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Eco bins and fridge cameras among young entrepreneurs' ingenious creations

A bin capable of weighing food waste and encouraging recycling and composting was the winning entry in an innovation competition for young entrepreneurs.

The annual County Durham Future Business Magnates competition saw Year 8 pupils from local schools apply creativity and problem-solving to a range of challenges.

Organised by Business Durham, the business support service of Durham County Council, this year's theme was 'What a Wonderful World – Can you Make it Better?'.

And after an exciting finale at Hardwick Hall, pupils from King James I Academy took first place overall with their 'Smart Weigh' business.

Their ingenious concept is based on an eco-friendly bin that can weigh food waste, with users then earning points according to how much of the waste is recycled or composted.

Runners-up, Belmont Community School, came up with 'TechC', a camera installed inside people's fridges to monitor the shelf life of products.

Framwellgate School's team bagged third place for their educational 'ShoreSavers' package, designed to teach primary school children about protecting the earth's oceans.

Cllr Joan Nicholson, Chair of Durham County Council said: "The competition is in its 19th year and brings together the energy and creativity of our young people and the experience and guidance of our business community.

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“It is an opportunity for our young people to show off their entrepreneurial talents by coming up with business proposals that are then judged by an expert panel of business leaders. It’s really inspiring to see and all involved form valuable connections.

“It all serves to lay a strong foundation for the future success of County Durham's next generation of business leaders.”

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In addition to the overall winners, the special category winners were as follows:

Brian Manning Award for Best Use of Networks

Winner: Wolsingham School

Business name: Hestia Food Testing

Product description: Testing device within food packaging to detect when food is no longer safe to consume

Best Prototype and Design and Best Business Plan

Winner: North Durham Academy

Business name: Hydro Flow

Product description: Small dynamo powered by water to generate electricity

Best Logo and Slogan

School name: Dene Academy

Business name: Loch Net Monster

Product description: Waste/pollution collector for use across streams or rivers to clean large rubbish, microplastics and oil from the water

Most Effective Team

School name: Durham High School

Business name: BioBlend

Product description: Aerobic decomposition bin with supporting app

Most Innovative Idea

School name: Bishop Barrington School

Business name: Vivagreen

Product description: Roadside ‘motor-bine’ to convert wind generated from passing vehicles into electricity

Most Investment Ready Business

School name: St John’s Catholic School

Business name: Naturwall

Product description: Insulating wallpaper

Best Presentation

School name: Belmont Community School

Business name: Smart Home Tools and Tech

Product description: Camera installed inside fridges to monitor shelf life of products

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Most Resilient Team

School name: Woodham Academy

Business name: E P Water Safety

Product description: Innovative water vacuum to remove harmful pollutants from rivers and lakes

The County Durham Future Business Magnates event was supported by sponsors, mentors, and community partners including Co-op, Erwin Hymer, Robertson Homes, and Waterstones.

To find out more about getting involved in future FBM competitions visit www.futurebusinessmagnates.co.uk.

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