



Press Release

July 2, 2026

Unsung community heroes of Fenland recognised at awards event

An 82-year-old boxing stalwart, and a devoted scout leader, who have each inspired generations of young people, were among community heroes celebrated at the 2026 Pride in Fenland Awards.

Once again, the people of the district put forward dozens of nominations to ensure recognition for Fenland's finest, from youths to retirees, who give their time and effort for the benefit of others and our community. A total of 99 groups and individuals were nominated.

The 18th Fenland District Council Pride in Fenland Awards, saw local boxing legend and chairman of March Boxing Club Frank Allen awarded the Lifetime Volunteer award.

The Special Judges' Award went to Norman Flatt, a scout leader since 1978, for his lifelong dedication to Scouting and the Whittlesey community.

Opening the event at Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre on Wednesday, July 1, Cllr Susan Wallwork said: "The Pride in Fenland Awards celebrate the difference that all unsung community heroes make to others.

"The nominations we receive demonstrate how impactful you all are and how sorely missed your contribution would be if you didn't do what you do.

"We mention you all briefly tonight, which will never seem enough to recognise the efforts so many of you put in day after day, year after year.

"Every single nominee provides inspiration to us all and while we can't give specific prizes to everyone, you really are all champions. We thank and value you all."

Cllr Sam Clark, who co-hosted the event, said: "You are all compassionate individuals who go above and beyond, dedicating time to your communities, showing empathy and compassion and these awards are a thank you from us to you."

During the event, special tribute was paid to the late Derek Bond, a dedicated Caring Together volunteer for more than a decade, and supporter at Wisbech Carers' Hub, where he continued to help until last August last year when he had to step back due to ill health.

“Derek was always ready to help however he could, with a big smile, great sense of humour and warm greeting for anyone he met and is deeply missed.,” his nomination said.

In addition, the event provided a platform for the presentation of Junior Naturalist awards to primary school pupils who took part in an environmental education programme and went on to do environment-linked volunteering. Awards went to: Holly McAvoy, Marcy Collard, Eva Slack and Eva Gregory.

They’d each taken part in a programme, co-created by 20Twenty Productions, and supported with funding from Glassmoor Local Environment Fund and Ransonmoor Community Fund. Awards were presented by March Rotary Club.

Pride in Fenland 2026 winners and runners-up, and details of nominations, were:

Lifetime Volunteer – Frank Allen

Chairman of March Boxing Club, Frank’s life has been ‘defined by service, discipline, and unwavering dedication,’ his nomination said.

He boxed from 10-years-old; joined the Army as a teenager, served across the world for 23 years and boxed for the military. Then, he got involved with March Boxing Club and became a trainer, coach, matchmaker, treasurer, timekeeper, and referee.

He kept giving to the club despite having to face the tragic loss of his wife to a car crash and eldest daughter to cancer, his nomination said.

In 2020, Frank was part of the team at March Boxing Club that earned the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.

Aged 82, he is only now planning to step back from spending his weekends refereeing – to allow him to spend more time with family. But will still be in the gym on training nights three to four times a week!

His nomination added: “Frank is a great mentor and strives for everyone in the club to achieve their best. His story is one of resilience, loyalty, and heart. He has given more than most ever will, and he continues to give even now. His legacy is not just in the trophies won or the bouts fought, but in the countless lives he has shaped along the way.”

Special Judges’ Award – Norman Flatt

For his lifelong dedication to Scouting and the Whittlesey community. Norman, a scout leader since 1978, has devoted decades to shaping generations of young people, teaching essential life skills, resilience, teamwork, and confidence, his nomination said.

In February of this year, Norman received ‘one of the highest honours for Scout volunteers at the National Scout Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey.’

Last year, he suffered a heart attack during a jamboree, but, after surgery, was back to Scouting as soon as he could, his nomination said. It described Norman as an 'outstanding individual' with unwavering commitment and generosity of spirit.

Community Impact

Winner - Nigel Spencer

For his contribution to making March Armed Forces Fayre and Remembrance Parade such a huge success.

Runner up - Brown Owl Susan Southwell

A dedicated Brownie Leader for 60 years, around 50 of those in March, giving opportunities to generations of young people.

Sports Volunteer

Winners - Graham and Kim Sharman

Husband and wife Graham and Kim Sharman for their tireless work over 20 plus years growing Whittlesey Football Club, creating a community for hundreds of children and their families.

Runner-up- Wisbech parkrun

The now almost three-year-old inclusive weekly community walk and run, organised and run by volunteers led by event director Sara Meekins and, attracting around 180 participants and 20 volunteers at each event.

Community Group

Winner - Wisbech Community First Responders

For outstanding dedication and selfless service to the community, often arriving first to provide lifesaving care.

Runner-up - FACET

For the invaluable help of its members and leaders sorting and packing hundreds of gifts for the Golden Age Christmas Appeal for older people in Fenland, and with the December Golden Age event.

Youth Services Volunteer

Winner - George Barton

For giving his time weekly in all weathers to support the Sports Connection Foundation Wisbech Youth Café, including with refereeing.

Runner-up - Anne Rose

For growing Wisbech Air Cadet Squadron and being integral in providing additional opportunities to hundreds of young people through the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Community Champion

Winner - Anne Wells

For leading Chatteris in Bloom to multiple Anglia in Bloom gold awards and her vital role in the Royal British Legion.

Runner-up - Lisa Hill

For her exceptional kindness, dedication and support to all ages and the people she works with and supports at Benwick Hub.

Fundraiser

Winner - Rob Gay

For organising regular bingo sessions, bringing people together and raising more than £20,000 each year for local causes, including Wisbech's Alan Hudson Centre, Sea Cadets and Oasis Centre, Walsoken Church and the Samaritans.

Runner-up - Eunice Gibson.

Long serving volunteer with Care Network Cambridgeshire, Eunice provides wellbeing support to countless people across the Fens with warmth and enthusiasm, extending her efforts to numerous fundraising initiatives.

Ends