



THE LARGEST CELEBRATION OF  
RURAL BUSINESS IN THE UK

ENTRY GUIDELINES  
2017

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This background information will help you to understand more about the Rural Business Awards - its ethos and aims, and how this aligns with the judging process.

The aim of the Rural Business Awards is to give recognition to businesses operating right across the Rural sector. The CLA define rural businesses as fitting into three broad categories – Land Based businesses, Land Related Businesses and Other Businesses located in rural areas.

Our category selection aims to draw together businesses from across these three broad areas to acknowledge the breadth and depth of opportunity presented by the Great British countryside, as well as to celebrate the achievements of our rural businesses, from engineering through to artisan food producers and professional services organisations.

Importantly the awards are organised by rural business for rural business and judged by people who understand the rural sector. Businesses operating in the Rural sector employ in excess of 3.4 million people within over 600,000 businesses, and the sector is growing rapidly.

The thirteen award categories will be decided by an independent panel of judges drawn from the rural business sector, official agencies and rural charitable organisations.

Our aim is to grow The Rural Business Awards to become the UK's most prestigious and respected Awards for rural businesses.

## RBA OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Awards are:

- To acknowledge and celebrate the vital contributions made by companies to the development and success of the Rural sector and rural way of life;
- To encourage entrepreneurial spirit in the Rural sector; and to give recognition to excellence in business set-up, operation and management

## ENTRY GUIDANCE

We want you to tell us why you're the best and why you, your business, project, product or service deserves to be recognised nationally as the best in its class.

Guidance will be given but content is not restricted in terms of the use of images, video or otherwise. Submissions need to be kept to a reasonable length, judges will be given approximately 10 minutes to view the content so please bear this in mind.

## SOME IDEAS OF WHAT TO INCLUDE

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VIEW THE CATEGORY DETAIL RELEVANT TO YOU!

- An introduction to your business
- A link to your website, together with contact information and email address
- The business ethos, aims and objectives
- Try to demonstrate your uniqueness, your successes and your vision.
- How are your values entrenched in the rural sector:
- How you plan, how you hope to grow and how you impact the rural economy and way of life.
- Overview Financial Information
- Images of your proudest moments or of the project itself.
- Client testimonials

## FEEDBACK FROM 2016

THE JUDGES FEEDBACK WITH FROM 2016 INCLUDED:

- Include references to the entry criteria relevant to YOUR business
- Read the category summary and entry criteria carefully relevant to the category you have entered
- Include evidence to address each point as appropriately as you can
- If you enter more than one category, you should submit more than one presentation! (these may have lots in common but should address each categories requirements independently)
- Need help? Want feedback from your entry last year? CALL US. We are here to help you.

# JUDGING CRITERIA

An independent panel will view each submission on Tuesday 4th July 2017, the process for judging is unique in that judging uses a points based system and as such the judges will not know the overall results.

The judging panel will refer to the entry criteria and our overall ethos and aims to ensure that entries are relevant and demonstrate commitment to the rural business sector; this includes:

- Contribution to the rural and wider business economy
- Effective Financial Management
- Job creation
- Service and Infrastructure development
- Positive impact on communities or people
- How your product, service, project or offering makes life easier or better for people living or working in rural locations.

---

## PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS

State your business name, include your logo and category entered at the start of your presentation.

Programs accepted - Powerpoint, Prezi and Keynote or Full Video.

Video links can be submitted online - the videos need to be listed on YouTube or Vimeo.

If you do not have video or images DO NOT WORRY, make sure you include all the required written information - judging will not be based entirely on visual aids but as a way to communicate key messages.

**Please include full resolution images and a full resolution version of your logo.**

# SUBMITTING YOUR ENTRY

All submissions are taking place online for 2017.

## HOW TO ENTER

1. Go to [www.ruralbusinessawards.co.uk/enter](http://www.ruralbusinessawards.co.uk/enter) to start the entry process.
2. Register to create an account.
3. Start your entry (you can save it in-progress and return to add more).
4. Submit your entry and pay your entry fee.
5. Return any time to complete your entry and upload your presentations.

You only need to register once, even if you want to enter more than one category. You must pay the entry fee for each category you enter, if we don't receive payment your presentation will not be judged.

You will find lots more information online to help with you entry.

Need help? CALL US. We are here to help you. 0116 380 0525 or email [office@ruralbusinessawards.co.uk](mailto:office@ruralbusinessawards.co.uk)

---

## TIMESCALES

1. Entry closes on 30th June 2017.
2. The deadline for presentations is midnight on 30th June 2017  
Submit your presentation material to us to complete your entry by midnight on Friday 30th June 2017. Please be advised that whilst we make every effort to chase up entry material, it is your responsibility to ensure we have your material on time. Reasonable lateness will be accommodated but only by prior approval and only if submitted before 8am on Friday 4th July.
3. Judging takes place on 4th July 2017.  
Our judging process is carried out on Monday 4th July. This date is final and is the reason for the 30th June deadline.
4. The shortlist will be announced from 10th July 2017  
We cannot personally respond to all entrants, but all entrants will be informed by email when the shortlist is announced on our website.
5. Tickets go on sale  
Tickets for the ceremony will be available when the shortlist is announced. Shortlisted entrants will have priority access to tickets until the end of August 2017 after which they will be on general release.
6. The Ceremony take place on 5th October 2017 at Denbies Wine Estate, Surrey.

# CATEGORY SUMMARY LIST

THE RURAL BUSINESS AWARD CATEGORIES ARE:

1. Best Rural Start-up
2. Outstanding Rural Diversification Project
3. Best Rural Clothing or Accessories Business
4. Rural Innovation of the Year
5. Best Rural Manufacturing Business
6. Best Rural Professional Services Business
7. Best Rural Creative or Media-based Business
8. Social Enterprise / Community Project of the Year
9. Best Rural Tourism Business
10. Best Rural Sporting Business
11. Rural Employer of the Year
12. Rural Entrepreneur of the Year
13. Best Rural Food & Drink Business

## 1. BEST RURAL START-UP

This award celebrates new businesses and will recognise those that demonstrate the journey that they have taken towards establishing a business that is excelling in its chosen market. This will be demonstrated by sharing with us a clear strategy, with an understanding of the marketplace as well as targets that have been met or exceeded in relation to growth and financial performance.

The winning business will have created the foundations for continued commercial success.

Open to any UK organisation that began trading within the last 3 years, this award will go to the company that best demonstrates the following:

- A well articulated strategy for growth
- Strong business and financial results
- Demonstration of the achievement of the aims and objectives identified upon start up
- Potential for sustained growth
- A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
- An Innovative or entrepreneurial approach to business
- Customer and staff engagement
- Effective leadership, operation and management
- An ethical approach to business

---

## 2. OUTSTANDING RURAL DIVERSIFICATION PROJECT

This award celebrates businesses that have emerged from traditional country businesses and are generally land based. We aim to recognise those that demonstrate a compelling justification for diversification and who have established a strong position in their marketplace. The project may be a commercial operation or not-for-profit.

The winning business will have created the foundations for continued operation and will address our overarching ethos by demonstrating a business or a people focus, growth and commitment to the rural sector through:

- A well articulated strategy
- Job creation
- Contribution to the rural and wider business economy
- Service and Infrastructure development
- The impact on communities or people and the environment
- How your product, service, project or offering makes life easier or better for people living or working in rural locations

### 3. BEST RURAL CLOTHING OR ACCESSORY BUSINESS

This award celebrates businesses that have emerged in support of traditional country pursuits or who use a rural base to produce or manufacture goods or materials that are sold to a wider urban as well as rural customer base. We aim to recognise those who demonstrate an innovative product or business by addressing an identified need in the marketplace. Tell us your story and how you came to develop your business, outline the process you undertook for developing the product or brand.

The winning business will have created the foundations for continued operation and will address our overarching ethos by demonstrating a business and / or a people focus, as well as growth and commitment to the rural sector through:

- A well articulated business strategy
  - Strong business and financial results
  - Demonstration of the achievement of the aims and objectives
  - A platform for continued commercial success
  - An Innovative or entrepreneurial approach to business
  - A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
  - Uniqueness in offering – what sets the business apart from the competition
  - Customer and staff engagement
  - Effective leadership, operation and management
  - An ethical approach to business
- 

### 4. RURAL INNOVATION OF THE YEAR

Innovation come in many forms; from new products and services to new ways of approaching old problems, or developing new business cultures this award celebrates the ideas that have had the greatest impact on an organisation or industry. Judges will look for evidence of how the innovation has been developed and applied to improve the lives of those living or working in rural locations, improve a businesses' commercial performance, operational effectiveness or customer engagement.

Open to any organisation operating in the public, private or third sector, this award will go to the company that can best demonstrate an innovation or innovative approach that has:

- Transformed or positively impacted the rural way of life, the business or wider industry
- Created competitive advantage
- Contributed to significant business growth and improved overall financial performance
- Achieved significant improvements in operational excellence
- Enabled the delivery of new ethical or sustainable practices
- Helped staff deliver better customer service
- Increased market share or customer loyalty

## 5. BEST RURAL MANUFACTURING BUSINESS

This award aims to celebrate manufacturing businesses that have established a position in a rural locale. These businesses will have embraced the challenges of operating out of a rural premise and will recognise those that demonstrate the journey that they have taken towards establishing a business that is excelling in its chosen market. This will be demonstrated by sharing with us a clear strategy, with an understanding of the marketplace as well as targets that have been met or exceeded in relation to growth and financial performance.

The winning business will have created the foundations for continued commercial success and will demonstrate;

- Efficiency in manufacturing processes – balancing the need to keep costs and waste to a minimum whilst meeting all manufacturing KPI's
  - Operational excellence
  - How the business has adopted innovative approaches or technology
  - A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
  - A well articulated business strategy
  - Strong business and financial results
  - Demonstration of the achievement of the aims and objectives
  - A platform for continued commercial success
  - Customer and staff engagement
  - Effective leadership, operation and management
  - An ethical approach to business
  - Job creation and positive impact on locality of operation
- 

## 6. BEST RURAL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUSINESS

This award aims to celebrate any Professional Services business that has established a position in a rural locale or that serves a rural client group. These businesses will have embraced the challenges of operating within a rural marketplace, demonstrated by the development of a clear business strategy, which addresses the unique challenges of working with individuals and company's operating rural and land based businesses. The businesses will show a strong ethical approach and involvement and understanding of the businesses who they serve.

The winning business will demonstrate;

- How and why the business better serves rural clients than urban or city based businesses and how the approach differs
- Excellent customer care – going the extra mile
- Illustrate an understanding of the challenges of living, working or running a business in the rural marketplace
- An understanding of the rural marketplace and how to address the communication challenges of keeping in touch with grass roots
- What makes the business different and why clients choose the businesses services?
- Uniqueness in offering – what sets the business apart from the competition

## 7. BEST RURAL CREATIVE OR MEDIA BASED BUSINESS

This award aims to celebrate Businesses which have their origin in creativity, skill and individual talent and which have demonstrated commercial success from a rural base, or by developing content that uses or embraces a rural theme. We will look at how these businesses are creating jobs and contributing to the economy as well as how they might bring together communities.

The winning business will be able to demonstrate the following:

- Clear strategy for business growth and sustainability and demonstration of the achievement of the aims and objectives
  - A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
  - Customer satisfaction
  - Strong business and financial results
  - Innovative approach to delivering creative output that achieves client objectives
  - How being rural shapes the way that the business operates
  - Customer and staff engagement
  - Effective leadership, operation and management
  - Uniqueness in offering – what sets the business apart from the competition
  - An ethical approach to business
- 

## 8. SOCIAL ENTERPRISE / COMMUNITY PROJECT OF THE YEAR

This award aims to celebrate an enterprise or project that is shaping a rural community or impacting the rural way of life in a positive way. We are looking for inspiring stories of triumph over adversity and coming together of people to demonstrate the strength and passion of our rural communities.

The winning business will be able to demonstrate the following:

- Absolute passion and commitment to the project and the rural way of life
- A vision for continued success, sustainability, growth and clear strategic direction
- Clear leadership and management of the organisation
- A high degree of customer satisfaction
- Clearly evidenced social, environmental and community impact
- Good awareness and communication outputs
- Evidence of creativity and innovation

## 9. BEST RURAL TOURISM BUSINESS

This award aims to celebrate a business that attracts visitors to our rural backwaters and heartlands. Projecting all that is wonderful about our rural tourism sector, we will reward businesses that are truly outstanding and offer something a bit different or innovative. With rural values, philosophy and commitment to customer care the winning business will stand out as a flagship of excellence.

The winning business will be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

- Strong business and financial results
  - Strategy for sustaining quality and continuous improvement
  - A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
  - That consideration has been given to addressing accessibility and inclusivity
  - That the business is sustainable has excellent green credentials and consideration has been given to environmental impact
  - Exceptional customer care and the willingness to go the extra mile for customers
  - Uniqueness in offering – what sets the business apart from the competition
  - Commitment to ongoing improvement both in terms of customer experience and staff satisfaction
  - Links with local communities and businesses for the benefit of all
- 

## 10. BEST RURAL SPORTING BUSINESS

This award aims to celebrate a business that is successful not only in terms of the contribution it makes to the rural economy and people, but one that is also entrenched in the rural way of life and can demonstrate passion for the countryside running throughout the business.

Combining business acumen with a keen sense of seeking to educate and get people from diverse backgrounds involved and enjoying the countryside and the sporting opportunities it presents.

The winning business will be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

- Strong business and financial results
- A sustainably business strategy
- A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
- That consideration has been given to educating and enabling people from diverse backgrounds and walks of life to take part and experience the sport
- Uniqueness in offering – what sets the business apart from the competition
- Links with local communities and businesses for the benefit of all

## 11. RURAL EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

This award will celebrate a business that seeks to attract, invest in, retain and reward talent – by developing strategy that promotes it as an employer of choice. We will look for evidence of how communication processes are developed with the aim to involve and engage employees in the businesses strategic development and in living the business brand.

Winning the hearts and minds of its employees will have resulted in sustained commercial and competitive success and also very high levels of customer satisfaction. The winning business will be one that works hard and plays hard and reflects its rural values by fostering a true sense of belonging and community.

The winning business will be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

- Staff development, retention and recruitment
  - High levels of employee engagement
  - Excellent leadership and management
  - Innovation and operational excellence
  - An embedded ethical and rural focussed culture
  - Creative and collaborative customer service
  - Increased growth or market share
  - Solid financial performance
- 

## 12. RURAL ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

This award will focusing on the contribution of a dynamic, passionate and visionary leader; we will recognise an enterprising individual who has achieved sustained levels of growth and financial performance by developing a culture of inclusivity, ethical business operation, innovation and exemplary market knowledge.

The winning individual will be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

That his or her leadership was instrumental in the establishment, operation and ongoing success of the business

- Clear Identification of a compelling market opportunity
- Exceptional vision and effective leadership to realise the opportunity identified
- Development of staff and resources to optimise the opportunity
- Strong commercial performance and financial results
- Significant growth or expansion with plans for sustained growth
- Innovation in products, services or processes
- Customer engagement and loyalty
- An ethical approach to business

### 13. BEST RURAL FOOD & DRINK BUSINESS

This award will celebrate innovative food & drink businesses, brands or products, that are leading the way and pushing the boundaries of what being a 'traditional' British producer, supplier or retailer means. With a commitment to promoting 'The Best of British', using sustainable quality ingredients and skills based approaches to production as well as developing a commercially successful business this award will highlight some of the innovative up and coming stars of the rural food & drink sector as well as those who continue to make traditional produce into sustainable business.

The winning individual will be able to clearly demonstrate the following:

- A well articulated business strategy
- Strong business and financial results
- Demonstration of the achievement of the aims and objectives A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
- A clear understanding of the market and customers to whom the business is selling
- That where possible they use local or sustainably sourced ingredients and/ or produce
- Uniqueness in offering – what sets the business apart from the competition
- Availability for sale in the UK
- A platform for continued commercial success
- Customer and staff engagement
- Effective leadership, operation and management
- An ethical approach to business



THE  
**RURAL**  
BUSINESS AWARDS

in  
partnership  
with



To book or enquire about entering  
Call: **01 16 380 0525**  
Email: [office@ruralbusinessawards.co.uk](mailto:office@ruralbusinessawards.co.uk)  
[www.ruralbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.ruralbusinessawards.co.uk)