

# Unilever Dragonfly Awards

## Background:

The Mersey Basin Campaign (MBC) wanted a means of recognising and celebrating the achievement of environmental volunteers working within the Mersey and Ribble catchments. A long-term partnership with Unilever was set up and it was decided that an awards scheme would be organised in order to identify, promote and congratulate the voluntary sector's unsung environmental heroes.



## The project:

The Unilever Dragonfly Awards were set up in partnership with Unilever who were also the project sponsors. Awards were given out in three categories: individual, group and young people as well as an award for the overall winner. The Margaret Fletcher Special Award was later added to reward particularly innovative projects.

Members of the voluntary sector and others were asked to fill in a nomination form for their chosen person/group detailing the environmental volunteering that had been done and why it was special. Nominations were then sent to the judging panel for consideration.

Prizes for the winners in each category included a trophy and a cheque for £1,000 to be used on further environmental projects. The overall winner also received a trophy and a cheque for £2,500. Runners-up in each category received a certificate.

The Unilever Dragonfly Awards were initially presented at the Campaign's conference but were subsequently moved to become a feature of the Campaign's Voluntary Sector Forum. The awards and winners were profiled on a dedicated page of the MBC website.



### **How we did it:**

- Submitted project proposal to Unilever.
- Secured funding from Unilever.
- Produced Dragonfly Award nomination form.
- Nomination forms were sent out to Local Action Co-ordinators as well as to voluntary sector organisations working in the Mersey and Ribble catchments. Nomination forms were also sent out to contacts held on the Community Support Co-ordinators database. 8-12 weeks were allowed to get as many quality nominations in as possible.
- The judging panel assessed nominations and winners and runners-up were decided.
- Winners and runners up were told they had won and the trophies and certificates were presented out in the field and photos taken.
- All awards were then officially presented at the Voluntary Sector Forum.

### **Publicity:**

The awards were publicised on the MBC website. This featured pages giving information about the awards as well as a downloadable copy of the nomination form. It also featured audio interviews with the winners and gave information on the voluntary work done by the winners and runners-up. The awards were also publicised in the Campaign's magazine SourceNW.

### **Project value and funding sources:**

Unilever provided **£10,000** funding each year for the awards. This covered £6,500 in prize money, production of trophies and certificates and all administration costs.

## Who was involved:

**Community Support Co-ordinator** – acted as project manager for the awards, sat on judging panel, sent out nomination forms, collated received forms, commissioned production of trophies and certificates, informed winners and runners-up that they had won.

**Unilever** – acted as project sponsor and sat on the judging panel.

**Voluntary Sector Advisory Group** – included members from BTCV, Faiths4Change and Red Rose Forest who acted as judges for the awards.

**New Media Manager** – recorded interviews with winners and uploaded the audio files to the MBC website.

**Communications Manager** – wrote stories about the awards and winners for the MBC website. Coordinated coverage in SourceNW magazine.

**Local Action Co-ordinators** – encouraged local groups to put in nominations and put in a lot of nominations themselves.

## Lessons learned:

**Only reward quality** – to maintain the award's credibility, only award worthy winners.

**Select an experienced judging panel** – make sure judges have good knowledge and contacts within the sector. They will be able to easily identify good projects and groups that are deserving winners and who will put the prize money to good use.

**Give quality prizes** – give good quality trophies and a cheque that is not just a token but that can be used for something worthwhile. Gives the awards credibility and makes them worth taking the time to enter.

**Give prizes out in the field before the official ceremony** – means you can have a nice picture of the winners "in action" at their project that can be used during the ceremony.

**Use your networks to find suitable nominees** – you only want to get quality nominations so work hard and use all your contacts to reach the right people.

**Great promotional tool** – the awards helped identify, promote and celebrate the valuable work done by the voluntary sector.

