

Voluntary groups honoured at Enterprise Awards

The annual Cashel Chamber of Commerce Enterprise Awards, sponsored by AIB Cashel, were held last Friday night in the Cashel Palace Hotel.

The non-profit event, which is now in its second year, was dominated by the fantastic voluntary groups who proved to be of enormous benefit to the local economy and businesses during the year. The Cashel Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to promoting and acknowledging local enterprises whether it is a business or voluntary community group and the response through-out the nomination and voting process from businesses and the general public was outstanding.

Cashel Chamber of Commerce President, Mike Ryan, addressed the dinner and acknowledged the difficult economic climate but stressed that everyone do their part to make the most of the opportunities that are still available to ease the problems. Quoting former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous speech from 1932, Mike Ryan stated "we have nothing to fear but fear itself" and continued "in Ireland today consumers have become consumed with fear, businesses have been paralysed by fear and governments are disabled by fear. One of the main solutions to the current recession will not be found in Leinster House nor in Brussels, Washington or even Beijing but by locals supporting local businesses. Shop Local is a slogan that is always used but the benefits are always underestimated."

Mr Ryan went on to say: "Keeping business local creates a renewable economy and saves jobs by doing your weekly shopping locally, employing local contractors, electricians, plumbers, etc, employing professional services locally, accountants, engineers, etc. All these services are available locally but businesses have an obligation to provide a quality service at a competitive price to the consumer."

Philip Leahy of AIB Cashel, sponsors of the event, also addressed the dinner and confirmed AIB's commitment to supporting local businesses, existing and emerging SMEs through freeing up credit to streamline cash flow, which is critical to all enterprises.

The evening was also enriched by guest of honour and guest speaker Mr. Louis Grubb of J & L Grubb Ltd., producers of the famous Cashel Blue Cheese. The



L/R: Emily Kirwan, (Cashel Arts Fest) Mike Ryan, (President Cashel Chamber of Commerce) Jane Grubb, Patronelle Clifton-Brown, (Chairperson Cashel Arts Fest) Anne Devitt, Philip Leahy, (Manager AIB Cashel, Sponsors) pictured at the Cashel Chamber of Commerce Enterprise Awards in the Cashel Palace Hotel on Friday night.

dinner guests were treated to a candid and honest history of how the Cashel Blue story began and where it is now with the next generation of the Grubb family. Mr Grubb gave great credit to the success of the brand and business to his wife Jane, and was evident to the assembled guests that the company was a true partnership and family enterprise.

The Cashel Blue Cheese is now moving into the North American market and bringing the name of Cashel to a wider international consciousness.

Mr. Grubb went on to say that his company has and continues supporting local businesses through suppliers and service providers including the likes of O'Dwyer Steel in Dundrum who were involved in the fantastic new J & L Grubb facility recently opened by Minister for Agriculture, Simon Coveney.

The first award of the night was the Cashel Chamber of Commerce Enterprise of the Year award which enterprises were

nominated by the public and a final three was selected by the Enterprise award committee to go through to the public vote online, based on the quality of the nomination submission. The three nominees were Cashel Arts Festival Committee, Eyesight Opticians (Friar Street) and Managh Transport (Farranamagh), it was a close contest and the public response was outstanding with over 350 votes cast.

It was a combination of these votes and votes by the Enterprise Award committee that established the winner. 2011 is the year of the Volunteer and it was fitting that the 2011 Enterprise of the Year Award was presented by the Sponsors Philip Leahy of AIB to Cashel Arts Festival Chairperson, Patronelle Clifton-Brown, on behalf of the committee.

This year the Cashel Chamber of Commerce decided to introduce a new award, The Best for Cashel Award, to honour a company or community group

who has made a significant contribution to driving the economy of Cashel through positive promotion.

The nominees in this category were The EU Rural Charter Committee (who hosted this years European Conference in Cashel in June), The Cashel Rugby Club (for gaining promotion to the All-Ireland Senior League) and The Tidy Towns Committee (for gaining an unprecedented 21 extra points in this years results). The winner of this award was voted on by the committee and it was awarded to Tidy Towns Chairperson, Paddy Downey, who accepted the award on behalf of the committee.

Chamber President Mike Ryan thanked all the people involved in making the night a success including The Enterprise Award Committee, Pat Murphy (Cashel Palace Hotel), Finula Crowe (Dundrum House Hotel), Noel Fahy (Noel Fahy Footwear) and especially the committee chairperson Sandra Hennessey (Dynamic Web

Marketing). Mr Ryan also complimented The Cashel Palace Staff for hosting the dinner and excellent service as well as Oliver Corbett for providing the music at the reception.

The Cashel Chamber of Commerce also acknowledged the quality of the actual awards which the main award was produced especially for the night by Russa Pottery with the stand by Marcus Fogarty and Best for Cashel Award supplied by The Kilkenny Shop. Mike Ryan singled out AIB Cashel for sponsoring the event and the support Branch Manager Philip Leahy has given the Chamber throughout the year.

Mr Ryan concluded by saying "There is a difference between an excuse and a reason, we can all think of 100 excuses not to do something but very few reasons and the people here tonight don't make excuses, they pick on the one good reason to do something and do it. That is the entrepreneurial spirit".