

These awards are open to businesses in or around the Ringwood area only ( a guideline is 4 miles) however if you are outside this area but can demonstrate it's a major trading area for you then you may still enter. Businesses can enter as many categories as they wish, but only one entry per category. Sponsors may not enter categories they are sponsoring.

Recommendations/Nominations need to have comments on why the company is being put forward so that the judges can appreciate why you have recommended them and gain an understanding of why they are worthy of the award. **It is not the number the judges will consider but the quality.**

**ALSO PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU CANNOT WIN THE SAME CATEGORY IN TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS**

### **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.

### **Best Café, Pub, Casual Dining.**

This award is open to cafes, coffee shops, bars, beachside bars, pubs, etc - and any business that provides food and drink in a social area. Entrants should demonstrate excellence across every aspect of their business, outlining their long term aims to continue to improve their customer experience.

### **Business Innovation/Expansion**

The judges will be looking for details on innovative practises that have helped your business grow and expand either since you launched it or in the last few years resulting in increased sales and profitability. 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 near future and how you plan to continue your expansion.

### **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.

### **Independent Business of the Year**

This category is open to local independent businesses who can demonstrate enterprise, vision, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit, which in turn is growing their business. Also, a strong record of serving local customers. The winning business will demonstrate excellence in all areas of the business and the business can be any size from a one-man band to large

### **New Business of the Year**

Entrants are invited from businesses less than three years old (as of April 2023), 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.

### **My Favourite Business**

**Non entry category – Nominations only from clients/customers etc**

Please nominate your favourite businesses in the area – the ones you use regularly and think deserve an award. It may be because of what they sell, their customer service, their staff – just tell us what makes them so special in your eyes.

### **Restaurant of the Year**

Entries are invited from dining establishments that can demonstrate a consistently creative and well received menu plus great customer service and a welcoming ambience. Serving delicious and tasty dishes they must have overall excellent feedback from diners. This is more about a fine dining experience rather than casual dining. Locally sourced produce and awards will impress our judges.

### **Self Employed/Freelance of the Year**

Open to any person that is self-employed or a freelancer in any business sector as we know you are one of the most hardworking and important groups contributing to the local economy. The award will recognise the achievements made by you in your business so details of growth, development, innovation, achievements will help our judges. There is no age limit in this category and the business could be anything from a market trader, local crafts producer, jewellery maker, food or cheese producer to a plumber, electrician, garden designer, bookkeeper, counsellor, HR provider, marketing /design company, PR. The list is endless but tell us what makes you stand out from the crowd and why you think you are better than competitors.

### **Overall Winner**

**This is decided by the judges who are asked to vote for their 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> businesses and then the one that gets the most overall 1<sup>st</sup> votes is our winner. If voting is very close there will be a runner up (s)**