



Respecting the past, shaping the future

*Press release from
Suffolk Preservation Society
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Griff Rhys Jones backs prestigious environmental awards

Comic star and keen conservationist Griff Rhys Jones is backing an awards scheme to celebrate outstanding contributions to Suffolk's environment.

The Suffolk based celebrity, most famous for his illustrious television, film and stage career, is also a lover of heritage, conservation and renovation, which lead to him recently presenting the popular BBC2 show Restoration.

He has now come out in support of the Award for a Better Environment, launched in the spring by the Suffolk Preservation Society.

Last year the Society run the much publicised Worst of the East competition, which sought out buildings that made a negative impact on the Suffolk landscape.

Now, the Society wants to showcase the other side of the coin by celebrating outstanding contributions to Suffolk's environment, landscape and heritage.

The star, who became a household name for his roles in Not the Nine 'O' Clock News and Alas Smith and Jones, said: "It is local support and action that really counts in heritage and conservation.

"Really, all the beautiful buildings and landscapes we love have to be looked out for all the time.

"Eternal vigilance can be very tiring, proper maintenance is gruelling and appropriate conservation is expensive. How good it is to see it recognised and supported."

Away from his TV work, Griff has indulged in his other passion by restoring two houses in Suffolk, a farmhouse in Wales, the Robert Adam House in London and played a pivotal role in the campaign to restore the famous Hackney Empire in London's East End.

As a Suffolk resident, he is keen to see the local landscape protected, and is why he is backing the awards scheme.

He said: “Supporting these awards are a great opportunity for the rest of us to show how much we care.

“We need to express our gratitude for the sake of Suffolk. It is time to say well done and for some dedicated people or organisations to take a bow.”

The three award categories are:

- **The Duke of Grafton Prize - for exemplary work to protect or enhance the historic built heritage.**
Eligible schemes include work which has improved, enhanced or preserved listed or historic buildings and structures. Works that have improved the appearance of a conservation area would also be eligible.
- **The Alfred Willams Prize – for modern buildings or extensions of distinction and excellence.**
Building structures of all uses, including residential, commercial, recreational, industrial and bridges are eligible to enter this category.
- **The EADT Prize – for exemplary work to manage, protect or enhance the countryside or coastline.**
Individuals, organisations and statutory bodies that have carried out work to manage and protect the countryside.

Richard Ward, the Society’s Director said: “We are delighted Griff Rhys Jones has backed the awards, not just because he is a celebrity but because he is a local resident with a huge understanding of the issues we are trying to highlight.

“We want to celebrate the positive contributions to show what can be achieved when schemes are developed with a little bit of care, sensitivity and imagination.

“These awards will only be given to those schemes which have demonstrated an outstanding attention to sustainability and improving Suffolk’s environment and heritage.

“We have been pleasantly surprised by the level and quality of the entries we have received.

“However, there is still more than two weeks to go and we want to give every opportunity for all possible entries to be made, to ensure we are awarding the very best schemes in Suffolk.”

Note to editors:

The awards are being supported by all the district and borough councils in the county, including Waveney District Council who have provided financial assistance towards the scheme.

Prizes totalling £2,500 will be awarded in each category of the awards, which will be held bi-annually.

An expert panel of independent judges, including a chartered architect, chartered landscaper, chartered planner, a conservation professional and a designer will pick a shortlist of candidates before SPS selects the winners.

Entries should be for schemes completed in 2006 and 2007 and winners will be announced in the summer.

Applications are open under the three prize headings. To be eligible, the works or development must be within the county of Suffolk; and completed between the 1st January 2006 and the 31st December 2007.

There are no application forms. Applicants, which can be clients, should submit an application setting out why they consider the project meets the objectives of the award.

The application should be on a maximum of four sides of A4. The text size should be 12pt. In addition, up to ten before and after photographs or relevant drawings can accompany the application in a j-peg format. Applications must be via e-mail to adrienne@suffolksociety.org

The application must also include the following information:

- A title for the project or description.
- The full postal address and post code for the application.
- Contact details of those making the application and their role in the project.
- Confirmation that the building or project owners have agreed to the submission of the application.
- Details of the client's brief or instructions. This must be in as much detail as possible.
- The details of the person submitting the application, their role in the project and their address and e-mail for correspondence.
- The details of all those involved in the project, including the client, designers/architects/structural engineers, other specialist consultants,

contractors or builders and main sub contractors. Any important third parties should be identified.

- Details of any planning approvals necessary and obtained.
- Details of how the project was made as sustainable as possible and addressed climate change problems. This will be a critical and influential factor when applications are considered.
- Details of the start and completion date of the project.

Applications must be received by noon .on Friday 25th April, 2008.

SPS, founded in 1929, originally worked to protect the county's buildings and landscape. Today, the Society has broadened its focus to help shape Suffolk's future, largely campaigning for sensitive and appropriate development, more and better quality affordable homes and to ensure sustainable infrastructures are in place to support the county's communities.

For more information contact:

Richard Ward, SPS, tel 01787 247179, or Patrick Lowman, Geronimo Communications, tel 01284 768935.

Email Patrick.lowman@geronimocommunications.com

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