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Helmsley needs your vote as local high streets battle to be Britain's best

***Helmsley beats off competition from hundreds of entries to become finalist
for Market Town category of the Great British High Street Awards***

1 October 2015: Helmsley in North Yorkshire has today been named as one of the country's best high streets by being shortlisted in the annual Great British High Street competition.

Helmsley has been named alongside Chipping Norton and Colne as one of the top three in the Market Town category. Now, to be crowned champion, Helmsley needs the public's votes.

This year's competition saw a record 230 applicants and now, for the first time, the public has the chance to vote directly for their best-loved high street online. Between now and November you can cast your vote for free via thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk or on Facebook.

If Helmsley wins, not only will they get a share of prize pot worth £80,000, but they'll win expert training and tailor-made tips from Google's training taskforce - the Digital Garage on Tour - for one hundred of their shops, bars and restaurants.

High Streets Minister Marcus Jones said: "We had a record amount of high-quality entries to this year's competition - testament to the pride local people have and brilliant work being done to boost Britain's high streets.

"The local high street is the life and soul of many towns, villages and cities across the country and these awards are a great opportunity to not only celebrate those that are the best of the best, but also to help others learn their valuable tips for success.

"If you cherish the hard work going on in Helmsley then show your support and get voting."

The Great British High Street Competition 2015 - sponsored by Boots, Costa, Post Office, Marks and Spencer and Tesco - is now in its second year and is one of a number of initiatives to help champion high streets as the cornerstones of the community.

These include a billion pound package of investment ranging from targeted business rate discounts, sensible planning changes and action that reins in over-zealous parking practices.

The first Great British High Street competition last year saw 135 communities battle it out to be crowned the nation's best. Belper in Derbyshire emerged as the overall winner. Belper found that winning not only boosted town pride, but also had a tangible economic impact with retailers reporting increased footfall.

Local business owner Carolyn Frank, who led Helmsley in Business' entry for the competition hopes that will happen for Helmsley too. "We're all over the moon! We're so proud of Helmsley being officially recognised as one of Britain's best market towns. We've long known it, but now everyone else can do too!

"Obviously we'd be delighted to win, and with the prizes including advice for 100 businesses, we'd even be able to work with other towns and villages in the area, which would be great. We're going to be pulling out all the stops to make sure local people know about Helmsley being a finalist, as we need everyone to show their support and get voting. We can't do it without you! So if you love Helmsley - as a visitor or resident - please do vote for us! And if we do win we hope everyone will be on standby for some big celebrations!"

Alongside the public's votes shortlisted towns will also be inspected by the Future High Streets Forum judging panel - made up of industry leaders from across retail, property and business

This year's competition also sees special recognition prizes for towns that have become 'rising stars', or local people who have made an invaluable personal contribution to their local high streets being launched.

To go online to cast your vote, visit the [Great British High Street website](http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/) (http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/) and follow @TheGBHighSt on Twitter. Voting closes in November.

Notes to editors:

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About the awards

1. The Great British High Street competition is run by the Department for Communities and Local Government and sponsored by Boots, Costa, Post Office and Marks and Spencer.
2. The Google Digital Garage on Tour is a workshop which includes sessions for businesses on finding and keeping customers online and the chance to have one-to-one consultations with Google specialists to chat through their businesses digital needs.
3. For more information or to vote for your high street visit the Great British High Street website

About Helmsley

Helmsley in Business is a group of 51 businesses working together to ensure the continuing success of the North Yorkshire town of Helmsley. Members include: Antiques and Interiors; Auntie Anne's Bakery; Bay Clinic; Bella di Notte; Black Swan Hotel; Browns of Helmsley; Castle Stores; Carters Country Wear; Celebrate Country Cake Design; Claridges; Crema Coffee Shop; Cut Price Bookshop; Duncombe Sawmill; Duncombe Park Gift Shop; Duncombe Park Estate; Elijah Todd; English Heritage; Feversham Arms Hotel and Verbena Spa; Helmsley Art Centre; Helmsley Brewery; Helmsley Galleries; Helmsley Post Office; Helmsley Town Hall; Helmsley Traditional Sweet Shop; Helmsley Walled Garden; Helmsley Wines; Honeysuckle Cottage; Hunters of Helmsley; International Centre for Birds of Prey; JEB Taxis; KVA Planning; Lazenby Visuals and Framing; Libby Butler Jewellers; Look Gallery; Marleys Butchers; No. 54 B&B; North York Moors National Park; Pennita Fashions; Porters Coffee Shop; Retals; Saltbox Gallery; Scotts of Helmsley Fish and Chip Shop; The Feathers; The Stickman; Think Fresh; Thomas of York; Thundercliffes; Tulchan; Viva Hair; and Yorkshire Deals.

Helmsley is a beautiful market town in the Ryedale District of North Yorkshire, with something to offer everyone - and a great place to explore the North York Moors National Park. It is popular with tourists for its characterful Market Place, historic architecture, the wide range of quality independent shops, and the excellent selection of accommodation, pubs, cafes and restaurants, many of which are award-winning. There are also plenty of interesting activities and attractions available on the doorstep including The International Centre for Birds of Prey, Helmsley Castle, Rievaulx Abbey and The Walled Gardens. Helmsley also marks the start of the Cleveland Way, which is popular with walkers and loops round the National Park to end up at the coast near Filey.

For more information log on to www.visithelmsley.co.uk