

Press Release

IAN MITCHELL an employee of Scottish Natural Heritage from Invershin, by Lairg scooped one of the first-ever *Champions for Sustainable Communities Awards* at a ceremony in Edinburgh on Tuesday March 18th.



Champion Ian has been recognised for his work teaching the community of Bohinj in Slovenia about the principles of sustainable development and protecting and utilising their natural environment – especially wild flowers.

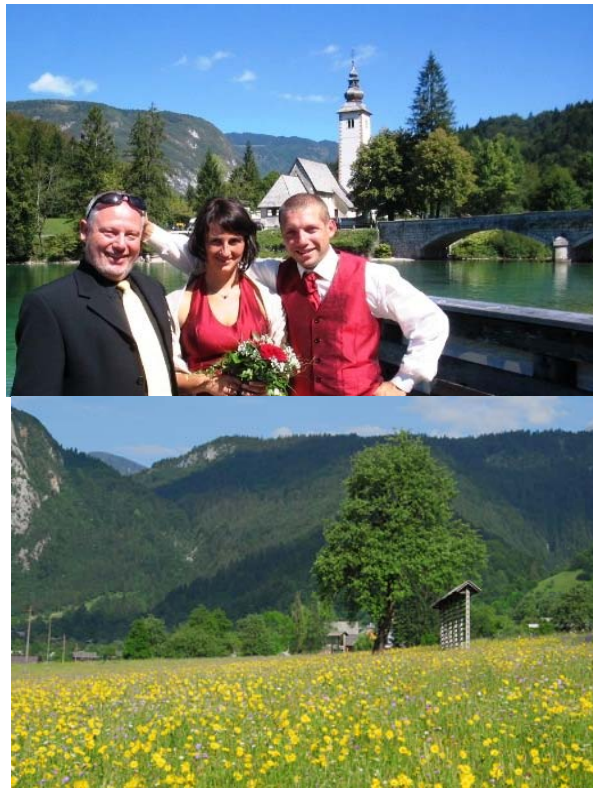
He said: "I am absolutely delighted, but the award should go to the people of Bohinj in Slovenia as it is through them that I have been inspired to carry out the work I do. I am so honoured to receive this award and honoured that Ana Wersun a Consul for the Republic of Slovenia in Scotland was at the awards with me today."

The award was made by Scottish designer and craftsman, Scott Irvine, using wood from fallen trees and fused glass off-cuts. Ian and Helen will also get the chance to visit another sustainable community project or similar experience in order to give them further inspiration for their own work.

The organisation's Frazer Scott said: "All of our 20 finalists were of an excellent calibre and should be proud of their valuable efforts towards sustainability. However, there had to be one winner in each of the four categories and we are delighted to announce Ian Mitchell as the best of the best in the International Development category.

"At the heart of sustainable development lies the leadership and commitment to drive forward change. These awards were a great opportunity to honour individuals who have made a difference by improving the environment, economy and society at the local level.

“All the winners have shown outstanding endeavour that proves it’s possible to really achieve a better quality of life for future generations. It’s the power of individuals, such as these, that can make a real difference, and we hope the Awards will inspire others to make positive changes in their own communities.”



The three other winners were Liz Stewart from Ullapool (Business), Helen Houston from Golspie, Sutherland (Public / Third Sector) and Ian Leaver from the Isle of Eigg (Community Group).

The nation-wide awards were devised to recognise individuals from across society who have led the way in improving the quality of a local environment in some way – whether that’s helping solve a community problem, transforming a piece of land or derelict space, or reducing climate change impacts.

Forward Scotland, a registered charity, is the country’s leading independent non-governmental organisation that works to make Scotland a sustainable nation in ways that create economic benefits, improve health and well-being and address issues of social justice to help change people’s lives for the better.

For further information on the work of Forward Scotland visit www.forward-scotland.org.uk or call us on 056000 10 560.

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Notes for Editors:

For the last 11 years Forward Scotland has championed an original approach to sustainable development. They carry out this work through a variety of projects and grant schemes, supported by information exchange. Forward Scotland is dedicated

to improving local environments and helping communities to achieve a better and more sustainable quality of life.

Frazer Scott is the Acting Chief Executive of Forward Scotland.

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