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## Tales from the road - judging the National Enterprise Town Awards

**What's it like to be a judge of the Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Town Awards? Maurice Healy, Director of Corporate Banking, Bank of Ireland, describes his experience as a judge of the 2018 competition.**

The search is on to find Ireland's most enterprising towns and villages. The judging of the awards is taking place in towns and villages across Ireland.

### **What is the Bank of Ireland National Enterprise Town Awards?**

[The National Enterprise Town Awards](#), organised by Bank of Ireland, is now in its third year.

The competition promotes enterprise by bringing business and community groups together, in towns and villages across Ireland, to showcase the spirit of enterprise in their local area.

90 towns have entered, all were nominated by their local county or town councils and local enterprise office.

### **My experience as a judge**

As part of Corporate Banking's support of our value of 'One group one team,' eight Corporate Banking colleagues will join judging panels across Ireland to find Ireland's most enterprising towns of 2018.

Inspired by David Walsh, CEO of Netwatch (a customer), who is passionate about his adopted county, I went along to see Co. Carlow for myself.

### **The privilege of judging**

I had the privilege of being a judge for three days meeting groups of volunteers, businesses and local government agencies, who are working hard to make their community a better place to work,

live, play, be educated, and to raise a family.

So, what were some of the highlights I experienced as a judge?

In Myshall, local entrepreneurs are establishing 'Ireland's Camino', a major tourism asset retracing the 6th-century journey of St. Columbanus from his birthplace in the Blackstairs mountains to Bangor Co. Down, establishing monasteries across France to Bobbio, in Italy. He was an early champion of European integration.

I enjoyed a cup of tea and the warmth of the people of Ballon at a fashion show and 'lock-in' at An Siopa Glas, an up-cycling and environmental shop, staffed by volunteers and raising funds for local initiatives.

Carlow Town is planning its new festival to celebrate the Rooster potato, while Carlow IT delivers tailored courses to support IT and engineering companies as they expand internationally.

I travelled by vintage car and by horse and trap along the banks of the scenic River Barrow in Bagnelstown, from the Walsh Distillery to the beautiful sensory gardens in the BEAM residential centre for adults with learning disabilities.

### **An inspirational experience**

I came away from three long days energised by the passion of the people I met and the inspirational communities where they live and work.

A huge thanks go to our Bank of Ireland colleagues who are embedded in their local communities and who embody Bank of Ireland's purpose of enabling our customers, colleagues, and communities to thrive. Judging continues in towns and villages across Ireland.

**Find out more and support these awards**

I would encourage all my colleagues to learn more about this amazing competition. You can find out more [here](#).

There is a total prize fund of €157,000 in 2018, and the winners will be announced at a gala awards ceremony taking place at The Lyrath Hotel, Kilkenny on November 28, 2018.

Here is a [list](#) of the 90 towns, villages and city areas to be visited by the judges, and the dates and times the judging starts.