

# CIVIC AWARDS

2023



**WELWYN  
HATFIELD**



# CIVIC AWARDS 2023

## Welcome to the Presentation of the Civic Awards 2023

This is the seventeenth year that Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, this year in partnership with Urbaser, has hosted its Civic Awards. We are very pleased to have a Young Person Award sponsored by the University of Hertfordshire for anyone under the age of 21.

The response to the award scheme was once again positive and the community judging panel had a real challenge to decide the winners. The range of achievements and work that takes place in the Borough is truly astonishing.

Details of the winners are in this booklet. For those who were not selected for a prize this year, may I extend my genuine thanks for your contribution to life in our Borough. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to make a nomination.

My sincerest thanks also go to the sponsors of the awards, Urbaser and the University of Hertfordshire whose support for this is invaluable.

Councillor Barbara Fitzsimon, Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield Borough



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# Justin Burgess

The Civic Award is presented to Justin Burgess in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Welwyn Hatfield community and JOCA charity

Nominated by:

Lord Salisbury and Lady Salisbury

John Burgess and Eliza Burgess

The following text is drawn from their nomination forms:

There is a general feeling in Hatfield that Mr Justin Burgess has gone way above and beyond. He did a terrific job throughout the pandemic, and he continues to do so.

Justin created a charity called JOCA (Just One Click Away) to tackle the rising cases of depression in the UK, mainly in young men, through providing counselling, support, and guidance, all of which was utilised by many people through the pandemic.

The need to start this charity stemmed from the death of three of his friends from Welwyn Rugby Club and it has grown exponentially through a “pass it on” campaign. A JOCA branded rugby ball was given to different clubs across the county for them to hold a mental health awareness day to ease the stigma that "big rugby lads" are too tough to talk about mental health which has helped many players of all ages at rugby clubs all over Hertfordshire.

Not only has the charity already been adopted by a further 10 clubs across different sports, but the RFU have also been looking at the idea of making JOCA a national charity to allow its affect to be felt nationwide and help other young men and women struggling to speak up about mental health.

# Rhianna Russell

The Civic Award is presented in recognition of the outstanding success Rhianna Russell has achieved representing Welwyn & District Bowls Club and England

Nominated by:

Peter Bowyer and Mike Poole

The following text is drawn from their nomination form:

Rhianna has achieved outstanding success at Bowls. She has been a club member of Welwyn & District Bowls Club for 6 years and played for Hertfordshire in the last few years.

In 2022, Rhianna reached the national finals at Leamington Spa, the home of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth games. She helped club members reach the quarter finals and went on to be crowned Ladies National Two Bowl Singles Champion 2022. Rhianna qualified for the finals by becoming Hertfordshire Champion, played five games in the run up to the National Final including the semi-final where she beat the reigning champion. In the final, a closely fought contest she won, to become the youngest ever champion.

Rhianna has a natural ability to help all in her team, encourage new bowlers to improve and other club members. She has helped with our open days promoting sport to all ages, from 8 to 80 and at bowls taster events with St Mary's primary school she is really able to connect and promote enthusiasm.

Her parents Clara and Phil are always there to help and encourage Rhianna to step forward and have supported her all the way, to reach the highest level, now bowling for her Country. In January 2023, she represented England in the BIIBC Mixed U18 International Series in Solihull where she gained a bronze medal in the pairs. Rhianna has now been selected to join the England squad and play for her Country at BIIBC in Frith, Wales for the U25 Ladies International Series on the 11th and 12th February 2023.

# Michael Nash

The Civic Award is presented in recognition of the work Michael Nash has undertaken over 65 years for different Football Clubs in the Welwyn Hatfield Borough

Nominated by:

Stuart Johnson and Tim Ball

The following text is drawn from their nomination form:

Michael has been involved as a player from aged 10 years to 30 years and from 30 years to 60 years as a Referee.

He started playing at Blackthorn School, moving on to Heronswood playing for both schools and playing for Peartree Boys Club and Wheatley Wanderers. Upon reaching 18 years of age and not eligible for youth football any longer, he went to work at Mowlems in Welham Green, playing for the company on Saturdays and Sundays and eventually playing for North Mymms, and Nabisco on Sundays. He also played for Tewin & Hertingfordbury on Saturdays and Characters on Sundays.

Michael then became Manager, Secretary and Treasurer of Characters with his wife taking care of the kit. In February 1976 he qualified as a referee completing 30 years officiating. He refereed on Herts County League, Mid Herts League, Mid Herts Minors League, South Midlands League and Welwyn Hatfield Sunday League. He has also been Secretary of Welwyn Garden United and Referees Secretary for Herts County League and Welwyn Hatfield Sunday League.

He has also served on various committees: Codicote, Welwyn Pegasus, and Herts Senior County League.

In all 65 years involvement in the sport.

# Sarah Marsh

The Environmental Award is presented by Urbaser  
in recognition of the work Sarah Marsh has undertaken  
with the gardening and planting design of Danesbury Fernery

Nominated by:

Sara Donatantonio and Joe Charry

The following text is drawn from their nomination form:

Sarah Marsh is very much a team person and has been involved with the gardening and planting design of Danesbury Fernery.

No original planting plans exist, so the Fernery has benefited from Sarah's expert knowledge to show off this wonderful heritage garden to full affect.

Not only does Sarah offer continuing advice on how to maintain this space but she is very much involved in the physical planting of bulbs and plants and weeding.

She is a wonderful motivator to all the volunteers and sharing knowledge to empower others.

We have been fortunate to benefit from her wealth of horticultural knowledge, which has enabled the volunteers to now have the confidence to open the Fernery under the National Garden Scheme later this year.

# Julide Hasan

The Young Person Award is presented by the University of Hertfordshire to Julide Hasan in recognition of her contribution to the University of Hertfordshire Law School

Nominated by:

Diana Kirsch and Amanda Thurston

The following text is drawn from their nomination form:

Julide has made a fantastic contribution to pro bono at Hertfordshire Law School. A third year LLB Law student at the University of Hertfordshire and alongside studying for her Law degree, Julide volunteers in the Hertfordshire Law Clinic that enables members of the public to obtain one-off legal advice in a range of areas including employment, family and housing law. Working in pairs with a lawyer supervising them, much of the work requires students to be proactive in organising meetings, carrying out legal research, and preparing documents. There was excellent feedback from the clinic coordinator saying Julide is among our most reliable and committed students.

Julide also volunteers for our Shelter Court Desk Runner project, supporting the Shelter Duty Solicitors Ruth Camp as she deals with the possession list of cases at Hertford and Watford County Court. Julide has to deal with members of the public, taking basic details to triage the case, and making notes in court. This is a really valuable project working with Shelter and Ruth has confirmed that Julide is a valuable member of the team. When last attending court, Julide dealt with 10 clients and Ruth said she was an enormous help on that day.

Julide also volunteers for our Streetlaw project, designing and delivering interactive workshops in local schools, supporting outreach events, open days and a recent taster event on campus.

Julide is one of our outstanding students. She is very reliable and a really confident and engaging presenter who has shown a commitment towards helping others, and to ensuring access to justice.

# CIVIC AWARDS

The members of the panel who judged the  
Civic Awards 2023 were:

**Councillor Barbara Fitzsimon** - Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield (Chairman)

**Gary McKinnon** - Head of Commercial, Urbaser – UK

**Geraldine Ward** - University of Hertfordshire Dean of Students

**Canon Norbert Fernandes** – Canon of Westminster, Parish Priest of WGC Catholic Churches, Chair of Christian Leaders' Group, Catholic Dean of Stevenage

**Father Darren Collins** -Team Rector of Bishop's Hatfield



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