

Stephen Fry lauds Dundee Uni at awards

CHLOE BURRELL

Stephen Fry has commended both staff and students at Dundee University for their success in involving the public with their research.

The former university rector congratulated the winners of this year's Stephen Fry Awards for Excellence in Public Engagement in a video message played at the institution's annual Discovery Days ceremony in the Dalhousie Building yesterday.

The writer and broadcaster said: "I still can't quite believe my name is attached to these prestigious and important awards.

"It always gives me pleasure to announce the winners, tinged with sadness that I can't be there with you, which I would love to be."

A project in collaboration with the Hot Chocolate Trust, which sought to reimagine spaces for children who have experienced trauma, was named as Public Engagement Project of the

Year.

It was led by Linsey McIntosh and Gary Kennedy, from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD), with Ellie Harrison, also from DJCAD, winning Engaged Researcher of the Year for her transport project Bus Regulation: The Musical.

Ms Harrison is no stranger to controversy. In 2016, she was paid £15,000 by Creative Scotland to support the Glasgow Effect project, which saw the artist challenge herself to remain within Glasgow's city boundaries for a year to measure what impact it would have on her artistic career.

The project sparked a debate due to the public grant she received for it.

Psychology PhD student Vicky Armstrong won the inaugural Early Career Researcher of the Year award for her work in early-years art therapy.

Mr Fry continued: "At Dundee, we have set ourselves some big challenges - and I say we because I still think of it as my university as those two periods, those tenancies as

rector, meant the world to me.

"This year the university received the highest number of applications in the history of the awards and the panel were really impressed by the high quality of all those nominations.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the university for its outreach to the local community and its deep sense of needing to contribute to what the world really needs, which is a fairer and more equitable playing field for all people."

Professor Iain Gillespie, principal and vice-chancellor of the university, added: "Public engagement is a key element of our strategy to transform lives through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge.

"Involving the public in research brings many benefits for all and is of increasing importance to universities and other public bodies.

"On behalf of the whole university community, I would like to congratulate the winners of the 2023 Stephen Fry Awards and



commend all those who are continually enhancing our public engagement efforts by listening to and learning with individuals, communities and organisations.”



WINNERS: From left are Vicky Armstrong, Gary Kennedy, Linsey McIntosh and Ellie Harrison. Picture by Mhairi Edwards.

