

Seeking out the best in business

by Trevor Sturges

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THE starting gun has fired on the county's premier business awards.

The third annual Kent Excellence in Business Awards have been launched with the promise of glory and a handsome glass trophy crafted by Maidstone artist Annie Ross for the winners.

This year, three new categories – Best Science and/or Technology Business, Business Commitment to the Environment, and Apprenticeship of the Year – have been added, making a total of 13.

The awards were launched at Dorton House, a school for blind and visually impaired young people at Seal, near Sevenoaks. It is run by a 172-year old charity, the Royal London Society for the Blind.

Other categories are for large business, small and medium enterprise, start-up, leisure and tourism, creative, employer, commitment to the community, customer service and commitment, entrepreneur and young entrepreneur.

The awards are staged and produced by Kent County Council and the KM Group.

Kevin Lynes, KCC cabinet member for regeneration and economic development, said:



AWARDS LAUNCH: Dr Tom Pey of Royal London Society for the Blind with Geraldine Allinson and KCC's Kevin Lynes

"KEiBAs spotlight the excellence that's found in Kent's business community.

"We want to be able to shout about all that's best in Kent and these awards are a great way to tell us."

'Give it a go'

KM Group chairman Geraldine Allinson urged organisations to "give it a go". They had nothing to lose by going to the website, downloading the entry form and entering. She said: "It is one of the most powerful and cost-effective marketing tools. Winning a prestigious KEiBA will help your organisation to stand out from the crowd."

Charmaine Alicia Kemp, founder of Dartford-based Wheelie Good Mobility, was last year's Young Entrepreneur of the Year. She said winning had made a huge difference to her business and own self-esteem. She urged young business people to enter.

"Kent has so much history in the world of commerce, it's up to us to update the history books," she said.

The deadline for entries, available at www.keiba.co.uk, is March 11, with the presentation gala dinner held at Leas Cliff Pavilion, Folkestone, on June 30.

■ See Kent Business, distributed with the KM on [Friday February 4](#), for details.