

# Rona Brown receives the William Y Darling Award

The city council has recognised one of the most prolific community workers for her diligence and good citizenship. Rona Brown runs St Bride's Community Centre where so many good things go on. Recently she was given the William Y Darling Award.

There was a civic reception where Rona and her friends gathered to hear the Lord Provost make the presentation.

The Rt Hon Lord Provost Frank Ross said: "Welcome to the City Chambers. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the heart of Civic Edinburgh. Here to the City Chambers and to this, the Lady Provost room for tonight's event.

"As Lord Provost I am delighted to have the honour to present the Sir William W Darling Bequest for Good Citizenship. For those of you who are not aware, Sir William Young Darling was the city's 235th Lord Provost of Edinburgh, holding the position during the challenging time of World War Two from 1941 until 1944. And Sir William was keen to have a lasting legacy and therefore created a bequest for good citizenship.

"And today, under the auspices of the William Y Darling Award we are here to recognise the work of Rona Brown."



The Rt Hon Lord Provost Frank Ross and Rona Brown with the certificate as part of the William Y Darling Award

“She is a pillar of that community. Indeed many of what are now traditional civic events or similar events there have been established due to Rona and others, and their determination and substantial efforts to improve the well-being and heritage of those living and working in the Gorgie/Dalry area.

“Some are continuing beyond retirement years – I find that difficult to believe!

“Rona is well known within the community and in a range of capacities. To mention just a few of these: being a long standing member of the Georgie/Dalry Community Council, now its Chair, to advise them to turn around the re-purposing of the St Bride’s Community Centre, to supporting the long established Adult Learning Project, having a key role in the annual Christmas lighting ceremony for the area.

“And if all of that isn’t good enough, Rona diligently gives

her time both participating and encouraging others across a range of key local initiatives from the fair to the gala to the litter pickups.

“Rona indeed demonstrates the selflessness, substantial energy and relentless hope that she can make a positive difference to people’s lives. These are the very traits that the bequest sets out to recognise.

“Rona is and remains a substantial inspiration to us all. And while Rona quietly goes about caring and supporting the community, her impact speaks loudly in helping to sustain community activity and to continue to build and react as the community grows and changes over previous, and I suspect, future years as well.

“It’s clear that her expertise and wise council to community leaders over the years is potentially her own legacy which is yet to be fully written. The Gorgie/Dalry community continues to benefit from Rona’s input, her guiding hand and strong ideas. And this award helps that community to articulate their collective gratitude for Rona’s outstanding commitment and contribution across the generations.

“She is, and remains, a tremendous ambassador for that area. It’s for these reasons that we’re here today to bequest the William Y Darling award for Good Citizenship to Rona Brown.

“I would now like to present Rona with her certificate all nicely framed up. But I would also like, as the city’s volunteering ambassador to put on record my own thanks for your continuing voluntary efforts. Rona, many congratulations.”



Rona Brown said: “I would just like to thank everybody for coming. I would like to thank the Lord Provost for his generous hospitality and Ashley Deans for making all the arrangements. I would like to thank everybody who nominated me

and who voted for me.

“I must say, it came as a huge surprise and I thought, and indeed say, “I thought I was the bane of the councillors’ lives and yet they voted for me!

“I do feel very honoured in being given this award. I also feel a bit embarrassed as what I do is replicated by many others all over Edinburgh. And most of the folk in this room are in that category, working away to benefit our communities, so it feels a bit strange to be singled out.

“I would like to thank you all, family and friends, for coming along and showing your support and taking part in this reception. I would like to thank my family for their support in all the community work I do, especially my long suffering husband, who never tires of telling everybody that he is long and suffering.

“But I don’t do the things that I do on my own. Whether it’s with St Brides, the Community Council or with Adult Learning Project it’s always been with a team of folk round about me. People who give up their precious time to volunteer, and gala days, park clean ups, Christmas lights or running events, running lunch clubs, family cinema screenings managing the community centres and going to meetings after meetings after meetings.

“I think St Bride’s must hold the record for the amount of meetings that we’ve had in the past year. A big thank you to you all. It’s on all your behalf that I’m so pleased and honoured to accept this award. Thank you very much.”