

## **Appendix 1: Press Release from Co-operation Ireland**

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### **Market area of Belfast triumphs in Pride of Place awards**

The Market area of Belfast was one of the winners at the annual IPB Pride of Place awards held on Cork City Hall on Saturday evening (November 17).

The organisation was awarded top prize in the Best Urban Neighbourhood Neighbourhood/Village with a population of 1000-2000.

Members of the Market Development Agency joined with 800 community heroes from across the country at the awards which are operated in association with peace building charity Co-operation Ireland.

The judges citation read:

“The judges were very impressed with the commitment and vision of this Association. They drew up a local plan with the aim to establish the area into a place where people would want to live, work and socialise.

“The plan is centred on the well-being of all residents and threaded throughout is its main theme of CONNECTIVITY.

“The Association has four full time staff and a team of volunteers and their plan is currently going through the consultation process. This is a superb example of local empowerment and initiative to encourage economic development and employment.”

Bloomfield in east Belfast came runner up in their category of Best Urban Neighbourhood/Village with a population of 1000-2000.

The Pride of Place awards, described as the ‘Oscars of the Community Sector’, celebrates the often unsung work of community groups that selflessly work to make local neighbourhoods a better place to live in, work in or visit.

Organised by Co-Operation Ireland and sponsored by IPB Insurance, the Pride of Place awards sees the country's local authorities, on both sides of the border, nominate outstanding projects that contribute to civic pride.

Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr Mick Finn said: "Cork has a strong tradition of volunteerism and community action and we are delighted to be partners in the Pride of Place competition. The Gala Awards evening is a unique opportunity to celebrate the best in community development and recognises the invaluable efforts of those who glue our communities together".

Tom Dowling, Chairperson of Pride of Place, expressed his delight "that after 16 years the competition continues to embed itself in the very heart of the Island of Ireland's communities and gives them the opportunity to highlight the proud and amazing achievements of their place directly to the judges. I wish them continued success and we are all looking forward to meeting all the nominated groups for a great night in the wonderful exciting city of Cork"/

Peter Sheridan Chief Executive of Co-operation Ireland said: "Pride of Place deserves its position as one of the most prestigious community awards on the island of Ireland and Co-operation Ireland is delighted that it continues to go from strength to strength.

"From Donegal through Northern Ireland and in counties all the way to Cork, communities have been reaping the rewards of the hard work carried out by the community groups who make Pride of Place what it is."

Chairman of IPB Insurance George Jones said: "Pride of Place is an important platform as it recognises those who give freely of their time to make where they come from a better place to live and work. It is clear that working together and getting things done increases people's pride in where they live and in turn helps build vibrant sustainable communities."

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