

Piltown is winner of .IE Digital Town Awards 2022

Piltown in Co Kilkenny has been announced as the overall winner of the 2022 .IE Digital Town Awards for its 'Taking Charge of our Digital Future' project.

- As well as taking home the overall award, Piltown was also announced as the winner of the Digital Business category winning a total prize of €19,000
- Chair of the judging panel Joan Mulvihill commended Piltown's win commenting that *"the community of Piltown showed extraordinary resolve and determination in putting their town on the digital map. The support from businesses and landowners in granting access to land, those who prepared the ground and laid the cables, every aspect of this entry is commendable. In recognising Piltown with this award we are confident that this is just the start for them with great things to come. This is truly a lighthouse digital town."*
- In total, there was a prize fund of €100,000 across 7 award categories including three special awards recognising a digital changemaker, a digital rising star, and a digital local hero
- Speaking at the ceremony, a .IE spokesperson commented: *"In the case of all our finalists and winners today, it's clear that with innovative ideas and the support of the community, towns can not only survive, but thrive."*

The winners of the 2022 .IE Digital Town Awards were announced today by .IE, the managers of Ireland's trusted online .ie address.

At a virtual awards ceremony this afternoon, Piltown was chosen from 7 category winners as overall winner, receiving their award from Minister Damien English, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

Piltown's *'Taking Charge of our Digital Future'* entry was shortlisted in two categories (Digital Business and Digital Changemaker) for its work in building, promoting, and managing the village's high-speed network. The judging panel commended Piltown for the manner in which the local community had fully embraced the project with landowners granting access to land and volunteers working to lay more than 6km of cables, training as fibre optic technicians and providing crucial expertise pro bono.

In addition to winning the Digital Business category prize of €9,000, Piltown was awarded an additional prize of €10,000 as overall winner – bringing its total prize winnings to €19,000.

Piltown is believed to be Ireland's first community owned and managed FTTP 'fibre to the premises' network and has resulted in the creation of a local digital hub and community centre that serves 37 groups in the area.

The team behind the project believe that its success could be replicated in other towns and communities through shared experience and learnings.

Throughout the competition, which was launched earlier this year, the judging panel looked for digitally motivated community projects and leaders who demonstrated digital thinking to creatively problem-solve and develop innovative ideas that improve and enhance towns and communities.

This year's winners and finalists cover the full spectrum, including those who are early in their digital journey as well as established, sophisticated projects.

There was a total prize fund of €100,000 across seven award categories in total. 13 counties had one or more finalists including Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Kilkenny, Kerry, Limerick, Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo.

Projects were shortlisted in the categories of digital education, digital tourism, community digital as well as digital business, while three special prizes honouring individuals and communities making significant difference to the digital betterment in local towns were also awarded under the categories of digital rising star, digital changemaker and digital local hero.

Congratulating the high calibre of entries, Minister English said: *“The awards are an important annual event that recognise the remarkable efforts made by our local digital champions who are determined to futureproof the places where they work, rest and play. The bar this year has been set exceptionally high, with many inspiring examples of digital leaders in our communities that are transforming local life and society in innovative and creative ways.”*

Now in its second year, the .IE Digital Town Awards honour local town projects and people that are using digital innovation, technologies, and digital-first thinking for the betterment of towns, citizens, and services in the community.

The full list of category winners and runners up includes:

- **Community Digital, sponsored by Western Development Commission**

Winner – Crumlin: *Connecting Crumlin's Community. (Prize: €9,000)*

Runner up – Limerick: *Tiny Little Histories. (Prize: €5,000)*

Commended – East Galway: *Galway Wild Geese. (Prize: €2,000)*

Commended – Castleisland: *Castleisland Market Town: A New Digital Age (Prize: €2,000)*

- **Digital Education**

Winner – Sligo: *Online Learning Project Manager. (Prize: €9,000)*

Runner up – Murroe: *Scoutus Interruptus: How Digital Technology Helped Keep Us Scouting Through the Time of Covid. (Prize: €5,000)*

- **Digital Tourism, sponsored by AIB Merchant Services**

Winner – Gleann Cholm Cille: *Building a digital cultural infrastructure for our community. (Prize: €9,000)*

Runner up – Ballyvaughan: *Linking the physical and digital worlds via interactive signage. (Prize: €5,000)*

Commended – Ballincollig: *Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills: Mobile Phone App. (Prize: €2,000)*

- **Digital Business, sponsored by Vodafone**

Winner – Piltown: *Taking Charge of our Digital Future. (Prize: €9,000)*

Runner up – Westport: *Where no Westport business gets left behind. (Prize: €5,000)*

- **Digital Rising Star**

Winner – Cootehill: *St. Patrick's Day celebration. (Prize: €8,500)*

- **Digital Changemaker, sponsored by Connected Hubs**

Winner – Roscommon Town: *Roscommon Rapid Response Team. (Prize: €8,500)*

- **Digital Local Hero**

Eoin Costello, Dún Laoghaire Town. *(Prize: €3,000)*

- **Overall winner: Piltown, *Taking Charge of our Digital Future* (Prize: €10,000)**

Commenting on the announcement, Oonagh McCutcheon, National Director of the .IE Digital Town Programme, said:

“At .IE, we congratulate all our winners, runners up and commended entries and are delighted to be able to honour and recognise their great achievements.

“Our ambition for this awards programme has always been to celebrate the everyday digital champions and community leaders – many of whom give up their time voluntarily – that are transforming local life, town amenities and community services

for the betterment of all townspeople and visitors through digital technologies, innovation, and creative digital-first thinking.

“In the case of all our finalists and winners today, it’s clear that with innovative ideas and the support of the community, towns can not only survive, but can thrive.

Our judging panel was particularly impressed by Piltown, where the entire community stepped up and took matters into their own hands with transformative results.

“We hope that not only Piltown, but all of our winners and runners up, can continue to be an inspiration to other towns and communities around the country and show them how digital tools and innovation can improve and enhance their local towns so that they can prosper too.”

The .IE Digital Town Awards, announced by .IE in 2021 as part of its overall .IE Digital Town programme, is part of four-year €1 million investment initiative focused on digital enhancement and digital technology adoption in Ireland’s towns.

This year’s category sponsors included Western Development Commission, Connected Hubs, Vodafone, and AIB Merchant Services.

About .IE

.IE is the national registry for .ie domain names and the trusted and progressive guardian of Ireland’s unique online .ie address. Our purpose is to enable and empower people, communities, and businesses across Ireland to thrive online.

We operate the domain name system ([DNS](#)) for the .ie namespace, facilitate an [independent dispute resolution service](#), and operate a public WHOIS lookup service for .ie domains.

In cooperation with our Registrars, technical partners, and stakeholders, we help advance Ireland’s internet ecosystem. Good governance is evidenced in our [policy development process](#) for the .ie namespace, which follows a bottom-up, consensus-driven approach through a multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee.

At .IE we are committed to digital advocacy for SMEs, and for local towns and communities. Through stakeholder engagement initiatives such as [.IE Digital Town](#), we work with and support SME organisations to improve their members’ online presence and e-commerce capabilities so they can unlock the power of the internet to boost sales.

We also produce fact-based research for the business community and policymakers, such as the [.IE Domain Profile Report](#) and the [.IE Tipping Point](#) report, which charts the attitudes to digital of Irish SMEs and consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There are over 330,000 .ie domain names registered. Since March 2018, it is easier and faster to register a .ie domain. As part of the .ie domain registration process, every applicant must provide tangible evidence of a connection to Ireland.

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