or community. |
| | | Collaboration and education that have inspired others to take action or contributed to broader community awareness. |

Evidence of measurable outcomes, such as carbon reduction data, renewable energy usage percentages, or biodiversity improvements. • Alignment with the Mid Ulster District Council's Sustainability Strategy and Climate Action Plan, a copy of which can be found at Climate Change and Sustainability | Mid Ulster District Council. • Long-term impact and scalability, showing potential for the initiative to be sustained, replicated, or expanded over time. Please note that this category is open to applications from businesses, schools, community groups and sports clubs. 11 Environmental This award celebrates an organisation making a meaningful impact on knowledge, behaviour, or community participation. It recognises **Education &** outstanding efforts to educate and engage people of all ages in **Engagement Award** environmental awareness and sustainable practices. Entrants should demonstrate the following: Innovative educational programs or campaigns • Measurable impact on knowledge, behaviour, or community participation • Inclusive and accessible engagement methods Evidence of collaboration / partnerships with other organisations that contributed to the project's success. Please note that this category is open to applications from businesses, schools, community groups and sports clubs. 12 This award celebrates organisations who are embracing the principles of Excellence in the circular economy. It recognises organisations demonstrating Resource outstanding performance in the efficient and sustainable use of resources Management Award across its operations. Entrants should demonstrate the following: Significant reductions in material, energy, or water consumption • Implementation of circular economy principles e.g. use of recycled or renewable materials. • Product design for longevity, reuse, or recycling. Innovative approaches to minimising waste and optimising processes, materials, or logistics. Partnerships and collaboration that have strengthened results, such as working with suppliers, local authorities, or community groups to achieve shared goals. Please note that this category is open to applications from businesses, schools, community groups and sports clubs.



Nominations can be made online at: midulstercouncil.org/awards

Hard copy applications WILL NOT be accepted unless you have obtained prior permission.

If you are unable to submit an online nomination, you should contact the officer below.

Contact

Sophie Steenson

Email:

Sophie.Steenson@midulstercouncil.org Phone: 03000 132 132 ext 24630

Entries must be received by 12 noon on the 15th January 2026, applications after this date WILL NOT be considered.

PROCESS

Assessment will be carried out by Officers using a standard assessment process. Criteria for submitting an application to any category are as follows:

STAGE 1 – ELIGIBILITY CHECK

All nominations will be checked against criteria at Appendix 1 – this is a Pass or Fail on 2 areas. All 2 areas must be a pass in order to proceed to Stage 2 (assessment).

STAGE 2 - ASSESSMENT

Applications deemed eligible from Stage 1 will proceed to Stage 2 and will be scored against criteria specific to the Award Category they have been nominated to.
Answers will be scored based on the scoring matrix provided in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 1

STAGE 1 – ELIGIBILITY CHECK

| Name of Individual/Organisation/Business: |
|---|
| Category: |

| CRITERIA | Eligible? (Tick or X or N/A) |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Nominees' contributions must demonstrate a positive impact on the economy, environment, or community within the Mid Ulster District. | |
| Nominations are confined to performance/achievements between 1 st January 2025 to 31 st December 2025. | |

Eligible to proceed to stage 2?

Yes/No (delete as appropriate)

APPENDIX 2

STAGE 2 – BASIC SCORING CRITERIA FOR RESPONSES

| ASSESSMENT | SCORE |
|--|-------|
| An excellent response which exceeds the requirements in a very comprehensive manner | 5 |
| A good response which meets the requirements in a comprehensive manner | 4 |
| A satisfactory response but concerns expressed by the judging panel on some aspects | 3 |
| Minimal / poor information or inappropriately provided | 2 |
| The applicant failed to address the question | 1 |

BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT AWARDS 2026



Mid Ulster District Council Business and Environment Awards 2026

Nomination Form

Nominations close at 12 noon on the 15th of January 2026 via Survey Monkey https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MidUlsterBus EnvAwards

BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT AWARDS

Nomination Guidelines

Please ensure that you provide up-to-date contact information for the person/business/organisation that you are nominating and please print their name as it should appear on certificate.

We will use this information to inform the nominee of their nomination and to issue invitations to the Awards Ceremony.

| 1. | Please indicate whether you are nominating an individual, |
|----|---|
| | business or other organisation: |
| | Individual Business Organisation |
| 2. | Please identify the category you wish to make the nomination for |
| | e judging panel may (at their discretion) change the category to e most appropriate one e.g. that best fits the nomination. |

| CATEG | CATEGORY | |
|-------|---|--|
| 1. | Best Small Business Award | |
| 2. | Best Medium Business Award | |
| 3. | Best Large Business Award | |
| 4. | Best Independent Retailer / Service Award | |
| 5. | Apprentice of the Year Award | |
| 6. | Employer of Choice Award | |
| 7. | Best Social Enterprise Award | |
| 8. | Rising Star Award | |
| 9. | Mid Ulster Climate Champion(s) | |

| 10. | Net Zero Project of the Year | |
|-----------------|--|----------|
| 11. | Environmental Education and Engagement Award | |
| 12. | Excellence in Resource Management Award | |
| | Name of individual, business or organisation that you | ou are |
| | Correspondence address - This will be used to confination with the chosen individual, organisation | - |
| | | |
| 5. F | Postcode | |
| 6. 1 | elephone | |
| | Email - This will be used to confirm your nomination chosen individual, business or organisation. | with the |
| | | |
| | I confirm the nominee demonstrates a positive in economy, environment, or community within the District. | • |
| Please nomin | e tick this box to confirm that the nominee is aware ation. | of this |
| | I confirm the nominee is aware of this nominatio | n. |

The following information will be assessed by the panel when shortlisting nominations.

The Assessment panel can only assess your nomination based on the information contained within this nomination form. Any prior knowledge will not be taken into consideration.

When scoring each nomination submission, the panel will refer to the detailed Mid Ulster District Council Business and Environment Awards 2026 Criteria which can be found online at **midulstercouncil.org/awards**.

REASON FOR NOMINATION

Please provide details of the named nominees' achievements or success during the period 1st January 2025 – 31st December 2025.

Please refer to the award eligibility criteria at midulstercouncil.org/awards and state your reasons for nominating.

| Please note that your details below must not be extended beyond the space provided. | | |
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Please supply a high-quality image of the individual / business /

Please summarise (in a list of bullet points) the nominees' top 5 key achievements or success during the period 1st January 2025 – 31st

Thank you for your nomination.

organisation you are nominating.

Privacy & Data Protection Notice

By completing this nomination form, you consent to the collection and use of the personal information provided. The information you supply will be used solely for the purposes of administering the Mid Ulster District Council Business and Environment Awards, including verifying eligibility, contacting nominees and nominators, and managing event logistics.

We will not share your personal details with any third parties except where required by law or where necessary to deliver the Awards (for example, with the judging panel). All data will be stored securely and retained only for as long as necessary to administer the Awards and meet any legal obligations.

By submitting this form, you confirm that you have the nominee's consent to share their details for the purposes described above. You can read our full privacy statement at: midulstercouncil.org/privacy

Nominations will be assessed and evaluated against the stipulated criteria, which is available on our website midulstercouncil.org/awards. All nominees and nominators will be advised of the outcome of the initial assessment panel.

Shortlisted nominees will be invited to the Mid Ulster District Council Business and Environment Awards Ceremony on Thursday 19th February 2026 in the Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre, Burn Road, Cookstown, at which the winners of each award category will be announced.

We will publish the information about the shortlisted nominees on our website at midulstercouncil.org/awards including their name and the award they have been nominated for.

The decision of the judging panel is final.

