

RENEWABLE WIND ENERGY AWARDS POWER AHEAD

More than 300 people from Ireland's leading renewable energy companies joined Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment Richard Bruton TD for the presentation of the first annual Irish Wind Industry Awards to individuals, in recognition of their excellence and innovation in renewable energy by leading the way to a carbon-free energy future.

According to Minister Richard Bruton TD, "Ireland must become a leader not a follower in wind energy and each winner of these awards is a leader.

"We are at a crucial moment in terms of climate disruption and it is imperative that we take decisions now that will define the next generation. Wind energy both onshore and offshore are and will be crucial to how we respond to our responsibilities in this area."

David Connolly, CEO of the Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA), said: "These awards showcase the great work being done in the wind industry in Ireland. As leaders in renewable energy we have a great responsibility to do all we can to drive Ireland's energy transition.

"Initial figures indicate that wind energy provided over 30% of Ireland's annual electricity demand for the first time in 2018. Our winners highlight the amazing work going on to reach this milestone with a wealth of cutting-edge innovation, excellence in operation and maintenance, and an impressive record in health and safety in the industry. These awards have also shone a light on the many wind champions working across the country."

'CHAMPION OF RENEWABLES'

Offaly's Catherine Swaine walked away with the overall award for her work in co-ordinating and delivering public visits to Bord na Móna's wind farm in Mountlucas.

Her passion for green energy and her drive to open up wind farms to schools, community groups and local people, has brought thousands of visitors to the Offaly site. Park runs, weddings, even Santa Claus have all made a visit to Mountlucas under Catherine Swaine's watch!

For a growing number of young people across the country their first contact with renewable energy has come on one of her tours. She has arranged and delivered over 14,000 tours to the visitor centre at the Bord na Móna Mountlucas Wind Farm in Offaly since 2015.

IWEA's chief executive David Connolly said that people like Catherine Swaine are invaluable to the wind industry. "Her enthusiasm for making the wind farm a real and vital part of the local community has brought over 100,000 visitors to Mountlucas since 2016."

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Catherine Swaine said:



IWEA's Chairman Peter Harte and CEO David Connolly with overall winner Bord na Móna's Catherine Swaine, who received the 'Champion of Renewables' award.



IWEA CEO, David Connolly presents the 'Person of the Year' award to Brendan Heneghan, Operations Director at Ionic Consulting, whose company also won the award for Consultant Firm of the Year.

"I love my job and I love welcoming people to the wind farm, many seeing wind energy in operation for the first time. It is a real honour to accept this award on behalf of Mountlucas Wind farm and Bord na Mona. It is also on behalf of the community there, if it wasn't for their support it wouldn't have been the success that it is. It is a great facility to have and they really make use of it."

IRISH WIND ENERGY AWARDS

PERSON OF YEAR IS A 'POWERHOUSE'

Mayo's Brendan Heneghan, Operations Director with Ionic Consulting, was another big winner, taking home the 'Person of the Year' award. He was described by the CEO of the Irish Wind Energy Association as a "powerhouse" in Irish wind energy.

This award is designed to recognise individuals who have made outstanding contributions in the wind industry and who have gone above and beyond in their role and had a significant positive impact on the industry.

"There isn't a company or person among our members that hasn't worked with him in some capacity. He was a very popular choice for his industry knowledge, his passion for promoting a

green, renewable future and his generosity of spirit and time," he added.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Brendan Heneghan said: "The wind industry has given me the chance to work throughout rural Ireland doing something as important as building renewable energy."

For over 15 years he said he has seen the wind energy sector grow to a point where 30% of electricity is generated from wind. "I honestly wouldn't want to do anything else," noted Heneghan, who was Interim CEO of the Irish Wind Energy Association during 2016 and remains an IWEA non-executive Director and Council member.

IWEA CATEGORY AWARD WINNERS

1. Best Community Project – Sponsored by Natural Power

Galway Wind Park – SSE/Coillte



2. Excellence in Operation and Maintenance – Sponsored by Height for Hire

Wind Turbine Engineering

3. Innovation in Research & Development – Sponsored by ElectroRoute

Tullahennel Wind Farm – GE Renewable Energy & Microsoft

4. Exemplary Health and Safety Performance – Sponsored by RES Roadbridge

5. Planning and Permitting (Pre-Construction Stage) – Sponsored by Fehily Timoney & Company

MKO (McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan)

6. Innovation in Technology – Sponsored by Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy Smart Wires

7. Champion of Renewables – Sponsored by Vestas

Catherine Swaine - Bord na Móna Powergen

8. Consultant Firm of the Year – Sponsored by Nordex Acciona Ionic Consulting

9. Project of the Year – Sponsored by Ionic Consulting

Galway Wind Park – SSE/Coillte

10. Outstanding Contribution – Sponsored by Innogy ElectroRoute



Frances McArdle, (Height for Hire) presented Declan Corrigan of Wind Turbine Engineering with the 'Excellence in Operation and Maintenance' award.



Ken Boyne (Ionic Consulting) presented the 'Best Community Project of the Year' award to Jon Johnson (SSE) and Peter Lynch (Coillte) for Galway Wind Park.