



## **Winner of Mayor's Awards 2023 – 2024 for Services to the Community**

### **Mr Ian Griffiths – Beat Route Radio (Nominated by Sharon Conway)**

I am one of the presenters at Beat Route Radio, Rushden Community Radio Station. I have been part of the station since January 2018 and helped prepare for the stations launch on 1st March 2018.

As one of 'the originals', I can say first-hand how much Ian Griffiths has done for the community through Beat Route Radio. Not only has he helped many of the presenters themselves through tough times, he has worked tirelessly for the community. He is determined that community should be at the heart of what the station is about.

Ian has actively sought out members of the community, businesses and charities and invited them to come on air and talk about their activities, charity events, fundraising efforts, new or established businesses. All this is offered free of charge with 'no strings attached'. In the early days, this often involved walking up and down the High Street and popping in to chat to business owners. Not everyone was supportive back in 2018 as they were suspicious and couldn't believe that he was genuinely offering such a service for free, especially as back then hardly anyone had heard of Beat Route Radio.

It is a testament to Ian's persistence, commitment and dedication that these days Beat Route Radio more often than not, has various contacts daily asking for support to raise awareness of various events. People now know that a Beat Route Radio mention will get the message to thousands in the Rushden area.

Ian has himself been involved in various charity fundraising events such as being 'arrested on air and locked up for crimes against broadcasting' and one of the 'Big Sleep Out' events to raise both funds and awareness of the homeless shelter in Rushden. Although these events have a fun element, they are not a 'comfortable' thing to do as they have involved getting cold and wet or being confined to a claustrophobic space for some hours. Indeed, getting cold and wet is often a pre-requisite for many of the Outside Broadcasts that Beat Route Radio attends each year - with Ian leading virtually all of them.

Another thing that Ian has been committed to right from the idea of setting up a community radio station, is supporting the local music scene. Over the six years (1st March 2024 is our 6th birthday), Beat Route Radio has played thousands of songs by Northamptonshire musicians and hundreds of them have been invited to come into the studio and perform live on air. This has not been limited by genre or age and there has been quite literally 'something for everyone' over the years.

Ian is also keen that the youth of the local area should feel that Beat Route Radio is as much for them as anyone else in the community. It is to this end that he has organised various evenings at local Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Sea Cadet groups where the group members are able to experience how to create a radio show and then have one they have made broadcast. Beat Route Radio has also had some similar events in schools and is currently pursuing developing this further with a Northamptonshire SEN school. At Outside Broadcasts there have often been competitions or other ways for young people to participate and the station mascot 'Beatie' has become a well-known figure for the youth of Rushden in particular.



## **Mr Ian Griffiths – Beat Route Radio**

It has not been easy setting up and maintaining the radio station, particularly in terms of time and effort. As the station has grown both with listenership and the number of presenters and 'behind the scenes' volunteers, it has become much more than a full-time job to keep things ticking along smoothly. Updates of software and equipment are carried out regularly and Ian goes out of his way to ensure he sees all the presenters as often as possible, making being part of it much more like a family atmosphere than anything else. All this means that Ian deals with Radio 'stuff' pretty much as soon as he wakes, throughout the day and right up to him going to bed. This is seven days a week too and he has rarely had any significant time away from the radio station in the past six years. His commitment to the station is staggering and it only increases as time passes.

I hope that you agree Ian really is deserving of this award.

## **Mr Todd Tompkins – Boxingbola / Titan Fitness Boxing Academy (Nominated by Cheryl Tompkins)**

Please see Facebook about the recent distribution of 100 pairs of boxing gloves to children in the community of Rushden, two bleed kits have also been purchased for "Off the Streets" for Rushden. The funding was the result of "Boxingbola" which Todd has set up to "Save Lives not Knives - No Knives better Lives" in response to local knife incidents.

Free boxing and fitness training workshops to promote the project and the selling of raffle tickets to fund the project, were also held in the community including "Asda" and "Rushden Lakes" alongside local businesses and residents donating great prizes too.

A further day has recently been held where free boxing gloves & a free boxing lesson, have been given to customers of local businesses.

Todd's overall aim is to contribute to making Rushden one of the safest and fittest towns, for residents to reside in, giving a great quality of life to everyone one way or another, through "Boxingbola" and "Titan Fitness Boxing Academy", which is an all age, all abilities, inclusive Boxing Club, where wellbeing and fitness training is available through boxing, alongside boxing training itself, if participants would like that too.

Todd has obtained his professional boxers' licence from the "British Boxing Board of Control" and has won his first professional boxing match on the 9th March 2024, having been boxing training since he was 11 years old, when there was "Streetwise" gym in Albert Rd, Rushden, then further attending a Boxing College in Leicester and Moulton College in Northampton for his sixth form, to gain his qualifications and then studying further.

Some of his trainers from then are still with Todd today attending his boxing gym to train themselves, so another aim is keeping the sport of boxing alive in Rushden of which there has been a long history and success of, and giving back to the Rushden community a strong foundation to further build on this.

Todd gives his time for free on all aspects of the project which are ongoing and expanding. Previous to the ongoing project free boxing and wellbeing sessions were available if needed too.