

CORNWALL SKILLS STARS SHINE AT 'LEARNING OSCARS'

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Cornwall skills stars lit up the South West Skills Awards with two winners and five highly commended finalists who received their awards from TV's Ben Fogle.

Described as the 'Learning Oscars', the prestigious ceremony, which was held on April 24, was organised and funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) South West to celebrate the exceptional achievements of individuals and organisations throughout the region.

Falmouth based Pendennis Shipyard won 'Large Employer of the Year' category for its work with apprentices. The judges were impressed with the company's commitment to training, which is demonstrated by the fact that this year they are taking on their sixth intake of apprentices. Apprentices now make up a fifth of Pendennis Shipyard's workforce.

Tulip Foods, manufacturers and processors of quality meat products from St Austell, triumphed in the 'Train to Gain Large Employer of the Year' category. Tulip Foods has worked closely with Train to Gain to implement a strategic learning programme in order to increase product quality and retain and develop employees. By the end of the year over 350 learners will have completed a Train to Gain full Level 2 programme.

Four learners were also highly commended in the Apprenticeship categories– Ben Brown from Truro in 'Young Apprentice of the Year', Curtis Frewin from Kelly Bray and Julia Dixon from Wadebridge in 'Apprentice of the Year' and Ben Butler from Newquay in 'Personal Achiever of the Year'.

Penzance based gas installation and maintenance company Flamerite collected a highly commended award in the 'Micro Employer of the Year' category for their work with apprentices.

Malcolm Gillespie, Regional Director, LSC South West said: "Last night's ceremony was a fantastic celebration of learning and development across the South West. We received a record number of entries, so our Cornwall winners and finalists can be very proud of their achievements."

"The awards enabled the LSC to showcase the outstanding contribution that individuals and businesses are making to raise skill levels and improve productivity and competitiveness throughout the region."

Intrepid explorer and TV presenter Ben Fogle presented the Cornwall winners with their award following his motivational speech to 170 south west apprentices, adult learners and employers at Sandy Park Stadium in Exeter.

Ends

Note to Editors:

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers. For more information visit: www.lsc.gov.uk/southwest

For more information, photos or to arrange an interview with a winner or finalist please contact Lindsay, Rebecca or Jenny on 0117 907 3400.

Awards categories, winners and highly commended finalists

- **South West Young Apprentice of the Year:**

Winner - Josh Pickering (Poole) Highly Commended – Benjamin Brown (Truro)

- **South West Apprentice of the Year:**

Winner - Kirsten Moran (Newton Abbot)

Highly Commended – Curtis Frewin (Kelly Bray) and Julia Dixon (Wadebridge)

- **South West Personal Achiever of the Year:**

Winner - Mathilde Heather (Bath)

Highly Commended – Ben Butler (Newquay) and Sarah Knight (Yeovil)

- **Employer of the Year (Micro):**

Winner – N.E Vehicle Repairs (Plymouth)

Highly Commended – Flamerite (Penzance) and I.R.T Construction Ltd (Kingsteignton)

- **Employer of the Year (Large):**

Winner – Pendennis Shipyard (Falmouth)

Highly Commended – Clarkson Evans Ltd (Gloucester) and Kawasaki Precision Machinery UK

- **Train to Gain Large Employer of the Year:**

Winner – Tulip Foods Ltd (St Austell)