

## **PRIDE OF SOMERSET YOUTH AWARD WINNERS 2018**

Extracts from the Pride of Somerset Youth Awards with introductions by Simon Parkin, presenter for BBC Somerset radio.

### **Bertie Kelly**

Our first award this evening goes to a young table tennis champion who, at the age of 12, has won 17 gold medals in the last six months alone. Bertie Kelly from Bridgwater is national champion AND county champion five years running – and his dad Jos, who nominated him, says Bertie “proves what can be done even when not living in a city with a big club that most of his competition have”.

### **Casey Williams**

Tonight’s next award goes to another of the county’s sporting stars. Casey Williams plays for Huish Taunton Tigers basketball club and has helped the senior men’s team come second in the Basketball England Division 4 this year. He was nominated by Gary, the club’s development officer, who describes Casey as a “model student athlete”, who’s “always on hand to offer advice on and off the court” to his fellow athletes.

### **Athena House**

Every year the Pride of Somerset Youth Awards come around, the judges are always struck by how many young people have really significant caring responsibilities; and 17-year-old Athena House from Taunton is no exception. She helps look after her mum who has Huntington’s Disease: a really serious condition which affects the brain, and which really sadly is terminal. Athena’s also juggling A Levels at the moment, and she’s a member of the Somerset Young Carers Project forum, speaking on behalf of young carers like her. Athena was nominated by Nikki from the Young Carers Project, who describes her as “a happy positive young woman who I’m proud to nominate for this award.”

### **Eva Halliwell**

Our fourth award tonight goes to Eva Halliwell from Wellington, who at the age of 10 has probably lived through more upheaval and disruption than most of us would experience in a lifetime. She’s had to move home countless times and life clearly isn’t easy: her mum says she spends up to five hours a day on trains and buses to get to school in Taunton and down to Exeter, where she’s a member of an elite gymnastics squad. She also lives with epilepsy and a condition called urticaria; but her mum says she’s dedicated, happy-go-lucky and confident –apparently she’s known in Wellington for cartwheeling up the street!

### **Gintare Saladzuite**

Our judges were really impressed by how much Somerset’s young people do for their local communities; and the winner of tonight’s next award is a perfect example of that. The National Citizen Service was launched in 2011 and helps teenagers prepare for the world of work, as well as carry out community projects. 17-year-old Gintare Saladziute from Bridgwater worked with a team to renovate the garden of a care home in Bridgwater: painting garden furniture and planters and tidying up the garden. She’s now graduated from the NCS but she’s still involved in giving other

young people the same experiences she had. On top of that she also raised money for Taunton Association for the Homeless at Bridgwater Carnival.

### **Kai Fletcher**

Our next award winner has got a very exciting few days ahead of him: tonight, he's up for a Pride of Somerset Youth Award tonight, then next Saturday he's off to London for the wedding of some couple called Harry and Meghan?! I wonder which one he's more excited about... Kai Fletcher has been nominated for his work with the Southside Centre in Twerton near Bath. He got involved with them after becoming homeless when he was just 15; and now he's 18, he's a young advocate team leader for the centre, helping other young people turn their lives around.

### **Daryl Allinson**

We're very honoured this evening, because we're joined by a member of the Yeovil Town squad! Although I'm not sure he needs to worry TOO much about Darren Way's strict training plan just yet. Daryl Allinson from Frome has battled leukaemia for the last three years: he's had to go through two bone marrow transplants, as well as all the side effects for those operations; but his mum who nominated him says he battles it all with bravery and an amazing sense of humour. Daryl's true love is football; and Yeovil manager Darren Way has been so impressed by Daryl, he's made him an honorary member of the Glovers!

### **Jake Edwards**

The Pride of Somerset Youth Awards are supported by Avon and Somerset Police, and we were joined by Superintendent Mike Prior from the force a little while ago. Avon and Somerset does a lot of engagement work with young people in our area: and this evening we're celebrating two police cadets who've made Somerset proud. The first is Jake Edwards from Street, who's given more than three thousand hours as a volunteer to Street Police Cadets. He became head cadet of the unit and is now a police community support officer. He may have left the police cadets now but Mark Bell, the main cadet leader at Avon and Somerset Police, says Jake still gives up his time to help the Street and Taunton Police Cadets.

### **Huw Lloyd**

We're about to meet someone now who could give Paul McCartney and Bill Wyman a run for his money. 17-year-old Huw Lloyd from Taunton only started playing the bass guitar a little while ago – but he's already working towards his grade 8 exam and has got distinctions in all his college music assignments. Huw was nominated by his course leader Andy, who says Huw's enthusiasm for music is "infectious", and describes him as "extremely friendly, helpful, genuine and a thoroughly nice person."

### **Lara Davies**

Our next winner tonight went beyond the call of duty as a sea cadet when she trekked for 60 miles alongside the Lord Lieutenant's wheelchair for the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme. Lara Davies from Street was the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet in 2016 – and although that's come to an end now, Lara

is still doing fantastic work to promote the work of the cadets at public speaking events, as well as working as a mentor.

### **Freya Cave**

Tonight we've been hearing about some really great young people who haven't let personal difficulties stop them living life to the fullest. 17-year-old Freya Cave from Middlezoy was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes three years ago: and anyone who knows anything about diabetes knows that a condition like that requires a lot of discipline and management to stay on top of. That's something Freya's more than achieved, even when she travelled to South Africa and Swaziland to help build a kitchen and provide clean drinking water. Freya's been nominated by her consultant Dr Gita Modgil, who says "from the moment I met Freya, I knew she would accomplish significant achievements in her life".

### **Zara Cadwallader**

Time to celebrate another police cadet now. Zara Cadwallader from Burnham-on-Sea is head cadet in Taunton, as well as the mayoral cadet for the town, representing Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey at events. She's volunteered as a police cadet at everything from Glastonbury Festival to Taunton Flower Show – and Mark Bell, the main cadet leader at Avon and Somerset Police, said in his nomination that Zara is "a unique individual who will help anyone".

### **Billy Marshall**

Our next winner has been described as being "blissfully unaware of the impact he has on everyone around him." We've already heard about the great work being done by youngsters on National Citizen Service; and 17-year-old Billy Marshall from Burnham-on-Sea is another one of those – this time helping children with disabilities and additional needs. He and his team raised money for the charity Brainwave by bag packing and organising a children's tea party. He's graduated from the scheme now but still helps plan events and volunteers as an advocate.

### **Poppy McGhee – Sandy Padgett Award winner**

The Sandy Padgett Award is a very special award. Sandy Padgett was former Chief Constable for Somerset and Avon Police who was passionate about supporting young people and their contribution to society. After her tragic and premature death her husband decided to donate a special award which we now honour at this Pride of Somerset event each year. It is only right that it goes to a very special person. 13-year-old Poppy McGhee from Wookey is quite the musician – reaching grade 8 violin at the age of just 8, and doing fantastically well with the recorder and oboe as well. Next weekend Poppy will represent the South and South West at the Rotary Club Young Musician finals in Edinburgh: she's one of just six who've been chosen out of 4,000 entries, so a real achievement. But what makes Poppy even more worthy of winning is that she puts her talents to a worthy cause, fundraising for a charity called The Amber Trust as well as for the Children's Hospice. She's organised busking, concerts and school activities to raise money – and all of this while dealing with various health problems of her own. Poppy was nominated for a Pride of Somerset Youth Award by her mum Angie, who says "she never boasts or shows off and has remained well-grounded, caring and great fun to be with. Poppy's achieved so much over the last few years, but has largely gone unrecognised because she's such a modest and humble young girl."