These awards are open to businesses in or around the area (a guideline is a four-mile radius). Businesses may enter from outside the area providing the area in and around the town is a major trading area of that business. Businesses can enter as many categories as they wish, but only one entry per category. Sponsors may not enter categories they are sponsoring.

Nominations need to have comments on why the company is being nominated so that the judges can appreciate why you have nominated them and gain an understanding of why they are worthy of the award. It is not the number of nominations the judges will consider but the quality of the nomination. In each category there are more chances to win with Gold and Silver Awards plus we also have an Outstanding Business of the Year award.

**B2B Business of The Year**

Open to any business that creates products and/or services for other businesses so that could include businesses that operate in accountancy, commercial legal work, IT and cyber security, car leasing, business funding, websites and marketing, sales training, hospitality supplies, security, insurance, telecommunications etc. The entrants need to demonstrate how their services stand above their competitors, how they achieve excellent customer satisfaction and what makes them an award winner.

**Best Place to Work**

This category is open to all businesses and organisations (public and private sector) that can demonstrate they have created an outstanding workplace based on a set of values that has led to a committed, effective, and motivated workforce. Tell us what sets you apart and how that has benefited the business/organisation and its employees. With stresses in recent years from Covid to rising running costs tell us how the business has taken steps to take care of and help employees and customers.

**Independent Business of the Year**

Tell us about your journey, your plans for the future. This category is open to all local companies with 20 or less employees that can demonstrate ambition and innovation in their business sector. Details on how your business stands out from your competitors and achievements in the last year or so. Details on where you want to be in the next year. The judges will be looking for achievement in all aspects of the company, excellent leadership, a good sales and marketing strategy, commitment to staff development and training**. This category is also open to the self-employed/freelancers**

**Community Support**

Open to any business or organisation that can demonstrate commitment to the local community through services, fund raising or physical or mental support. This award is open to businesses or individuals who have gone the extra mile supporting other businesses or individuals during the recent issues. The winner of this category will be a business or an individual that has consistently helped others with dedication and commitment. Entries should give examples of what has been done. Entries can be nominations from other businesses for a business or individual OR from a business for an individual within that business

**Hospitality – THIS IS ONE CATEGORY BUT WE ACCEPT ENTRIES FROM THE BELOW**

Café/Tea Room - entries from cafes, coffee shops, tea rooms and of course customer nominations. Entrants should demonstrate excellence across every aspect of their business, outlining their long term aims to continue to improve their customer experience. Tell us what makes you so special. Use of local produce and home made food will impress our judges. Nominations will tell us why you think this business stands out and deserves this award.

Casual Dining - Pubs, restaurants that offer a relaxed informal dining experience rather than a fine dining one. Excellence in food, ambience, service will all paint a picture. Use of local ingredients and freshly produced food plus talented creations will all help.

**Excellence in Customer Service**

This award is open to businesses that can show flexibility, responsibility, and a clear focus on their customer service. They need to demonstrate a high level of customer satisfaction, setting the bar for their competitors to follow. Also, businesses should, if possible, give examples of any customer service training they have given to their team, whether on a one-to-one basis or group training.

**Family Business of The Year**

The winner of this award will have family members currently working in the business. The judges are looking for businesses who can articulate why that matters to the success of the business, while acknowledging the pros and cons of a family structure. Entrants will demonstrate what it means to be a family business and how (if applicable) non-family leaders are integrated. Businesses entering this award will need to specify the current family members leading the business and their roles.

**New Business of the Year**

Entrants are invited from businesses less than three years old (as of December 2022), that have demonstrated enterprise, vision, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit when setting up a successful new business. Also, a clear vision as to how the business will develop in the future. We are looking for inspiring new businesses that will be seen as role models for other new businesses.

**Young Entrepreneur/Rising Star**

Entrepreneur A young person is defined as under 35 – they can either be employed or run their own business. The judges will be looking for individuals who have demonstrated an exceptional contribution to the workplace or development of their own company showing excellent performance, a real hands-on approach, initiative, and entrepreneurial spirit

**Green/Eco Business of The Year**

We are looking for local business entrants who show awareness of environmental issues and are working to be more environmentally friendly. Entrants will need to show they are focused on being ethical and socially responsible. The award is open to any local business, organisation, or individual that has included environmental improvements as part of their core business model and reducing waste.

**High St Impact**

The award is designed to recognise any business, team or individual that can demonstrate a significant impact in making STURMINSTER a more vibrant, welcoming or sustainable town. Our judges will recognise and reward initiatives that create high street jobs, attract local residents and visitors, revitalise the town centre, or raise the profile. Measures to make the town centre/High St more green, clean and mixed use spaces will also be recognised by our judges.

**My Favourite Business**

This is a category for local people to put forward all the businesses that they love and think deserve an award for their customer service, their products, their prices – just tell us why they are so brilliant, why you love them

**You cannot enter your own business in this category but can encourage your clients/customers to nominate you**