

A Rewarding Evening

Community held its first annual awards evening in November. The awards are given to celebrate the diverse work and achievements of members from across the country. Here we introduce the five award winners.



Name: **Brenda Clarke**
 Work: **Seven till ten – general corner shop**
 Region: **6**
 Membership: **32**
 Award: **Activist of the Year**

Brenda (pictured right) has been a member of Community since she left school at 15, and has been doing a lot of voluntary work with her local community drop in shop which gives advice to job seekers in the local area.

Says Brenda: 'I work in the community drop in shop across the road from my main job in the corner shop. I hold a surgery three times a month on a Saturday morning giving advice to job seekers. People pop in to see me at work to make their appointments!'

'It was a complete surprise to win the award because I was only doing what I've always done! I couldn't come to the award ceremony because I've been having chemotherapy at hospital but that's finished now and we had a get together recently when they presented me with the award.'

'I would really encourage other people to get involved in voluntary work and learning with the union. That's the only way forward isn't it? I would tell people to get involved as much as they can, you don't know how far you can get until you start.'

Brenda was not able to attend the award ceremony in London. Peter Crowe, region 6 secretary, accepted the award on her behalf. The award was presented to Brenda a week later by Tracy Clarke, Community's vice president.



Name: **Rae Twidale**
 Work: **Westcliff Neighbourhood drop-in centre**
 Region: **6**
 Membership: **4 years**
 Award: **Lifelong Learner of the Year**

Rae works as a community development worker, supporting people in the community and helping them gain access to information and education.

'I feel exceptionally honoured to get this award, I've never won anything in my life,' says Rae. 'It's not just an award for me though, because the work that I do here isn't solely mine, the award belongs to the whole team.'

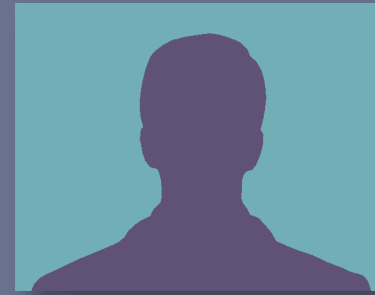
Rae has helped to get a new drop in centre on the Westcliff estate which is in a disadvantaged area of Scunthorpe.

Says Rae: 'The organisation has developed over the last three or four years from having one drop in centre on the Westcliff estate to two. It was my idea to go for the second centre and we've worked hard to make it a success.'

As well as helping others in the community to develop their skills and training, Rae has always been keen to help colleagues with their learning.

'I've delivered a lot of development work courses and a union learner reps course through Community. I'm also a qualified tutor in community development. This award has spurred me on to do more.'

'I'd definitely recommend that anyone who is interested in doing voluntary work within the community access as much as is possible in terms of training. There are short courses and accredited courses, anything that would give them the knowledge to move forward.'



Name: **Anonymous***
 Work: **Betting industry**
 Region: **8**
 Membership: **2 and a half years**
 Award: **Organiser of the Year**

Working as a lay organiser, the winner of Organiser of the Year has been involved in organising his fellow colleagues.

Says the winner: 'I couldn't believe it when I won the award! I feel very honored. It's the best surprise I've had all year this year.'

As a relatively new member, the award winner decided to get involved to help support people in their jobs as well as support the union as a whole.

'I've found it extremely rewarding being involved with the union, helping other workers and I would encourage anybody else to do the same. I think Community

union makes a genuine difference in people's lives and so the more people that help the better. It's good for the volunteers themselves because it's such a rewarding experience and it's good for the union as well.'

**We have not mentioned the name or company to protect the identity of this member.*



Name: **Denis Týtek**
 Work: **Previously Corus, made redundant August 2006**
 Region: **2**
 Membership: **34**
 Award: **Branch Officer of the Year**

'I used to work at the Corus plant in Workington. Back in 2000 about 166 people were made redundant and since then I have been involved politically trying to keep the branch open, working with MPs and government ministers. It was a 6 year battle but unfortunately it has now been closed.'

'I was really surprised when I got the award – it was a complete shock! It was

really nice to be nominated and receive it. As far as I'm concerned it's an award for Workington though, not just for me. I think it's recognition for all of us in the joint branches.

'I think it's really worthwhile retaining membership of Community even if you're not working. Having the support of a union behind you is important and I'd like to see membership of Community grow.'



Name: **Claire Main**
 Work: **Courtaulds UK Ltd**
 Region: **2**
 Membership: **7 years**
 Award: **Young Member of the Year**

As a health and safety rep, Claire has been involved in a variety of health and safety activities and has been attending health and safety seminars. The biggest of these was the European Hazards Conference held in Latvia last October, which she attended after winning a Community competition to submit an essay on a health and safety related topic.

'I was over the moon that I won the Young Member of the Year award, although my nerves really kicked in when I went to collect it!' says Claire. 'I like to get involved

and I was the TUC student of the year last year as well!'

Keen to encourage more young people to follow her lead, Claire is hoping that more young people will get involved in Community. 'I try to get more young members involved, she says. 'It's not always easy because it isn't always something that the younger generation are interested in. I think that more young people will become involved in the future though, as they start to realise what a difference they can make!'