

Golden Mile of Galway 2015 competition launched

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The annual Golden Mile of Galway Awards was launched this week, announcing details of this year's competition. Rural communities are being encouraged and called upon to enter this competition throughout the county. Now in its twelfth year, the aim of the Golden Mile of Galway Awards is to bring rural communities and neighbours together, to highlight a one mile stretch of public road in their area and to recognise and celebrate the features that make up their unique locality, rural roadways, stonewalls, flora and fauna. This countywide initiative is rolled out on an annual basis by Galway County Council and Galway Rural Development Company Ltd in partnership with Comhair na nOileán Teo. and FORUM Connemara.

The Golden Mile of Galway information pack as well as DVD are available and very useful supports for any community preparing their entry. The organising committee want to assure communities that there are lots of sources of further support, guidance and encouragement available.

The competition involves several category awards - Best Natural Heritage Mile; Best Built Heritage Mile; Best Community effort and Litter Management (Tony Dervan RIP Award), Schools Award and Overall Golden Mile of Galway Award Winner. Deadline for entries is the third week in August when the official application forms must be submitted with supporting documentation. During September the judges will visit each community, walk the mile, the photographer takes photos of the mile and following that the judging panel convenes and scores given. The entries are considered under the headings of natural and built heritage, community effort and road safety. The results of the competition will be announced at an awards ceremony in December.

All entrants will have the honour of having a photograph of their 'Golden mile' included in the specially designed Golden Mile of Galway 2016 calendar which is distributed far and wide. The Golden Mile of Galway first began in 2004 and has successfully run for the last 11 years with over 150 different community entries during that time.

The first steps to entering the competition is to request a Golden Mile of Galway information pack, gather a local community group together and select a one mile stretch of public roadway outside the 50km speed limit with interesting features of built and natural heritage. Follow the guidance given in the information pack. Contact Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council on 091

509198 or email mmannion@galwaycoco.ie or Frank Keane in Galway Rural Development Company on 091 844335 or email fkeane@grd.ie

Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council said 'We have a treasure trove of curiosity in our rural environment, the flora and fauna in our hedgerows and there's a wealth of stories and history to be shared with local communities through the Golden Mile project.'

While Frank Keane, Enterprise Officer with Galway Rural Development Company commented that 'The Golden Mile of Galway encourages people living in rural Galway to celebrate, to maintain and to enjoy the natural and built heritage along their local roadways.'

'I would encourage groups and schools living in our rural areas to take part in this competition and to showcase the special places in which they live' said Cllr. Mary Hoade, Cathaoirleach, Galway County Council .

The overall winner of the 2014 Golden Mile of Galway Competition was Headford Environmental Group. Representing the group Venetia McElin said 'Our involvement in last year's Golden Mile was a very fulfilling experience. We learnt so much from the people living on the mile about the heritage and the story of the Owerbeg mile. We would encourage anybody living on a rural mile to explore its rich heritage and biodiversity'.

View www.galway.ie or www.grd.ie for more information. Contact Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council 091 509198 or email mmannion@galwaycoco.ie or Frank Keane in Galway Rural Development Company on 091 844335 or email fkeane@grd.ie to receive your Information and guidelines pack and entry Form.

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