**HASSRA SOUTH EAST**

**ANNUAL AWARDS 2024**

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***PRESENTED AT***

**ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELD, LONDON**

**WEDNESDAY 12th March 2025**

###### SOUTH EAST ASSOCIATION AWARDS FOR 2024

Our awards start with recognising the efforts of members through Merit Awards.

These are much coveted and are issued sparingly recognising HASSRA endeavours over several years. Although there is no written guidance around receiving more than one merit award, it is considered that a reasonable lapse of time will have taken place.

**MERIT AWARD WINNERS 2024**

**Tristan Court  - Merit Award**

Tris has been and continues to be a driving force for Brighton club.

He has been on the committee for many years and has been the Treasurer now for the last 2 years and does a fantastic job. But it is not only this that he excels in. He is always thinking of new ideas and events we can put on and will just go ahead and arrange them. He inspires the other members of the committee to be enthusiastic and think outside the box.

Tris is involved in pretty much all of the events that we put on and no task is too much for him. He puts all of our competitions etc on HASSRA Live and is a real advocate of trying to get more of our members to go on the site.

Tris is extremely approachable and members of the committee and members in general often go to him to mull over ideas or ask for his opinion which is very valued. Tris uses a lot of his own time for anything HASSRA and it really is appreciated to have someone like him on the committee. The club would be lost without him.

**Shona Honeysett - Merit Award**

A stalwart supporter of HASSRA and the face of her club for many, many years, this awards the dedication over all of these years. The full nomination lists considerable achievements and milestones and this will be shown in full in the awards booklet.

**Full nomination narrative -** Before starting to write our nomination, I asked around and no one really remembers a time when Shona was not an active member of Eastbourne HASSRA.

Having joined in 2018 she may not be our longest standing member, but she has, for the longest time been the heart and soul of our club. Like our traditional stick of seaside rock, she is rumoured to have HASSRA running all the way through her

She has recruited most of the existing committee members with her no nonsense, just join HASSRA talks during our training days at JCP.

Her dedication and commitment have been unfailing over the years. She has been the Queen of the kitchen during events like breakfast rolls, jacket potatoes, and her infamous Christmas buffet. I wonder how many people she has catered for over the years.

This fabulous lady has run a HASSRA tuckshop for her colleagues, arranged countless outings, book a meal out or two, organised a summer indoor Olympics during covid and has folded more raffle tickets than I am sure she cares to remember. She has watched countless committee members come and go over the years, but she has remained our constant.

Despite taking a step back from committee duties at the end of last year for personal reasons, Shona has continued to support individual members like, the new chairman, secretary and treasurer, as well as the committee in supporting us to run events.

She has maintained her position as our chief cheerleader and continues to promote HASSRA to new staff members.

This nomination is long overdue and although we know she will hate the attention, we all at Eastbourne HASSRA think she is worthy of a Merit Award. She is amazing and we would love to see her recognised for being the heat and soul of our club for such a long time.

Thank you, Shona, from your friends at Eastbourne HASSRA

**Jackie Akehurst - Merit Award**

Jackie has been a HASSRA committee member for a number of years.  She is proactive and much valued by her fellow committee members.  Jackie is supportive and not afraid to query decisions and offer effective solutions.

Jackie led on a number of successful events in 2024 including wine tasting and a visit to a golf driving range.  Her natural enthusiasm is infectious and encourages everyone to get involved and enjoy the activity

Her negotiation skills have resulted in some excellent rates for HASSRA members.  She is currently in discussions with a local spa and racket club to arrange activities for Spring 2025.

Jackie is enthusiastic and passionate about HASSRA and always attends meetings and activities with gusto.

A deserving winner of a South East Merit Award

**Jayne Dawson - Merit Award**

Jayne’s local club say that she is simply brilliant and is HASSRA! She organises so much for the office and nothing is too much trouble. Always around and asking for new ideas to promote and celebrate HASSRA. Some colleagues don’t know her real name! She is just known as Mrs H.

She will listen to suggestions and include other members in decision making. She often gives up her own time to come in early and set up raffles etc.

**Janet Stemp - Merit Award**

Janet has been the Treasurer of the Didcot Club for over 30 years – she is and has always been the face of the club. When others have come and gone – Jan has remained at the heart of the club and continued to keep things going. Jan has been instrumental in the success of the club – applying for grants and organising events during the pandemic.

Jan will retire at the end of this year and it is the right time to recognise how important her role has been. She has supported newcomers and kept HASSRA alive in a small office.

**Anita Talor – Margate**

Anita is not only the treasurer within her local club but one of the driving forces that has helped propel her club to providing great things for their members. Introducing the snowball has joined up the various teams within the office and has ensured creation of greater funds to offer more member treats and activities.

Using a lot of her own time for HASSRA activities and organisation, this award recongises the difference she makes.

**Full nomination wording -** Anita is not only Margate HASSRA’s Treasure but also my right-hand women and one of the driving forces of Margate Hassra committee. Anita took the position in 2023 and since that time she has helped propel Margate into the thriving club which it has now become.

I cannot express enough how grateful I am for Anita’s support with group activities and helping to push forward with our committee’s ideas and turning them into a reality. Anita is often the first person to put her hand up to help out with anything we need doing.

Last year, Anita introduced snowball to the Margate office which has been a great success and resulted in lots of office involvement from both the job centre and our CFCD colleagues. It has been wonderful to see so many of our members winning a significant amount of money over the last year. This has also been financially beneficial enabling us to offer our members more treats and activities.

Anita will always ensure that that our members are supported and has spent much of her free time buying gifts and treats so that we can provide, for example, Valentine’s Day treats and seasonal goodies to all our members.

Along with ensuring that our accounts are up to date and that we are keeping to our budget, Anita also assists with the recruitment process, ensuring we have goodies and gifts for our new members as well as attending and taking part in the new staff presentations.

Anita takes time to speak with members to make sure we are providing activities and charity events that they want and will often speak out in spotlight meetings promoting HASSRA and what we have on offer.

The work that Anita has done for the club and the wellbeing off the office has been recognised by our management team and they have put Anita forward for the King’s Garden party to thank her for the work and to show how much of an impact she has made to Margate as a whole.

Without Anita’s constant support and help we would not have been able to provide all the amazing activities that we have in 2024. Thank you, Anita!

**Ade Akinboweya- Merit Award**

Ade achieved a new high in terms of HASSRA activity in winning the Table Tennis Men’s Singles at the September Festival in 2024. An active participant for a number of years but now able to proudly announce that he is a national champion.

**LOCAL OFFICE CLUB AWARDS 2024**

This year the Awards Committee decided that as it is the 90th anniversary, that all clubs that submitted a report would receive a £50 payment for their club. We had an increased number of reports received although less than half of the clubs in the Region submitted one.

Another difficult year for the Awards Committee, with some very tight calls on what has been an improved completion of the template provided.

To start with, we would like to recognize a club that is deemed to be our most improved in 2024

**Most Improved (winning £150 for club funds) – Canterbury.**

Whilst we split the clubs into small and large (150 members being the divider), not everyone can be deemed the winner but we would like to recognise another good year and

**Highly Commended £150 – Newport - IOW.**

**Best Small Club Runner Up £200 – Eastbourne.**

**Best Large Club Runner Up and £200 – Worthing.**

**Best Small Club and £300 – Margate.**

**Best Large Club and £300 – Ramsgate.**

### ARTS & CRAFT NON-SPORTING CONTRIBUTOR 2024

This year’s winner has gained critical acclaim both within and outside of HASSRA.

Within HASSRA he is widely regarded as a brilliant photographer and a real devotee to his hobby, winning many competitions at various levels and officiating at many events. He is known to leave home at all hours of the day and night in pursuit of atmospheric, original and unusual subjects.

On a wider scale, he has been a finalist for the past two consecutive years in the UK landscape photograph of the year awards. He was also a finalist in the 2024 British wildlife photograph of the year awards with the final results still pending – so we wish him well in that.

His exceptional photographic skills attract over 5000 followers on social media with his photographs shared by followers over a hundred times every week. His successes in drone and aerial photography have attracted over 30,000 views on social media and in 2024 he achieved a personal goal by featuring in a national newspaper. His drone shot of the east hill funicular railway appeared in no less than “The Times”.

If that is not enough, he designs, promotes and sells products featuring his photography at markets across the southeast, his calendars selling out every year.

He is a dedicated expert in his chosen craft and is a truly worthy winner; **Liam Willis from Hastings HUB club.**

### SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR 2024

### Our winners this year recognises not one but four individuals, who together form the Milton Keynes Quiz Team.

### The team has been ever-present at the South East regional events and national qualifiers for over 20 years and have been very rarely beaten at this level.

### They have represented the region at the General Knowledge, Pop and Sport National Finals across the country and every year since these moved to Warwick in 2013 as part of the festival events.

### Despite their longevity they had never been crowned national champions coming close on numerous occasions, but this finally changed in 2024 as they were crowned General Knowledge Champions at the July Festival.

### As a team, they will be put forward as our nomination into the national Sportsperson of the Year but for now we our winners are

### Rob Zorlakki, Damon Flynn, Derek Hall and Michael Leonard.

### BUSINESS SPONSOR OF THE YEAR 2024

### Our winner this year has been their local club sponsor for a number of years, however the last few has seen considerable change in both staff in the office and those serving on the HASSRA committee.

### Her unwavering support of all things HASSRA includes encouraging management engagement to allow HASSRA events to take place, improving staff wellbeing.

### Not only being supporting in all things HASSRA, our winner combines wellbeing initiatives and has made financial contributions to events to make sure these occur. The full nomination will be include din our published awards booklet but this year we recognise the difference made by our Business Sponsor of the Year; Therese Young from Margate.

### The nomination goes forward for consideration as the national Business Sponsor of the Year

### Full award nomination - For a many years now Therese has taken on the role as club sponsor for Margate which encompasses Margate Job Centre and Counter Fraud, Compliance and Debt Interventions site.

### Over the last two years, Margate has seen a significant change in both its employees and membership of the HASSRA Committee. Therese’s constant support and encouragement has enabled the club to grow allowing it to facilitate on-going events despite these changes.

### Margate has successfully increased its membership, and the number and variety of activities it provides for not only members but the entire Margate office. The success of the Club is due in no small part to the level of engagement at management levels. Therese has been the major factor in ensuring that staff wellbeing and HASSRA remain at the forefront of office discussions

### Her support of both the HASSRA and Wellbeing activities is exemplary including providing part funding for some of the activities that have been given to staff. The most recent example would be providing financial support for a Blue Monday office. Therese has supported the HASSRA committee acknowledging the crossover between that and members of the office VOICE team.

### Another excellent example would be her support of a staff away day organised by the HASSRA committee with a clear focus on wellbeing and the available support within the department and HASSRA. This worked so well that plans are already in place for another staff away day next year thus ensuring that wellbeing and staff morale remain at the forefront of all office planning.

### Therese’s support is not just financial: it is also practical as she ensures sufficient time is given to HASSRA committee members to allow them to deliver a range of activities during the year including seasonal goodie bags, Team quizzes, snowball raffles, charity events and the now legendary visit of the ice cream van last summer.

### She allowed the club to redecorate and provided funding of new furniture for our wellbeing room which is available to all staff in Margate. The previous room was very drab and depressing and was mainly used for storage but has since become a bright calm area which has comfy furniture, a book library, a craft corner, and an array of puzzles, activities and supplies readily available. For the more active, there is the perennially popular pool table and sports’ equipment including yoga mats for anyone wanting to use the room for relaxation.

### Therese is highly supportive of all charity events and encourages staff participation again allowing the use of time in staff development hours to hold these events. In turn, this allows the committee to advertise and promote activities leading to the recruitment of new staff who have recently joined the DWP or moved to the site.

### We would not have been able to move the club forward without the constant support and guidance of Therese. The success of the club is in large part thanks to her and as such, the committee and office as a whole consider her more than worthy of recognition.

**NEWCOMER AWARD 2024**

A recently introduced award to recognise the valued contribution of new blood into the HASSRA family.

We had a number of nominations this year and would like to recognise these, so have decided to award a Highly Commended certificate to Gareth George from Eastbourne and Nick Gurr from Margate.

Both joined their local club committees in 2024 and made an immediate impact, taking on event organization both physically and using HASSRA Live functionality. Active advocates of HASSRA they are continuing to think about improvements for their clubs and worthy of recognition.

**Full nomination wording -** Gareth joined Eastbourne JCP in December 2023.  His enthusiasm, professionalism and passion made an immediate impact within the office, and he was a natural choice when the role of Vice Chairperson became available in September 2024.

His positive outgoing nature has made a huge impact to the perception of HASSRA in the office.  He proactively mentors new team members on the merits of HASSRA and its many benefits, which has helped membership reach record figures.

An ‘ideas’ person, Gareth is not afraid to take the lead or pick up the baton to make things happen.  Most recently, he stepped in to save breakfast rolls at the eleventh hour and subsequently presented plans for our next breakfast offer focusing on healthy options to engage with other colleagues.  Gareth also put forward of a jobcentre wide activity to promote HASSRA’s 90th birthday, which is currently in development.

Gareth also demonstrates a natural team player mentality, encouraging and supporting fellow committee members to promote HASSRA in the best light.

**Full nomination wording** - Nick joined the Margate HASSRA committee in February 2024 and instantly engaged with the committee offering to take on the role of IT support for Margate and running our online competitions. This was something which we had never done before as we were unsure how this would work. Nick took the time to familiarise himself with the set up and within a couple of months we had our first online competition. This enabled the club to receive the regional funding and encourage online participation from our members both locally and nationally.

Nick always promotes Local and national online events and has supported members who are less computer savvy to navigate HASSRA Live and ensure they are aware of all available offers and competitions.

Nick is very keen to ensure that the committee is moving with the times and wanted to look at more cost-effective ways of encouraging staff to participate in the snowball/raffles and other events. To this end, Nick spent lots of time researching and eventually procuring a “Sum Up” card payment machine which has seen an increase in sales across the board.

Along with his support locally, Nick has also represented Margate HASSRA by attending quizzes, taster sessions and participating in last year’s Sports’ Day. Nick is in the process of trying to recruitment further members so that we can take part in this year’s football and netball team events.

Nick is always willing to help and take on additional roles such as club secretary in which we know he will excel. Thank you, Nick, for all your hard work!

**We do have a Newcomer Winner for 2024**

Our winner joined the DWP in November 2023 and was the first to sign up to HASSRA during their induction week HASSRA talk leading the way for her fellow trainees to join. Joining the committee as soon as they could at the next AGM in February 2024 and has been a great help to the team.

They bring enthusiasm and fresh ideas to every meeting and is always willing to take things on and contact businesses on behalf of the committee, for example contacted the local bowling alley and helped to organise our club tenpin bowling event. They joined in with selling snowball and raffle tickets as well as leading competitions back of house for the club.

They attended HASSRA day taking part in the quiz, and agreed to be the point of contact for the day for attendees from the local area and organised the people on and off the coach.

They also attended HASSRA festival in July when rounders players were required at short notice. During that weekend they fully embraced the opportunities available to take part and to meet and make friends with HASSRA members from all over.

They are a great ambassador for HASSRA in the office and deserves to be recognized.

**Our winner is Abbey Birks from Ramsgate.**

Abbey automatically gets an invitation to the HASSRA National Conference at Warwick University in May as our Regional winner and will be in contention to be a potential national Newcomer of the Year.

**EXCEPTIONAL MERIT AWARD**

This award was introduced a few years ago to recognise HASSRA volunteers in the South East region who had made an outstanding contribution to their club or region over a considerable period. That is certainly the case with today’s recipients.

There are usually key individuals in every successful club and that is certainly the case here. Many members in this local club say that it would not survive without them and over the years we have watched the Southampton club thrive and get back to its former glory. The effort they put in for the enjoyment of others is quite exceptional, be it arranging club activities, trips, theatre outings or supporting local charities which in 2024 reached the phenomenal total of £5620 for the Mount Batten Hampshire hospice.

It is a rare thing to honour two people as a pair but this is very much a case of- BOGOF - buy one get one free.

This thoroughly deserved exceptional merit award goes to:

**Donna Hack and Pauline Stukings**

**NGAIRE THOMAS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2023**

It is extremely rare for anyone to be nominated for 2 awards in the same year but on this occasion that is the case and deservedly so.

Our volunteer of the year was also successfully named as personality of the year.

The following describes his outstanding candidature for both awards………….

Neil Taylor is amazing, he is the beating heart of HASSRA Ramsgate and we would not be as successful and popular with members as we are without Neil.

HASSRA Ramsgate has had a change about over the last few years with committee members moving on and retiring. At one point we had only Neil and the late, great Tony Warley who we sadly lost, from the original committee. Neil could have chosen this time to leave too but he is so passionate about HASSRA and keeping it going, offering our members the best possible experience that there was never any question that he was staying.

Neil is a great club treasurer, always taking the time to make sure our accounts are up to date and has overseen the introduction of our use of the Sum Up card machine. This innovation has seen an increase in the money we are able to raise for our club and charities. Neil attends all committee meetings bringing ideas and ensures we run at least two events every month for our members. He brings his experience from how it was run previously and events of the past, alongside his enthusiasm for finding and running new events like our bowling and mini golf events in 2024.

Neil attends taster days and recently attended the go-karting one, promoting it widely to our members and to people who might want to join. Neil runs the weekly snowball efficiently and without any fuss despite it meaning he is unable to enter himself. He also creates and adds many of our quizzes and competitions, again meaning he is unable to participate. Neil regularly attends the regional AGM and is attending again this year.

Always working away, sometimes quietly, often in the background but always as a HASSRA superstar.

Our deserved winner is **Neil Taylor from Ramsgate**