

Two Herefordshire community projects win awards at the inaugural West Mercia Police awards



Rob Thomas (right), of charity Vennture is awarded the Police Crime Commissioner's Innovation Award by Bill Longmor

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TWO Herefordshire award winners saw off stiff opposition to clinch the overall prize at the inaugural West Mercia **Police** awards.

Vince McNally, from Hinton, won the Dedicated Service Award and Rob Thomas, from Vennture- the charity behind Hereford's Street Pastors- clinched the PCC Innovation Award at a special award ceremony last week.

Speaking about the work of Mr McNally, an awards spokesman said: "Vince dedicates a huge amount of his spare time to helping the Hinton Community Centre, which has become a real hub of activity and brought people together.

"His work with the boxing club has done so much to help young people, including ex-offenders, helping give them guidance and training in several areas. The centre also helps teach young people and runs lunches for elderly people – the food for which Vince picks up every day from their partners Waitrose."

Both award winners saw off two others shortlisted for each award before the winner was announced on the night.

Speaking about the work of Mr Thomas the spokesman added: "Rob's leadership has seen a range of innovative and highly successful initiatives launched in Herefordshire.

"Vennture's Street Pastors scheme help 3,000 young people each year to stay safe in the night-time economy, and help combat a host of issues including anti-social behaviour.

"Their work on the 'Emelia's Place' scheme, giving people somewhere safe to rest, get medical treatment and advice on a night out, made a significant difference in helping reduce demand on the police, ambulance services and other health services. They have also launched a groundbreaking family pastor initiative."

West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner Bill Longmore started the awards scheme, in conjunction with Chief Constable David Shaw, to recognise people who go the extra mile to ensure our communities are safe, healthy and happy places.

Mr Longmore said: "People and community groups can, and do, achieve great things in West Mercia every single day. Whether that is helping victims of crime, supporting watch schemes, running sports clubs or volunteering with the police. All this positive energy is invaluable in making our communities stronger, more vibrant places, and it is only right that we take the time to thank the people who make that happen."