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LDRS Conference and Awards 2019

Leigh Boobyer named Reporter of the Year at inaugural Local Democracy Reporting Service Conference and Awards

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Leigh Boobyer was named Local Democracy Reporter of the Year at the inaugural Local Democracy Reporter Conference and Awards, held at Media City Salford.

Judges said Leigh broke news that “embarrassed the authorities, interested readers and listeners and – in the best possible way – made himself a real irritant for figures that would prefer not to have been exposed to the public gaze”.

Leigh, who is based at Reach Plc’s Gloucestershire Live newsroom, provides local democracy stories for a range of media organisations across the region.

Among the items of work that impressed the judges was an expose of police staff selling part-worn tyres from force vehicles for personal financial gain.

The story followed a six-month investigation and was published by news outlets including [Gloucestershire Live](#), the [Wiltshire and Gloucester Standard](#) and the [BBC](#).

The full list of award winners at the June 25 event was:

- **Best Broadcast or Use of Multimedia:**
Winner: [Paul Faulkner](#); Highly-Commended: [Daniel Mumby](#)
- **Impact Story of the Year Award**
Winner: [Daniel Holland](#); Highly-Commended: [Reidie Witterton](#)

Winner: [Daniel Holland](#); Highly-Commended: [Bridie Witton](#)

- **Best Use of Freedom of Information**
Winner: [Sarah Ward](#); Highly-Commended: [Leigh Boobyer](#)
- **The Spotlight Award**
Winner: [Rachel Burford](#); Highly-Commended: [Amy Orton](#)
- **Scoop of the Year**
Joint winners: [Leigh Boobyer](#) and [Amy Orton](#)
- **Best Use of Social Media**
Winner: [Faye Brown](#); Highly-Commended: [Oliver Sirrell](#)
- **Local Democracy Reporter of the Year**
Winner: [Leigh Boobyer](#)

The conference was attended by more than 100 Local Democracy Reporters from across the United Kingdom, senior managers from the regional media and executives from BBC News.

The award ceremony concluded a day of presentations and workshops on topics such as best use of social media, Freedom of Information and smartphones for multi-media journalism.

David Holdstock, Director of Communications for the Local Government Association, also spoke to Local Democracy Reporters on the topic of relationships with local authority media teams.

The event concluded with a speech from Helen Thomas, Director of BBC England, who said it was a “great privilege to be standing in a room of hard-working and dedicated journalists”.

She added: “The LDRS came at a time when local news has perhaps never been so important – and never so threatened.

“Local reporting is part of the fabric of the UK. Not only informing communities and providing a second-to-none record of daily life, but also as a watchful vigil over our institutions and the people who run them.”

“It [the LDRS] goes to show what is possible when journalists set their mind to something... an organisation that has filed more than 80,000 stories, employing nearly 150 reporters and holding politicians and public bodies to account day-in-day-out like never before.”

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