

GRIMSBY TELEGRAPH: VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR REVEALED

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"IT'S part of being human, wanting to make the community that much better."

These are words spoken by our new Volunteer Of The Year.



Lives first responder Mick Atkins scooped the prestigious title at a ceremony at Grimsby Town Hall last night, where people from throughout North East Lincolnshire gathered to celebrate the efforts and sacrifices made by voluntary workers.

Mr Atkins (39), of St Nicholas Drive, Grimsby, was nominated by the public for the Grimsby Telegraph's annual award for his eight years of work with Lincolnshire Integrated Voluntary Emergency Service.

At the Volunteer Of The Year Awards at Grimsby Town Hall are (from left) Grimsby Telegraph deputy editor Michelle Hurst, runner-up Chris Scott, runner-up Leon Ward, winner Mick Atkins, and the Mayor and Mayoress of North East Lincolnshire, Coun Stewart and Karen Swinburn.

Presented with a £50 gift voucher courtesy of Tesco at Hewitt's Circus, a VIP trip to watch Grimsby Town and other gifts, he said: "I'm very proud - it's a fantastic pat on the back.

"Being paid is not important at Lives. We do this to help - it's part of being human, wanting to make the community that much better.

"Everyone who's a volunteer is just as much a winner as I am."

A tanker driver by day, Mr Atkins is among a large team of volunteers who respond to 999 calls received via East Midlands Ambulance Service.

They provide vital support to medics in a range of situations, including traffic accidents and cardiac arrests.

Runner up Chris Scott (centre) receives his certificate from the Mayor of North East Lincolnshire Council Coun Stewart Swinburn and Mayoress Coun Karen Swinburn.

Mr Atkins added: "When I save someone's life, the thank you from the family means so much. You have helped them, and in doing so you have done your job."

The Telegraph received scores of nominations, which were judged by the Mayor and Mayoress of North East Lincolnshire, Couns Stewart and Karen Swinburn, Deputy Mayor Coun Colin Eastwell and Michelle Hurst, deputy editor of the Telegraph.

The Mayor said: "Mick goes out in advance of the ambulances if they are delayed, or helps out if needed, using training he paid for and attended in his own time.

"Judging has not been easy, and we have had to go through the shortlist two or three times."

Runners-up were Leon Ward and Chris Scott. At just 16, Leon is a dedicated member of the Acorns Out There voluntary mentoring service for young people, and Youthbank, which helps allocate money to worthy causes.

Mr Scott is best-known for his work as chairman of the Friends of the Freshney group, organising mass clean-ups and events.