

Rayne Reigns Supreme for ICT

The Essex village of Rayne has come out tops for Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the 2006/7 Calor Village of the Year[®] for England competition.

The village was revealed as the regional ICT winner for East England back in July and, as such, was up against four other regional winners for the overall award – Allendale, Northumberland (North England); Bidford on Avon, Warwickshire (Central England); Tarrington, Herefordshire (West England); and Herstmonceux, Sussex (South England).

Rayne was announced as the overall ICT winner at the glamorous Calor Village of the Year[®] awards luncheon, which took place at Skinner's Hall in London on Tuesday 16 th October with guest of honour food writer and presenter Sophie Grigson. Village representatives were presented with £1,000 prize money on top of the £500 awarded to the community as a regional ICT winner.

The Calor Village of the Year[®] for England competition rewards vibrant, self-sustaining village communities which, irrespective of size, have made the best of local opportunities to maintain and enhance the quality of life for all residents. The competition, which is organised and funded by gas supplier Calor, judged villages on six categories in total covering Building Community Life, Business, Young People, Older People, the Environment and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

The overall ICT award was judged by Ellie Stoneley on behalf of UKVillages.co.uk. Ellie commented: "This year the overall ICT award was harder to judge than ever, the standard of the entries was superb - all of them demonstrating a real enthusiasm for involving the whole community in IT projects. The ICT category award really sets an exemplary standard and it has been fascinating to see how villages have raised the bar during the last seven years.

"Rayne is a vibrant community which has embraced ICT in a way that includes rather than excludes the wider community. Some 89% of the community has used the website; free Internet lessons are offered to local residents; and the Parish Council and other community groups work to ensure that information is circulated widely. Rayne's entry really stood out due to the 'marketing' undertaken locally. All too often wonderful village web and IT training initiatives are launched but fail due to the lack of local awareness - this will not be the case in Rayne where even the local estate agent puts the website address on new property details. The village of Rayne really did fight off stiff opposition from throughout England and are a worthy winner of the Calor Village of the Year[®] for England overall ICT award."

For further information regarding the competition please contact Emma Flinn or Sara Tomkins on 0161 817 4200, email emma.flinn@connectpoint.co.uk.