



Media release
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INNOVATIVE IRIS LANDS £250 TECH PRIZE FROM THE NOTTINGHAM

Community-minded Bulwell schoolgirl Iris Wallace celebrated the arrival of New Year with the news she had landed a £250 Nottingham Building Society Innovative Young People of 2020 winner's prize.

The award came about due to the 11-year-old being involved in lots of inspirational local volunteering since moving to the area just over a year ago with her family – the majority of it researched and arranged using her own initiative during the first Covid-19 lockdown.

Going into 2021 Iris continues to work several hours a week at the Bulwell Forest Garden charity, undertaking tasks such as litter picking, making bird feeders and growing fruit and vegetables in all weather conditions to help the community garden project.

Iris also gives up free time to volunteer at Bulwell Food Bank, helping with jobs such as putting together vital food parcels. She even cooked no less than 250 hot meals with her mums Kelly and Shelly over a two-week period recently, which were then handed out to families in need.

The Bulwell Academy pupil's outstanding commitment to her local community and helping those who are vulnerable and in need within it are what led to a unanimous selection by The Nottingham's judges in the Innovative Young People 10-13 age category and the award of a £250 tech voucher.

A delighted Iris said: "I was surprised but very happy to hear I had become one of The Nottingham's Innovative Young People of 2020.

"It is nice to be recognised in this way but the main reason I continue to do as much volunteering as I can in my spare time is to help people who most need it in the community where I live."

In late 2020 Bulwell Forest Garden community gardener and food bank trustee Adele Brooksbank saw the building society's award scheme - established to shine a light on examples of those aged 10-21 who have found inspiring ways of furthering their education or boosting career aspirations - advertised and decided to nominate Iris.

She was joined by no less than 19 other people from in and around the Bulwell area who did exactly the same.

An extract of Adele's nomination read: "Iris has become a young ambassador for the garden. Without her input, the garden wouldn't have come up with ways to further our project.

“I nominated her not just because Iris has helped us as a project, but because she has overcome her own shyness and has further strengthened her own ability to learn and continues to look for new ways of learning and gathering information. If all this wasn't enough, she has begun to help out at our local food bank at which I'm a trustee. Iris is a remarkable young lady who deserves this recognition for all the work she has so far achieved and continues to achieve.”

The Nottingham's Head of People and Development, Anne Leivers, added: “Early on in 2020 we launched our [Career Academy](#) to help drive the aspirations of young people through hints and tips as to how careers can be kick-started.

“However with the Coronavirus pandemic causing serious challenges for all, not least young people who faced unprecedented hurdles in their education or career aspirations, we built on that by introducing the Innovative Young People awards.

“We received many inspirational nominations which made some very difficult decisions for the judging panel, but we are satisfied that the winners are thoroughly deserving of their awards and we hope the prizes can play a role in helping them fulfil their ambitions.”

Innovative Young People of 2020 awards were also presented to winners, who live in other areas of The Nottingham's heartland, in the 14-17 and 18-21 age categories.

Photo caption: Inspirational Bulwell schoolgirl Iris Wallace.

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Notes to editor

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About The Nottingham

Founded in 1849, The Nottingham is a mutual building society owned by its members with a long and proud history of doing the right thing and helping communities prosper. Today, The Nottingham is a top ten building society operating online and via a network of 40-plus branches across nine UK counties.

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