

Solihull Civic Honours Award Categories

The Good Neighbour Award

Individual award

This award recognises individuals who make their neighbourhood a better place to live - whether through ongoing dedication or a single act of kindness. Their contributions, from community involvement to invaluable support, help create a stronger, more connected community.

Criteria

- Solihull resident
- Demonstrates kindness and selflessness
- Has made a noticeable difference to the lives of neighbours and the community through ongoing examples of support
- Creates or encourages a sense of belonging within the neighbourhood where people feel safe and valued

Examples

Example 1: Ongoing Dedication

Nominee: Retired Nurse

Person A - checks in daily on elderly neighbours, offering lifts to appointments and helping with shopping. She organises monthly coffee mornings to combat loneliness and foster connection.

During winter, she coordinated a “warm spaces” initiative in her local church hall. Her quiet, consistent care has made her street feel like a family.

Example 2: Single Act of Kindness

Nominee: Sixth Form Student

When a neighbour’s home was damaged in a fire, the student rallied local support.

He created a fundraiser, collected donations, and helped clean and repaint the property. His compassion inspired others to get involved and strengthened community bonds

Example 3: Community Connector

Nominee: Community Volunteer

A volunteer runs a WhatsApp group for her street, sharing updates, safety alerts, and local events. She welcomes new residents with a homemade cake and a neighbourhood guide.

Her efforts have helped neighbours feel safe, informed, and genuinely part of something.

The Volunteer Contribution Award (all age)

Individual award

A recognition to individuals who have made a significant and positive difference through their volunteer efforts - Celebrating dedication, commitment, and meaningful contributions that have improved communities, organisations, or causes.

These awards highlight the lasting contributions volunteers create, whether through hands-on service, advocacy, mentorship, or innovation.

Criteria

- Be a resident of Solihull or actively volunteer within the borough
- Demonstrates a significant and positive impact their volunteer work
- Show a regular commitment to helping others
- Shows ongoing involvement and a dependable presence within their community or project over a sustained period
- Is regarded as an important part of the project/organisation

Examples

Example 1: Community Pantry Volunteer

A volunteer assists every week at a local community pantry helping families access food and essentials. Over the past three years, she has become a familiar and trusted face, often staying late to support new visitors and train other volunteers.

Her commitment has helped the pantry grow into a vital lifeline for the neighbourhood, and she's considered an irreplaceable part of the team.

Example 2: Youth Sports Mentor

A Solihull resident has spent the last five years coaching a free football club for young people in Smith's Wood. He not only runs weekly sessions but also mentors' players outside of training, helping them with schoolwork and personal challenges.

His consistent involvement has created a safe, supportive space for dozens of young people, and the club credits him with keeping the programme going year after year.

Example 3: Digital Inclusion Champion

Person C - volunteers with a library-based tech support group in Shirley, helping older residents learn how to use smartphones, email, and online services. She has been involved for over two years, attending every session and even developing easy-to-follow guides for beginners.

Her work has helped hundreds of people feel more confident and connected, and she is widely recognised as the heart of the initiative.

The Small Community or Charity Group of the Year Award

Group or organisation

The Small Community or Charity Group of the Year Award celebrates local community groups and local charities that have made a significant impact within their communities. It recognises groups that have shown exceptional dedication, creativity, and commitment to improving the lives of others, whether through social support, representation, environmental initiatives, or community engagement.

This award honours the efforts of small but mighty teams who work tirelessly - often with limited resources - to create meaningful change. Recipients are selected based on their achievements, resilience, and the positive influence they have had on their community.

Criteria

- Solihull based organisation
- Annual turnover below £100,000
- Operates on a small scale with limited resources
- Evidence of positive change for the community.
- Examples of creative approaches to address local priorities
- Collaborates with other groups or services to enhance impact
- Builds and inspires pride within the local area and community
- Demonstrated measurable impact within the local community over the past 12 months

Examples

💖 Example 1: Volunteer Run Group

A small volunteer-run group based in Solihull that supports older residents living alone. With an annual budget under £50,000, they've creatively partnered with local cafés and schools to run intergenerational lunch clubs and doorstep check-ins. Over the past year, they've reached over 120 residents, reducing isolation and building stronger neighbourhood connections. Their work has inspired pride and visibility for older voices in the community.

🌱 Example 2: Gardening Group

Operating on a shoestring budget, a grassroots gardening group transformed unused plots into vibrant community gardens. They collaborated with local schools, disability support services, and food banks to create inclusive growing spaces and donate fresh produce.

Their creative approach to food insecurity and environmental education has engaged over 200 residents and brought colour and connection to the borough.

🎨 Example 3: Arts Based Charity

A small arts-based charity with a turnover under £80,000, focused on empowering marginalised voices through storytelling and creative workshops. Over the past 12 months, they have run pop-up exhibitions, partnered with youth services, and delivered workshops in libraries and community centres. Their work has helped participants build confidence, share lived experiences, and foster pride in local identity.

The Health and Wellbeing Award

Group or organisation award

The Health and Wellbeing Award recognises groups or organisations that have made outstanding contributions to improving physical or mental health within their communities.

This award honours those who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to promoting well-being through initiatives such as healthcare support, improved mental health, increased physical activity, or holistic wellness projects. Recipients are celebrated for their commitment to fostering healthier lifestyles, raising awareness, and providing essential services that enhance quality of life.

Whether through education, direct support, or community-driven initiatives, winners of this award play a vital role in making health and well-being accessible to all.

Criteria

- Operates within Solihull
- Promotes delivery of activities/services that support physical/emotional well-being for individuals and communities
- Provide clear examples of improved physical or mental health e.g. reduced isolation, increased physical activity
- Has contributed to reducing health inequalities in the local area
- Involvement of local people and communities in delivery and development of activities
- Demonstrates effective cross-sector collaboration with health, social care, and NHS partners to improve community health and wellbeing

Examples

Example 1: Community group arranging walking sessions

A small community group that organises weekly walking sessions for residents of all ages, particularly those recovering from illness or experiencing social isolation. Over the past year, they have expanded to include mindfulness walks and gentle stretching sessions, supported by local physiotherapists.

The group has helped over 150 people increase physical activity, reduce loneliness, and build new friendships. They work closely with GP practices and social prescribers to reach those most in need.

Example 2: Mental Health Support Group

Operating from a local community centre, this volunteer-led group offers free mental health support workshops, peer-led discussion circles, and drop-in wellbeing sessions. They have collaborated with NHS mental health teams and local schools to deliver targeted support for young adults and carers.

Their work has led to reduced anxiety levels, improved confidence, and stronger community connections, especially among those who previously struggled to access formal services.

Example 3: Grassroots Organisation

A grassroots organisation tackling food insecurity and poor nutrition through cooking classes, healthy meal kits, and pop-up nutrition advice stalls. They have partnered with local health visitors, food banks, and social care teams to reach families in need.

Over the past 12 months, they have supported over 300 households, improved dietary habits, and helped reduce health inequalities in the borough. Their inclusive approach has empowered residents to take control of their health in practical, sustainable ways.

The Community Innovation Award

Individual or Group/organisation award

The Community Innovation Award - Social Media, Online Safety, Arts, Sports, Podcasts, Digital, Environment, Physical Activity, Sustainability. This award recognises individuals, groups, or organisations that have introduced new ideas, demonstrated exceptional creativity, and applied forward-thinking approaches to address community needs or challenges - from digital media and the arts to sustainability and physical activity.

It celebrates innovation that drives positive change and strengthens communities - whether through emerging technologies, fresh forms of creative expression, or groundbreaking sustainability efforts.

Criteria

- Solihull based organisation
- Clear examples of originality, creativity and innovation
- Clear example of how innovation has made a difference to communities and solved community challenges
- Demonstrates examples of collaborative partnerships

Examples

Example 1: Digital Community Group

A small community group launched a digital safety campaign for young people, combining interactive workshops, animated videos, and a podcast series co-created with local teens. Their innovative approach made online safety engaging and relatable, reaching over 500 students across the borough. They partnered with schools, youth services, and local police to ensure the content was accurate, inclusive, and widely accessible.

Example 2: Arts Group

A Solihull-based arts group transformed unused public spaces into pop-up galleries and creative hubs, showcasing community-led artwork focused on mental health and identity. Their mobile exhibitions travelled across libraries, parks, and shopping centres, sparking conversations and reducing stigma. They collaborated with local mental health charities and schools to co-design the installations and host creative workshops.

Example 3: Bike Share Scheme

A grassroots sustainability initiative that introduced a community bike-share scheme using refurbished bikes and solar-powered docking stations.

The project encouraged active travel, reduced carbon emissions, and provided free transport options for low-income residents. Working with local businesses, environmental groups, and the council to bring the idea to life, their model is now being explored in neighbouring areas.

The Breaking Down Barriers Award

Group or organisation award

The Breaking Down Barriers for Organisations honours local charities, groups and organisations that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to fostering inclusivity and removing obstacles that hinder equal access and participation. This award recognises organisations that actively create welcoming environments, challenge discrimination, and implement initiatives that promote diversity, equity, and accessibility.

Whether through community engagement, innovative programs, or workplace policies, recipients of this award lead the way in ensuring everyone feels valued and empowered. Their efforts drive meaningful change toward a more equitable and accessible society for all.

Criteria

- Solihull Based organisation
- Examples of clear actions to remove barriers for underrepresented/marginalised groups
- Organisation reflects the diversity of the groups they are supporting
- Clear examples of co-production in shaping services
- Clear examples of the Impact of their work on the local community
- Demonstrates examples of collaborative partnerships
- Clear examples of accessibility and inclusivity within proposal

Examples

Example 1: Organisation Improving Accessibility

A small community organisation that works to improve accessibility for disabled residents across the borough. Over the past year, they've co-designed inclusive transport guides with wheelchair users, hosted sensory- friendly events, and trained local businesses in disability awareness.

Their team reflects the diversity of the people they support, and they have partnered with the council and health services to embed accessibility into local planning. Their work has helped hundreds of residents feel more confident and included in everyday life.

Example 2: Women's Support Group

This grassroots group supports women from refugee and migrant backgrounds in Solihull through language classes, employment workshops, and cultural exchange events. All programmes are co-produced with participants to reflect their lived experiences and needs.

The group has built strong partnerships with housing services, schools, and local employers,

and their inclusive approach has helped dozens of women gain confidence, independence, and community connection.

Example 3: Neurodiverse Network Group

A volunteer-led organisation that advocates for neurodivergent individuals in education and employment. They have developed training for local schools and businesses, created peer-led support groups, and co-produced resources with autistic and ADHD community members. Their team includes neurodiverse staff and volunteers, and their work has led to tangible changes in how services are delivered and understood across the borough.

The VCFSE Organisational Leadership Award

Individual award

This award recognises outstanding leadership or management within the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector.

It celebrates leaders who have demonstrated exceptional vision, governance, and commitment to strengthening their organisation and the wider community. Nominees will have; Shown strategic leadership and ethical decision-making, Championed innovation and long-term sustainability, inspired teams and stakeholders to deliver meaningful impact, strengthened the organisation's role and reputation within the community.

Recipients of this award exemplify the values of integrity, resilience, and service - making a lasting difference in the lives of others and the future of their organisation, regardless of their leadership role or capacity.

Criteria

- Solihull based
- Examples of leadership-Demonstrates strong governance, planning and decision making
- Clear examples of initiatives that have had local impact
- Local testimonials- Supported by feedback from colleagues or beneficiaries.
- has introduced successful solutions to local challenges
- Demonstrates examples of collaborative partnerships to strengthen the sector.

Examples

Example 1: Community Centre Director

A Director leads a small community centre in Solihull that supports families facing financial hardship. Over the past year, he introduced a new referral system in partnership with local schools and health visitors, ensuring families could access food, counselling, and childcare support more efficiently.

His strategic planning and ethical leadership helped secure long-term funding, and staff regularly praise his inclusive, empowering management style. Testimonials from beneficiaries describe him as “the reason we feel seen and supported.”

Example 2: Volunteer Programme Lead (Unpaid Role)

Person B - volunteers as the lead coordinator for a faith-based charity supporting isolated older adults. Despite not being in a paid role, she has transformed the organisation's volunteer programme - introducing structured training, building partnerships with local GP practices, and creating a peer mentoring system that boosted volunteer retention.

Her leadership has led to a 40% increase in service reach and stronger ties across the VCFSE sector. Colleagues describe her as "a visionary who brings people together with purpose and compassion."

Example 3: Founder of a Social Enterprise for Young People

Person D - founded a youth-focused social enterprise offering creative workshops and employment support for young people not in education or training. He developed a sustainable business model by partnering with local businesses and reinvesting profits into free programmes. His governance and planning have earned praise from funders and community leaders, and young participants say he has "changed the way we see our future."

His work has helped shape local policy on youth engagement.

The Community Parenting Award

Group or organisation award

This award celebrates organisations that go above and beyond to support care-experienced children and young people, including those in foster care, care leavers, and those engaged through mentoring programmes or long-term support initiatives. It recognises the powerful role that community-based parenting and organisational care can play in helping young people feel safe, valued, and empowered.

Nominees for this award may include charities, community groups, education providers, or service-led organisations that deliver nurturing environments, consistent guidance, and inclusive opportunities for care-experienced youth. Whether through fostering programmes, mentorship schemes, or dedicated services for care leavers, these organisations demonstrate deep commitment, compassion, and a belief in every young person's potential.

This award honours those who embody the spirit of community parenting—offering not just care, but connection, consistency, and hope through structured, impactful support.

Criteria

- Solihull based
- Provides exceptional care, clear examples of going above and beyond
- Demonstrates clear examples of impact on the lives of the young person they've supported
- Has demonstrated sustained and dedicated involvement over time
- Acts as a role model/mentor to others

Examples

Example 1: Charity

A Solihull-based charity that supports care leavers transitioning into independent living. Over the past year, they've provided tailored mentoring, life skills workshops, and emotional support to over 50 young people. Staff go above and beyond - helping with everything from job interviews to birthday celebrations and many care leavers describe the team as "the family I never had."

Their sustained involvement and nurturing approach have helped young people build confidence, stability, and long-term resilience.

Example 2 (Business): Learning Hub

A social enterprise education provider that runs a dedicated programme for care-experienced students. As part of its business model, Pathways reinvests profits into free tutoring, mental health support, and one-to-one mentoring for young people in care. The team collaborates with foster carers, social workers, and local authorities to create personalised learning plans and safe spaces for students to thrive.

Their commitment has led to improved attendance, exam results, and self-esteem. Staff are seen as role models who consistently advocate for their students' potential -demonstrating how a business can drive social impact through education.

Example 3: Mentoring Community Group

A community group that pairs trained adult mentors with care-experienced youth for long-term guidance and support. Mentors meet regularly with young people to help them navigate education, relationships, and personal goals. The programme has built lasting bonds and helped participants feel seen, heard, and empowered.

The organisation is praised for its consistency, compassion, and its belief that every young person deserves a champion.