

# *News from WRG and WREN*

November 2007

## **High calibre shortlist causes WRG and WREN to increase Communities Challenge prize fund**

WRG and WREN made a surprise announcement at this year's WRG Communities Challenge, held at the House of Commons on 29 November, claiming that the standard of shortlisted applicants was so high that they had been forced to increase the prize fund so that everyone could be a winner.

The WRG Communities Challenge is an annual event open to all charity and not-for-profit organisations within 10 miles of a WRG landfill site who are organising capital projects that will improve the quality of life in the local community. Winners range from village halls, to skate facilities, to community parks.

Unlike the grant funding WREN provides as an environmental distributive body, recipients of the Communities Challenge awards do not have to find match funding and can apply for 100 per cent of their project cost, up to a total of £250,000.

The prize funding pot for this year was set at £1 million. But after drawing up a shortlist of eight the judges found the quality of the planned projects so high that they didn't want anyone to lose out.

Peter Cox, Managing Director of WREN said: "All the shortlisted applications were of exceptional quality, had lots of local support, and promised to bring clear advantages to their local areas.

"This being the case, we took the decision to increase the prize fund to £1.7 million so that each of the applicants would get the money they needed to make their project happen."

The judges also felt that the level of applications to the challenge justified an increase in the prize fund for future years and at this year's award ceremony WRG and WREN announced that next year's challenge would have a prize fund of £2 million.

Mike Snell, General Manager of External Affairs at WRG, said: "The WRG Communities Challenge continues to be an exciting initiative that promises to make a real difference to people and their lives."

Simon Downing, whose village hall project was awarded £250,000, said: "I'm delighted that thanks to WRG and WREN my home village of Little Eaton will now be getting a much needed village hall. I think it is fantastic that they have upped the prize fund, giving more people the opportunity to make a community project they have dreamed about happen."

The 2008 WRG Communities Challenge is now open. Visit [www.wren.org.uk](http://www.wren.org.uk), or call 01953 717165 for information on how to apply.

#### THE WINNERS:

- Little Eaton Parish Council, Derbyshire – £250,000 awarded for a planned village hall
- Kirkintilloch Skatepark Initiative, Glasgow - £230,000 awarded
- North East Lincolnshire District Council in partnership with The Friends of The Freshney – £120,000 awarded for a planned redevelopment of the Duke of York Gardens
- Chapel St Leonards Action Group, Lincolnshire – £202,635.30 awarded for the creation of a new park and play area
- The Friends of St Ives, West Yorkshire – £250,000 awarded for improvement of parkland
- Manton Community Alliance, Nottinghamshire – £150,000 awarded for the creation of a play park
- Friends of Locke Park, South Yorkshire – £124, 269 awarded for the creation of a new play area
- The MEB, Birmingham – £250,000 awarded for the regeneration of an inner city playing field

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