

Scottish Beacon wins National Journalism Award

The Scottish Beacon won a prestigious award at The British Journalism Awards, hosted by the Press Gazette on Thursday night when Beacon founder Rhiannon J Davies collected the Georgina Henry Award.

The award was set up to honour the founding member of Women in Journalism UK and former deputy editor of the Guardian.

The [Scottish Beacon news website](#) is the first collaborative journalism outlet of its kind in the UK. The aim is to strengthen the independent community-based media sector and bring stories from Scotland's communities to a wider audience. It launched in August of this year.

The Edinburgh Reporter is a founding member alongside 21 other publication partners – from Shetland in the north to Dumfries and Galloway in the south.

Speaking about the project, the judges said: “At a time when local news publishers are under real pressure, The Scottish Beacon gives underserved communities a much-needed voice. It is a truly collaborative project that brings community-based outlets together to hold the powerful to account and to help strengthen democracy. Having already achieved an impressive amount in the short time it's been running, we can't wait to see what it brings next.”

Another of the Scottish Beacon partners, Migrant Women Press, run by Juliana da Penha – was also shortlisted in the same category.

Rhiannon Davies, Founder of The Scottish Beacon and Greater Govanhill CIC said: “This recognition means a lot to me. I truly believe that the future of journalism is collaborative and that local journalism matters.

“Time and again, I hear stories from our partners about the value they bring to their communities and the vital need for the work that we do.

“Yet the current climate for local news is extremely tough. Ad spend gets hoovered up by big tech companies, people are unaccustomed to paying for news online, and funding for journalism is not yet established in the UK in the same way it is in the US.

“Local journalism is an essential part of democracy and yet it is currently under threat. Most independent publishers operate on shoestring budgets meaning their future is precarious.

“I hope that more people will help to keep public interest journalism alive by supporting their local publications.”

Phyllis Stephen, Editor of The Edinburgh Reporter, said: “It is always good to win awards, and even though The Scottish Beacon is at an early stage in its gestation it is good to know that other people recognise both that hyperlocal journalism matters and that a local journalism collaboration can really make a difference.”

The Georgina Henry Award is run by Women in Journalism UK and supported by law firm Wiggin LLP. It comes with a prize fund of £4000, and winners are given a place on the Women in Journalism committee, as well as given the honorary title of WiJ Fellow.

While The Scottish Beacon received funding from the Google News Initiative to develop and launch, it has not yet received any funding for editorial work. This prize money will be used to develop collaborative reporting projects, investigating stories at a national level and working with partners to cover the local angles – to break stories with bigger impact.



Rhiannon Davies collects award for Scottish Beacon. L-R Gaelyn Fuhrmann (Wiggin LLP), Rhiannon J Davies (Scottish Beacon), Jane Martinson (Women in Journalism) Kerry Godliman (awards host) © ASV Photography Ltd.



Scottish Beacon partners from around the country meet at The Community Newsroom in Govanhill