

Outstanding Individual Contribution

Driving force in sustainability and accessibility

Neil Warren, the project manager for the award-winning Countryside Mobility scheme, was presented with the individual Outstanding Contribution to Tourism.

Mr Warren was hailed as a man of “a great many talents who has helped a great many people” – including many present at the awards ceremony – to whom the award would come as a complete surprise.

He has worked in travel and tourism support for more than 15 years, offering help and support to businesses of all sizes, as well as individuals.

His first work in tourism was the east of England and in community-based tourism in central Asian republic of Kazakhstan.

In the Westcountry, he perfected his craft as a sustainability and access expert at South West Tourism. Mr Warren led on sustainable tourism for the region and presided over a huge growth in participation across the region.

When the tourism body closed, he kept the initiative going while working with Sustainability South West and the University of Exeter.

His passion for sustainable extends to travelling by bike whenever possible.

In his present role with Countryside Mobility he is helping ensure that people with limited mobility can enjoy easy access to outdoor visitor attractions across the South West England through a Trampers scooter hire scheme.

The scheme was established in 2010 and is operated by the charity, Living Options Devon

In his spare time he runs a freelance business specialising in helping small organisations and charities learn how to create and promote their own film.

Mr Warren is also a regular awards judge.

He is also a licensed trainer for a number of Welcome to Excellence courses and delivers his own training on developing and promoting video.

Hundreds of tourism businesses have benefited from his help and guidance through the years in his work in the industry in the South West.



A Countryside Mobility scooter in action and, inset, Neil Warren who has helped hundreds of tourism businesses throughout the South West



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Top restaurants and pubs earn precious metal

RESTAURANT OR BISTRO OF THE YEAR

The Elephant Restaurant, a landmark in Torquay, won gold for chef proprietor, Simon Hulstone (pictured right) and his wife Katy.

The Elephant was the first restaurant in Torquay to be awarded a Michelin star, which it maintains today.

The Hulstones proudly source as many ingredients as possible locally and sustainably, many from their dedicated farm in Brixham.

The Fish House, overlooking Newquay's Fistral Beach was given a silver award and the Star Castle Restaurant, St Mary's in Scilly received bronze.

TOURISM PUB OF THE YEAR

Gold went to The Swan, Bampton, near Tiverton in Devon.

“We're an AA Four Star Gold classic English country inn, the



oldest pub in Bampton, Devon and we offer the very best dishes using seasonal, regional ingredients, peppered with top-notch customer service,” a spokesman said.

The Swan's many other awards

include two AA Rosettes for culinary excellence and, in both 2017 and 2018, and the pub was named as an ‘Estrella Damm’ Top 50 Gastropub.

There are also three contemporary B&B rooms for guests.

The Pandora Inn, Mylor Bridge, near Falmouth in Cornwall, won silver, and The Gurnard's Head Hotel, Zennor, near St Ives received a bronze, and the Blue Peter Inn, Polperro, South East Cornwall, and the Cricket Inn, Kingsbridge, South Devon, were highly commended.

■ In the cafe/Tearoom of the Year, Devon and Cornwall didn't bag a gold but the two counties provided three of the finalists.

Boscastle Farm Shop and Cafe, on the north coast of Cornwall, and the Guardhouse Cafe, Berry Head, on the South Devon coast near Brixham, won silver awards.

Bronze went to the Cantina Kitchen and Bar next to Goodrington beach in Paignton.