



London Sports Awards

Monday 6th December 2021

Guildhall

The Rt Hon The Lord Mayor of London
Alderman Vincent Keaveny

Ladies and gentlemen – it is a pleasure to welcome so many of you all to Guildhall and to the 2021 London Sport Awards!

After such a difficult eighteen months, we are really delighted to be with you all this evening and celebrate your work.

For those who I have not met already, I'm Vincent Keaveny, the Lord Mayor of our great City of London.

For some of you who may not have visited the City before, let me give you a piece of advice: don't let the skyscrapers fool you.

Yes. We are a place of historic importance, with world-leading cultural centres and an innovative financial and professional services sector. But we are – by no means – limited to that.

The City of London Corporation recognises the importance of sport to enhancing people's mental and physical wellbeing and the vital role it plays in assisting regional development, as well as encouraging the importance of diversity and competitiveness.

There are wider benefits too.

Just last week I joined the Sports Minister to launch an important piece of research into the soft power and trade benefits of hosting major sport events in the UK.

Sport and sporting events are of great importance to national morale but also global perceptions, and it is this aspect that is of utmost importance in my role to promote UK business overseas.

All of you here know the importance of sport, too, which is what makes you champions of your field, but what you may not know is how the City Corporation supports many grassroot sports activities as well.

We manage over forty-five square kilometres of open spaces in and around the capital – which were used thoroughly throughout the pandemic.

Our spaces are visited over 23 million times a year...from Hampstead Heath to Epping Forest, from Burnham Beeches to Highgate Wood, the majority of which have great open grassland to play any game you want and with many equipped with facilities for many of the sports being recognised this evening, including swimming pools, tennis courts, football and rugby pitches and cricket fields.

That's why we are so delighted to be hosting these Awards for the second year in a row, with their message of unity, inspiring young people with aspirations leaders and – most importantly – recognising the hard work that goes into the delivery of grassroots community sport.

I would like to thank you for all your hard work and for taking the time out of your busy schedules to be with us this evening.

It's a truism to say that sport plays an important role in bringing people together, but the importance of that cannot be overstated. What unites us is stronger than what divides us, and I believe sport is a great social leveller and a crucial part of our culture.

Everyone assembled here today is unquestionably an important part of that rich culture, and I am delighted to be able to celebrate this tonight.

As part of support for this year's London Sport Awards, we are delighted to be sponsoring the Business Contribution to Sport awards this evening.

This award recognises the important contribution played by small and large businesses across the UK in helping fund and deliver grassroots sport.

I would now like to invite my colleague, Keith Bottomley – who also sat on this year's awards panel – to join me on stage and announce the winner of the 2021 Business Contribution to Sport award.

Thank you very much..