



W I N T E R N E W S L E T T E R 2 0 1 6

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM

From the Chairman...

Welcome to East Midlands in Bloom autumn/winter newsletter 2016, and once again it is great to report that EMiB has had another outstanding year, all thanks to you, our remarkable communities in the Great East Midlands. We have had 57 'main Bloom' entries, 161 It's Your Neighbourhood entries, 22 schools participating and an increasing number of 'special award' entrants - so well done all of you!

We were very pleased to welcome several new Bloom communities in 2016: Dallington Village, Desford, Duston, Laceby and Redbourne. At the time of writing we have also been pleased to hear of more new communities joining for the first time in 2017 – an update on this will follow in the Spring Newsletter.

I would also like to recognise the standard of our entries in 2016, with 17 main Bloom entrants achieving Gold (a record) and also record numbers achieving Level 5 Outstanding in It's Your Neighbourhood.

I am also extremely pleased that our sponsors continue to recognise the importance of East Midlands in Bloom, and thank Silver Sponsors Amberol and Amethyst Horticulture, and Bronze Sponsors Barcham Trees, DART Training, Moulton College, Taylor's Bulbs and new sponsor TDP Ltd.

EMiB was very well-represented at the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards, held this year at the Edgbaston Conference Centre, Birmingham. This was a wonderfully enlivening evening, featuring 'interval' entertainment by a troupe of dancers, singers and musicians – my ears have just about recovered. Chris Beardshaw was the Master of Ceremonies, and our results from the East Midlands were the best ever! The seven representatives from this region had another splendid set of results, with Silver Gilt for Cleethorpes in the Champion of Champions Category, Silver for Evington in the Urban



Community Category, Gold for

Loughborough in the Small City Category (and for Andy Rush, Chairman of Loughborough in Bloom, a Community Champion Award), Gold for Immingham in the Town Category, Silver for Mablethorpe in the Small Coastal Category, Gold for Market Harborough in the Large Town Category, and Silver Gilt for Middleton by Wirksworth in the Village Category. With Middleton achieving such a high level on their first time in the Nationals, and first Gold Awards for both Immingham and Market Harborough, our Region's entrants can feel justifiably proud of their efforts.

In 2016, a Royal Horticultural Society Its Your Neighbourhood National Certificate of Distinction was awarded to Eton Avenue Growers Association from Newark. This recognized their remarkable work with people of all ages who had become disengaged from the mainstream, and in encouraging their interest and skills in horticulture to grow commercial crops as part of a social enterprise. This has been a central part of Newark in Bloom for some years now and is in every sense an inspiration. An equally remarkable IYN entrant, Clear Cut Conservation from Loughborough, was awarded the DART 'Most Inspiring' Trophy for their work to improve and maintain a section of canal in the town, proving that not every IYN project involves flowers or gardens.

After such a great year, with so many highlights in it, I would only note one further pinnacle, the increasing numbers involved in the EMiB Best School Garden competition and the four winners – Gosberton House School (Spalding), Blidworth Oaks Primary School (Blidworth), Holy Trinity Catholic Academy (Newark) and the overall winner, Boston West Academy (Boston); there seems little doubt that the future is something to look forward to if these inspirational young people are anything to go by.

Next year we are looking forward to seeing the success of six EMiB national representatives – Market Bosworth, Uppingham, Belper, Oadby & Wigston and two 'first-time' entrants, Littleover and Mansfield BID - in RHS Britain in Bloom, for which the date and venue of the Awards Ceremony is yet to be announced

To conclude, thanks to all our participants, judges, assessors and sponsors for their efforts in 2016 and I wish you all another outstanding year. As always I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in 2017, which begins with the Biennial Seminar in Leicester on February 16th. Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

Jeff Bates,

Chairman, East Midlands in Bloom

PS Please see details of our NEW category on p 13 and our 2017 Seminar on p 14!

Blooming Boston!

Since its formation in 2012 the Boston in Bloom Partnership has ensured that the Bloom entry not only celebrates local features that we are proud of, such as the Memorial Gardens, but also demonstrates development from year to year, particularly focusing on the transformation of neglected areas of the town. Improvements to prominent areas are important because they demonstrate to the public, external funders and potential business sponsors that Bloom is serious about making change and adding value.

The green space next to B&M store first came to our attention around two years ago following complaints from the public and elected Members. Forming part of the busy thoroughfare between Boston railway station and St. Botolph's footbridge, and affording a main pedestrian access to Boston Stump and the town centre, the B&M area had become sadly neglected. This was, in part, due to complications over land ownership. A pro-active approach was adopted in negotiations with the landowners' agents, resulting in the widening of the path and removal of some trees. Discussions then followed with Transported, the Boston and South Holland arts organisation, who agreed to commission landscaping improvements from Jeni Cairns (an RHS Gold Medal award winner) and colourful wall banners and vinyls from Zaneta Belasicova to brighten up the area. Designs were based on feedback from community events and workshops. The enhancement was shaped by Boston Borough Council, Boston in Bloom and Witham Central and Carlton Road Neighbourhood Action Group who had nominated the area as an On Your Doorstep project. Practical support was provided by HMP North Sea Camp inmates who helped clear the raised beds and mulch areas. The icing on the cake was the creation of a vibrant community mosaic. Inspired by British artist Eduardo Paolozzi, the mosaic features the five porticos of Boston rail station. Artists Carol Parker and Fiona Gurney worked with Memory Lane, a local club for people with dementia and their carers, to create the mosaic to raise awareness of dementia. As a finishing touch, local company Boston Bulbs donated free bulbs to add more colour in the spring.

The original project has encouraged partners to expand their horizons beyond the B&M green space to tackle the surrounding area. Plans are now underway to re-plant the police station raised beds and to install public art, made from recycled cans, alongside the river bank path.

At a time of diminishing resources, the B&M project highlights the vital role of partnership working in delivering projects. The focus on partnership working and commitment to developing the Boston in Bloom entry each year are, we believe, strong features which the judge recognised in our entry along with growing support from local businesses and improved coherence of planting. The resulting Judges Award 2016 for the 'transformation of the B&M open space' was well received. Thanks go to Transported, Boston Borough Council, Witham Central and Carlton Road Neighbourhood Group, HMP North Sea Camp, Memory Lane, Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Big Local and numerous volunteers for their support.

Ian Farmer,
Boston in Bloom



Earl Shilton in Bloom

In its third year in the RHS Britain in Bloom Competition, Earl Shilton has again received an award for its entry in the East Midlands region. The volunteers were thrilled to receive a Silver Gilt Award for the second year running along with a special Judges Award presented to Shirley Martin-Abel for her work with the residents at Bethel & Bethesda Residential Home. Once again, Elisavet Kyriacou of Chris's Fish & Chip Shop was awarded a Gold Award and 'Best Retail/Commercial Premises' in the whole of the East Midlands. The Chip Shop garden is a beautiful oasis of colourful plants and flowers delighting the customers as they pick up their food and sit for a while on the outdoor benches admiring the displays. The display centred on this year's theme of 'turning grey spaces green' and the volunteers worked hard to transform the town into a colourful oasis of blooms in planters, over 100 hanging baskets, and for the first time this year our new permanent stone planters took pride of place along the main street. We have strived to improve our score this year across all areas including community involvement, biodiversity and sustainability. Bat boxes, owl boxes, hedgehog baths, swift nesting boxes and bug hotels have all helped to increase the amount of wildlife in the town. The 'bug hotel' chain continues to expand with one being commissioned for a nearby infant school! The team was especially proud of a garden they created at the local doctor's surgery for the Dialysis patients. During their four hours of treatment they now have many interesting and visually stimulating opportunities for discussion. For the first time, the group ran two very successful competitions, 'Tallest Sunflower' for the children and 'Best Front Garden' for the local residents. We were delighted to receive over 80 entries! Roses were planted in the QEII Hall Field Park, a three tiered birthday cake planter was constructed and a Queen Elizabeth 'EIRR' raised bed was planted up to commemorate The Queen's goth Birthday.

Various community groups have been involved in this year's entry, including Community House, United Reformed Church, St Simon & St Jude Church Brigade and the Pelican Playgroup. Residents near a local jitty transformed the thoroughfare for the benefit of people walking in to the town. Pink Ladybird Crafts 'yarnbombed' the posts outside their shop with knitted flowers providing an interesting focal point.

Support has also been received from the Afternoon and Evening WI Groups in the town. The judges were especially taken with how the residents of Bethel & Bethesda Residential Home had been given a new lease of life by Shirley Martin-Abel of 'Growing Futures'. She volunteered her time to begin a gardening club at the home with planned activities promoting the residents health and well-being including growing salad and vegetables which the kitchen staff then prepared for meal times. The activities were a regular talking point for the residents and visitors alike.

We would like to thank the townsfolk, local businesses, community groups and our supporters for helping us with our success in 2016.

To find out more about Earl Shilton in Bloom, please visit their Facebook Page or email earlshiltoninbloom@hotmail.com

Bev Hockton,
Earl Shilton in Bloom



Never Give Up

This is a very special message for all you hard working volunteers trying hard to achieve the very best for your town or Village and, ideally, to bring back one of those wonderful prestigious awards that can be bestowed upon you by East Midlands in Bloom.

In 2012 three hardworking ladies in Burgh Le Marsh tried really hard to make some improvements in the Town having entered the EMIB competition.

Having tried very hard, sadly they felt that they had achieved nothing as no award on that occasion was forthcoming.

What happened after that?
NOTHING FOR TWO YEARS.

In 2015 the EMIB letter hit the desk, once again, to our Town Clerk who passed this on to our Town's Mayor, Councillor Neil Cooper. I joined the Town Council in May of that year and Councillor Cooper then asked me to give it a go.

My positive thought processes began to emerge. "We never got anywhere last year, so we can't do any worse this year" I said to myself.

I needed help and I was very pleased to grab an associate of mine Councillor Michael Martin.

The first thing I did was to grab hold of the previous results sheet and find out more about it. To my delight I found comments made by the Judges as to where we went wrong and how we can improve things.

THAT WAS IT! – EUREKA!

Focus on improving the areas that the Judges have highlighted.

In the short time given, we did just that. I felt that we had put too much emphasis on failure and no attention was being given to the important comments made by the Judges.

It's great to be praised but we needed to concentrate on **where the improvements were needed**. So that is what we did in the remaining time allowed. A big effort in a short period of time.



We were so busy doing so many other things that we never got around to attending the subsequent awards ceremony that generally takes place in September.

Our Town Clerk, Angela, passed a letter to me from EMIB and it read "... sorry you were unable to attend the awards ceremony etc etc...I am pleased to advise you that you received a BRONZE award."

It is impossible for me to put into words how I felt having read that letter.

The Town Council and the whole Town were lifted up to a new level.

This award spurred us on to greater heights and greater efforts resulting in a **Silver** award this year with the great help from my key volunteers Eileen Jupp and Anne Moorkite. But there's more.

The special award for "**The Most Improved Entry**" also went to Burgh Le Marsh, which really knocked us sideways. Each time, all we did was to focus on where the Judges recommended improvements. They don't just Judge – they advise. Please take advantage of their knowledge and never give up and **Good Luck** with your next entry.



Cllr David Fenton
Burgh Le Marsh



Clear Cut Conservation

The winning nomination for the DART Training "Most Inspiring It's Your Neighbourhood" 2016

The Clear Cut Conservation team consist of three men and a lady, captained by Barrie and are an amazingly efficient and passionate group who are responsible for keeping a 2 mile section of the canal in Loughborough litter free. All multi task and can steer the boat.

They take great care not to disturb wildlife and associated habitat and are mindful of established and new nesting sites along the water's edge as well as water lily beds and other flora whilst busy with their work.

Extraordinary items have been removed from the canal using grappling irons including 56 bikes, 14 shopping trolleys, a full safe, toilet, needles and general bottles and food wrappings which are thrown into the canal.

The cleanliness of the canal waterway is entirely their achievement and their efforts have indeed educated its users to reduce the amount of litter over time. They have struck up a tremendous rapport with canal users, neighbours and visitors, evident as I joined them for their weekly litter pick where they were greeted by residents, other boat users and towpath walkers along their route.

They work closely with the Peter le Marchant Trust who offer boat trips for the disabled and the Canal and River Trust who have donated their litter pickers. Apart from occasional stalls on the local market and promoting their cause by "modelling" for Debenhams, they are totally self sustaining, including fuel and boat repairs.

They pointed out early on that they had no flowers on board. What they do have is a sustainable, worthwhile project, which has some unpleasant sides to it but has stood the test of time through their enthusiasm. They enable the canal bank to sustain its wildlife without danger from harmful debris and canal side residents are proud to enjoy their beautiful gardens where they can sit awhile against the backdrop of a clean and safe waterway.

Well done Barrie and his crew for the conservation of "Your Neighbourhood"

Helen Burgess, IYN Assessor



Duston in Bloom 2016 – Bronze Award Winners!!

Duston Parish Council decided to enter Bloom in April 2016. With only 4 months until judging the decision was taken that the first year would be "low key" and make improvements to existing initiatives whilst adding additional community engagement projects and concentrating efforts on the newly secured community allotment (The Grow Together Allotment) The Parish Council had in place many bloom aspects, for several years they have provided local businesses with hanging baskets, planted up twice a year with spring/summer and autumn/winter flowers, usually in a theme relevant for that year (2016 was red, white and blue in honour of Her Majesty the Queens 90th Birthday).

To build on this the Parish Council engaged with the local community to carry out some planting at its two community centres, with Hopping Hill Primary School and the Cotswold WI helping at the newly refurbished Community Centre and Caring Kindergartens, Perkins Florists and the Youth Group at the St Luke's Centre. With a donation for some planters and plants given from one of the Borough Councillors. Additional smaller projects took place with the Youth Group holding a litter pick and a tidy up of the Community Policing Team's Police Box garden.

The Grow Together Allotment was a large focus for the Parish Council in entering Bloom, with the Youth Worker taking the lead and working in Partnership with Voluntary Impact. The allotment saw many generous donations from local businesses including Travis Perkins, Perkins Florists, Golbys, Men in Sheds, local groups and some of the other lovely allotment holders. The allotment has been a huge success and has achieved amazing results in a small space of time.

The Parish Council were thrilled to receive a Bronze Award in September as well as the Judges Award for the allotment and hope to now build on this success and look forward to Duston in Bloom 2017!!!

Amy Holt

Duston Parish Council



Blidworth in Bloom

Since 2011 we have worked very hard to get some good results every year and 2016 has been our best, with Silver Gilt for our small town – though everybody still calls it our village! Our goal is to get all our community involved, which they do young and old.

The Blidworth Oaks infant school won Gold and 'Best Fruit and Vegetable Garden' in the East Midlands in Bloom School garden competition this year; we also had great help from the Brownies who dug, planted and watered the Library beds with the help of their brothers, sisters and parents – they were rewarded with a Gold Medal from the Parish Council.

The new planters outside the Leisure Centre have not only looked nice and colourful but have also stopped cars parking on the frontage, making it safer for pedestrians and also keeping that junction clear to see traffic on the busy road.

The War Memorial, which Christine has been looking after for six years now, gained a Judges Award from the EMiB Judges; Christine says it has been a pleasure working up there and keeping it looking nice all the year round. At the time of writing it had just been planted up with bulbs and flowers ready for Remembrance Day, which attracts between 350 and 450 people for the service each year.

Blidworth in Bloom doesn't end when the Judges have been and our flowers have died; instead everything just starts again with the winter planting and making our plans for next year – and now we're aiming for Gold.

Christine Dabbs Blidworth



One of the planting groups from Blidworth Oaks at the Leisure Centre having just cleared the ground ready for planting.

The Children from Blidworth Oaks Primary school, winners of this year's East Midlands in Bloom best School Fruit and Vegetable garden, have not only been working hard on their school grounds this year they have been helping out with the villages entry as well.

The school achieved its gold award, with almost every child in the school involved in the schools extensive gardening programme. The school is lucky enough to have beautiful grounds, which over the years have been developed and now include an allotment, fruit garden, poly-tunnel, chicken shed, forest learning area and an Eco garden where the schools green flag waves proudly. This year children were involved in building raised planting beds and setting up a multi-use composting centre. Plans for next year include bring the ICT suite to the garden by installing motion activated cameras to catch wildlife in the eco garden!

Moving outside the school and into the village children from across the school have been involved in looking after a flower bed in front of the Leisure Centre, which lies on the main road at the northern entrance to the village. First designing then clearing, planting and tending the garden which features headstocks from the former village colliery which closed in 1989, children involved have learnt not only about gardening but also about the heritage of their village. Members of the parish council helped children pick out the plants to be used at a local nursery and also joined in with the planting.

2016 also marked the schools 90th anniversary which coincided with the Queens 90th birthday and to celebrate both events the local parish council invited the school to help plant some new trees on an ancient piece of land known locally as the Bull piece. Once again children were able to learn about the heritage of their village whilst helping to provide a peaceful and tranquil area to be enjoyed by the whole community.

For 2017 the school and the Parish council will again be working together on projects across the village bringing together the youngest, and more senior members of the community to work together to celebrate our village and its heritage whilst helping the village look beautiful...hopefully helping Blidworth to achieve a gold in the 2017 awards!

Phil Johnson

Blidworth Oaks Primary School



Children from Blidworth Oaks with the Parish council planting trees and setting out a new bench on the Bull piece for the Queens 90th Birthday and the school's 90th anniversary.

Golden Loughborough

TO MISQUOTE the words of the much-missed David Bowie, it really has been a "Golden Year" for Loughborough in Bloom and undoubtedly our busiest. It has also been one of our most rewarding.

We have seen no less than three different sets of judges in town from East Midlands in Bloom, Britain in Bloom and the International Communities in Bloom. Each of the visits were warm, entertaining and presented their own different sets of challenges.

Judging time can be fretful of course, but on each occasion our visitors went out of their way to make us feel relaxed and hopefully we reciprocated!

It was our first ever entry into the International Communities in Bloom and although we didn't get a medal, we are very proud to have been awarded a Five Bloom rating (A total evaluation score of between 82 to 83.9 per cent). And I'm especially pleased that the Forest Road Green Belt gardeners were given a special international mention. The same group was awarded Green Flag status not so long ago as well. Brilliant stuff.

Absolutely hats off to all those people, volunteers and workers alike, who have delivered fantastic results for the community.

I have my own highlights for this year and none more so than the fact that the town's Queen's Park won the TDP Limited East Midlands In Bloom Award for Horticultural Excellence within Parks. Like many others of its kind, Queen's Park, as its name suggests, has Victorian origins, but it is not stuck in the past and manages to blend the modern with the more traditional.

It is always beautiful, but this year it went one better if that was possible.

Contractors Quadron in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council and the Friends group excelled themselves with experimentation of the planting of the beds.

And it has been a wonder to behold.

It was also excellent to see council contractors Quadron and Serco given an East Midlands in Bloom judges award for their continued support of Loughborough. People sometimes ask how do we keep going in these times of austerity

Well, a lot is down to the goodwill of such people as Quadron and Serco and other businesses in the area, through the Business Improvement District and Loughborough University.

Of course we couldn't do it without all our wonderful volunteers, including our excellent Mike Jones, who has just stepped down from his lead role as community chairman, but whom we hope will still be around in Bloom for a while yet.

However lastly I want to make special mention to the work carried out by our local authorities, especially Charnwood Borough Council.

Council workers are often overlooked.

Folk will turn round and say: "Well it's their job isn't it?"

Well, up to a point maybe, but certainly not to the huge extent that our borough council has performed. Above and beyond.

The town owes our officers, workers and councillors a lot of thanks and I'm sure the same can be Bloom-wide over.

Andy Rush, Chairman Loughborough in Bloom
And Editor, Loughborough Echo Newspaper

EMiB Note: Andy was given a Community Champions Award at the Britain in Bloom Awards in October – well done Andy!



Loughborough in Bloom stalwarts, Harry and Pat Cook of Forest Road Green Belt Gardeners, supported by Charnwood Borough Council and Quadron Services Ltd, have been awarded Loughborough's first Community Green Flag by the organisers, Keep Britain Tidy. Despite Loughborough's East Midlands and Britain in Bloom successes in recent years and the award of mainstream Green Flags to the town's Queens Park and the Outwoods, it is the first time that a local community Group has been honoured in this way.

The front of their house, adjacent to the busy Forest Road Roundabout, has long been a profusion of colour for passers-by to admire, but Harry and Pat have now extended their efforts across the Bridge over the Wood Brook and along the length of the Green Belt. Apart from the colourful Summer Displays, these also include extensive Wildflower Areas, huge amounts of Spring Bulb Planting, Willow Weaving, Carved Mushroom Seats, a Fairy Trail for Children, Bird Boxes, Hedgehog Houses, a Bug Hotel, a Bee Hive and much, much more!

In addition, with the agreement of Leicestershire County Council, Harry has also taken over the management of the centre of the roundabout itself, which looks a picture throughout the year.

Harry and Pat involve the local community in all that they do, and Groups of Local Scouts, the Glebe House Gardening Group, and Mountfields Lodge & Hardwick House Schools are just a few of the groups that have worked on the site under Harry's guidance.

With typical modesty, Harry says, "We just enjoy gardening and if it gives pleasure to people passing by, we are pleased to brighten up their day. The Green Flag is not just for us, it is for everyone who has contributed."

Littleover in Bloom

Littleover in Bloom was born out of a challenge.

In 2008 recently retired, I joined what was then our newly formed Littleover Neighbourhood Board. Derby City Council split Derby in to 17 segments, Neighbourhood Boards were created, these were led by local councillors to give the residents in each area the chance to advise the councillors on what we would like to happen in the community we lived. I felt really excited about helping to make a difference.

During one meeting, we were discussing what we could do to improve our area, I found myself saying, 'we have old brackets on the lampposts, which to my knowledge have not been used for quite some time, could the councillors organise to hang baskets on them', the retort was no, but you could! That conversation seems a very long time ago.

That was the first year we entered Littleover in the East Midlands in Bloom competition. We were a small group, who we were very nervous, and did all the wrong things, like showing the judges about a dozen gardens, both front and back, and presenting them with hoards of paperwork, that we had produced during the year, but to our amazement we won an amazing Silver Award. We were hooked.

Over the years we have made connections with all the schools in the area, the Brownies, Guides, Cubs, Scouts and Rainbows, and have managed to get them all involved. We also invite the Friends of Littleover Parks, the Littleover Historical Society, the churches, and the pubs to join us, and even managed to cajole the local shopkeepers in to entering in to a Best shop window display each year.

We have had our ups and downs, losing key working members, as they have felt they have really had enough, and couldn't manage to help anymore, also experiencing, that just as you manage to get a group of young keen gardeners together they move on to University. We have had our lampposts exchanged and have been refused permission to replace our brackets, we eventually won that battle. I have been frogmarched off a traffic Island for gardening, and rebuked for digging up the grass verge, but we have had such pleasure from wonderful blooms and triumphant youngsters who have shown their vegetables with pride at our horticultural shows.

We did come to an almighty low at the beginning of this year, having a deficit in the coffers, no sponsorship, no Neighbourhood Board, and most of our team were unable to garden for one reason or another, we considered not entering the EMIB competition. However we persevered, were able to raise enough cash through sponsorship and donations, and managed to persuade a couple more volunteers to join us.

At the presentation ceremony in September, as the Urban community candidates stood waiting for the announcements, I jokingly said, 'I will stand at the front of the group, as Littleover is always bottom'. One by one, each community group were called out to go up on stage, until suddenly I realised, I was the only one left, I panicked thinking to myself, they have forgotten Littleover, and then it finally dawned on me, that we had won in our category. It was with great emotion and tears in my eyes, that I stepped up on the stage to receive our prize.

My mum was a superb gardener, I hope she was looking down and joined me in my delight.

I am not a great gardener, I work hard and enjoy the rewards that gardening and working with the community gives. I truly believe that, Greener spaces means Greener lives.

It is with thanks to our gardening team, both past and present, who have worked with myself and my long standing friend Jane Arguile, who has been consistent with gardening advice, in achieving; Littleover in Bloom is the Best Urban Community Category Winner 2016! Hurrah!

Jan Jackson

Chairman, Littleover in Bloom



It's Your Neighbourhood in Nottingham

New faces for IYN assessment team

Here in Nottingham we've been focusing on neighbourhoods and we were pleased to sign up 50 IYN groups this summer. It's a lovely task to look forward to, but that's a lot of groups to assess! For the past few years we've recruited assessors from the BTEC Horticulture course at Nottingham Trent University's Brackenhurst campus, and this year we decided to widen this volunteering opportunity to include Nottingham City Council staff and keen gardeners from the community. It's been a great success, with a team of 25 Nottingham assessors of all ages working in pairs to share the workload. We've had lots of positive feedback from the IYN groups and also from our volunteer assessors, who have made new friends, boosted their confidence and picked up great new skills to enhance their CVs. The comments we received from the assessors included:

"Great gardens, great enthusiasm, great people. It's been a treat to meet the people and see what they are doing."

"We really did enjoy ourselves and met some wonderful people."

"We would love to work together again and perhaps see some new gardens. We have really enjoyed working together and have visited each other's gardens as well."

There are opportunities across the region so if you are interested in joining in next year, just contact Jeff and Irene at East Midlands in Bloom. The most important things are a positive attitude, the ability to engage people, an interest in community gardening and the environment, and the ability to signpost to other services/partners as appropriate. In Nottingham it's meant a commitment of a couple of days, with an extra half-day for a training session with East Midlands in Bloom.

Julie Walker, Nottingham in Bloom

Meet one of our volunteer IYN assessors:

My name is Jordan. At 19 I'm one of the younger assessors for the Royal Horticultural Society's "It's Your Neighbourhood" award.

I wanted to be an assessor because growing up, I was part of a community garden. The management of the community garden let me use a space, about 6 by 20 feet, to grow some vegetables. I was told about the Nottingham in Bloom gardening competition in 2008 (when I was aged 11) and I decided to enter. On my first year I received 'Silver Gilt' which I was very pleased with. In 2009 I received a 'Gold Award' for young gardener for a different plot, around 15 by 40 feet. I was over the moon with this. In 2010 the plot received Nottingham in Bloom's 'Gold Award' for the young gardener category again and in 2011 it received '1st prize' in the Nottingham City Homes Best Garden competition for young gardener category. The memories of these gardening competitions are some of the best of my childhood. They have also helped me decide on what sort of career I want, and a gardening career is what I'm aiming for.

Earlier on this year I thought about my years entering the gardening competitions and it brought back good memories, but since the allotment plot is no longer available to me, I haven't been able to enter any adult categories (the soil at home is heavy clay so I can't grow much in my home garden, it's also quite shady). I thought about how I could relive those memories, so I decided to ask Julie from Nottingham City Council if I could be an assessor for any gardening related competitions that were running. I was informed about IYN and decided to give it a try. I have seen four different projects in total and I have met some great people. It's very good seeing how gardening can bring a community together, whether it's an immaculate garden where prize vegetables and fruit is grown or simply a flowerbed that everyone owns. It's also great how these projects can change people's lives, improve a local area and bring people out of their shell. I have really enjoyed being an assessor this year and I will certainly be doing it again next year



Jordan Marriott
Nottingham

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM DIARY DATES

Thu 2nd Feb	Closing date for EMiB Seminar reservation forms and AGM nominations
Thu 16th Feb	EMiB Seminar , Leicester City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FZ AGM Venue as above 3pm approx..
Fri 28th April	Closing date for 'In Bloom' and 'It's Your Neighbourhood' entry forms
Fri 12th May	Closing date for EMiB Special Award entries (<i>Frank Constable MBE Award, Best Hotel/Pub Garden or Display, Best Retail/Commercial Premises</i>)
Fri 2nd June	Closing date for EMiB Best School Garden Award entry forms
Mon 3rd – Fri 14th July	EMiB judging period
July & August	EMiB It's Your Neighbourhood assessment period
Wed 13th Sept	EMiB Awards Presentation Boston, Lincolnshire

2017 SEMINAR

16th February, Leicester City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FZ

This is our major biennial event, which is open to all interested parties, whether experienced, new, or potential entrants with special emphasis on how to improve your entry. There is no obligation to enter the campaign by attending and it is a superb opportunity to interact with other delegates and exchange and share ideas.

There will also be an update on the National Bloom developments, with the continued theme of Green Streets: Better Lives (and also the Great War, of course). There will, of course, be opportunities to meet with Judges, IYN Assessors, other 'Bloomers' and to talk to some of our important sponsors, who will bring with them some of the products that are so helpful in brightening up our communities.

The cost is £7 per person, to cover the cost of refreshments and lunch. To ensure your place/s, please return your completed reservation form (see page 14 of this newsletter), or download a form from our website: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk by **Thursday February 2nd** to EMiB Secretary Irene Bates* (see address below).

If you were a Bloom or IYN entrant in 2016 we cordially invite you to stay for the AGM which follows the last session after lunch.

AGM

This will start after lunch at approximately 3 pm. We really would love to see each community that entered the EMiB Competition in 2016 to attend the AGM. Please don't be shy, it is an opportunity for your group to be represented. Any nominations for the *executive committee* must be received by Irene Bates not less than 14 days before the AGM (i.e. by Thursday 2nd February 2017). Please write with your nomination/s to:

Irene Bates, East Midlands in Bloom Secretary, 64 Chaddesden Park Road, Derby DE21 6HD

Email: info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk **Tel:** 01332 679598

www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

CALL FOR NEW BLOOM JUDGES AND IYN ASSESSORS

We always need more Bloom Judges and It's Your Neighborhood Assessors. You don't need to be qualified in horticulture, and training will be given. Please contact us if you are interested or come to the Seminar where we can discuss what is involved. Mileage costs are covered and you would be part of a very friendly team!

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM SPONSORS 2016



Amberol (*EMiB Silver Sponsor*) Sponsor all our city categories and also the John Williamson trophy for the BID (Business Improvement District) category. Please read their article on the following page.



Amethyst Horticulture (*EMiB Silver Sponsor*) Sponsor the entire Towns categories, i.e. Small, Medium and Large Towns. Please read their article on the following page.



Barcham Trees sponsor a tree to the value of £200 for the East Midlands in Bloom Best New Permanent Landscaping Award.



DART Training sponsors of the RHS/EMiB It's Your Neighbourhood with the Most Inspiring IYN Entrant Award. This year the winners are **Clear Cut Conservation** from Loughborough.



John and Andrew Constable, sponsors of the Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden.

Moulton College (*EMiB bronze sponsor*) of the East Midlands in Bloom Best School Garden Special Award 2016.



Taylors Bulbs is again pleased to support the East Midlands in Bloom Most Improved Entrant Award.



TDP Ltd (*EMiB bronze sponsor*) of the TDP Ltd. East Midlands in Bloom Award for Horticultural Excellence within Parks. We are pleased to welcome them on board this year.



The Art Department is one of the nation's leading graphics providers with over 25 year's digital print experience. They sponsor EMiB by providing the plaques for the Best Pub/Hotel garden or Display; the Best Retail/Commercial Premises; and the Best School Garden Special Award.

There are still many sponsorship opportunities available for 2017, e.g. the Villages, Coastal and Urban Community categories and various other Special and Discretionary Awards. To find out more, please contact our Sponsorship Secretary Chris Beal on: chrisbeal.meadowsidehorticulture@tesco.net or give us a call.

FROM OUR SPONSORS



Creating classic displays with modern materials

Patience Atkinson-Gregory of Amberol explains how to combine the contemporary and the traditional to bring a touch of class to floral displays.

Value for money is an important consideration for any In Bloom group and so it is important to ensure that the products you use – from plants to planters – are fit for purpose.

As manufacturers of self-watering planters, we are often asked our opinion on the best material for a container. The truth is, they all have their own benefits and drawbacks. Terracotta creates a sense of warmth and colour but is prone to cracking; wood looks attractive but doesn't wear well and metal brings a contemporary twist, may rust after time.

That's why we choose to make our self-watering containers from recyclable polyethylene. It's practical, sustainable, robust and affordable. It's also versatile and can be made to look like a whole range of materials.

Creating the wow factor with 'wood' and 'stone'

So, if you are looking to create a display with the wow factor, or planning a display near a heritage site, church or historical building, containers that combine the beauty of natural materials with the practicality of modern materials might tick all the boxes.

Amberol's self-watering stone trough has an authentic texture painstakingly modelled on a classic stone trough to look just like the real thing. Weighing a fraction of stone containers, they are both portable and durable, allowing you to create stunning floral displays with a strong sense of heritage to complement historical surroundings perfectly.

Our self-watering barrels are modelled on traditional hogshead barrels, used for making whiskey – but only the most eagle-eyed would be able to tell that they are actually made of polyethylene. The barrels come in three sizes: large, medium and the half barrel - perfect for placing against walls and railings or smaller spaces. One of our most popular products, they create an authentic natural impact with none of the disadvantages of wood so you get value for money – and stunning displays.

And it's never too early to get planting. We think it's hard to beat a floral display of colourful spring flowers after a grey winter. Year round displays are also looked on favourably by Britain in Bloom judges. So, if you haven't already done so, plant your spring bulbs now before the early morning frosts set in. Tulips and varieties such as Narcissus Poeticus can be planted in December – and are often cheaper to buy around now. Here are our top tips for bulb planting:

- Choose your bulbs carefully. Look for firm, healthy bulbs and plant within a week or two of purchase before they start sprouting
- Find the right place to plant your bulbs - containers are ideal, offering a sheltered space for spring flowers to grow.
- To root well, bulbs need the right amount of water. Too wet and the bulbs will rot; too dry and they will not root properly. It's also advisable to soak the bulbs before planting. Using self-watering planters ensures that bulbs get the optimal amount of water to ensure growth.

For more information about Amberol's products, email sales@amberol.co.uk or call 01773 830 930.



Britain in Bloom - It's not just about the flowers

Originally initiated in 1964 by the British Tourist Board to beautify our towns and villages with flowers, Britain in Bloom has grown from its humble beginnings into one of the largest community led organisations in the country. Anyone involved in the campaign, whether the largest City or smallest parish, now fully appreciates that it's not just about the flowers. Community members are willing and encouraged to embrace the Britain in Bloom ethos, taking responsibility for our public areas and environment, they work tirelessly together to transform areas, by 'greening, cleaning and generally caring.'

Well known Local Government supplier, Amethyst Horticulture, sponsor East Midlands in Bloom as well as other regional in Bloom groups, they specialize in the supply of plants, hanging baskets and high impact floral displays, managing director Nigel Fox comments'

'Through our sponsorship of 'In Bloom', I have had the pleasure of meeting numerous campaign members, and all should be commended for their efforts, they are enhancing our communities for the enjoyment of all'. I have seen The Britain in Bloom campaign really expand over recent years, with Councils and communities now working together to enhance our environments.

It is still fortunately recognised that the simple, much appreciated and inexpensive town centre hanging baskets and floral displays play an important part in transforming our urban areas. The inclusion of town centre floral displays, makes a town centre look cared for, it encourages a sense of pride, respect and wellbeing. If we can build on this, through the In Bloom, it will in turn encourage a more united community, increase visitors, business and investment. It really is about much more than just the flowers!'

Amethyst Horticulture has developed a range of 'Self Watering' containers with integral reservoirs, these have been designed from a horticultural perspective to sustain large and attractive displays, as cost effectively as possible. The containers only require watering once or twice a week, consequently the savings made on maintenance of a basket in the first season goes a long way to covering its initial cost. The company can also offer a complete growing, planting and maintenance service. They also hire high impact ready planted displays, ideal for instantly enhancing the 'greyst' of urban areas.

For further information on Amethyst products and services, please visit their web site www.amethyst-horticulture.co.uk, or telephone sales 01795 522828

SPECIAL AWARDS and NEW TOWNS CATEGORY

EMiB Best School Garden Competition and Winners 2016

Our thanks go to Graham Lamb who again co-ordinated the best school garden judging and we welcomed new judge Malcolm Brown to join the existing team of Janet Lewis and Chrissie Dale. This year Graham has been able to simplify the marking sheet and reports, as those of you who have re-entered will be aware this year. This is with the aim of making it easier for teachers and judges to interpret the marking system. The standard of the gardens continue to improve, aided by the advice of our dedicated school garden judges. The judges continue to be very impressed with the enthusiasm of pupils, teachers and helpers and the high standards of the school gardens. It was very pleasing to see most winning schools represented at the Presentation of Awards at our splendid venue at the John Fretwell Sporting Complex in Mansfield.

The overall winning school was Boston West Academy in Boston, Lincolnshire. The Best School Garden for Wildlife was Holy Trinity Catholic Academy in Newark; the Best School Ornamental Garden was Gosberton House School in Spalding; and the Best School Fruit & Vegetable Garden was Blidworth Oaks Primary School in Blidworth, near Mansfield. Congratulations to all for their splendid results!

The number of schools that can enter relate to the Bloom category; please see below. Schools that are not in a Bloom entry area can also enter independently as long as they do not exceed the allocation below:

Small Village, Village & Large Village - **one** school
Small Town, Town, Large Town - **two** schools
Small City, City, Large City - **three** schools

This competition continues to encourage gardening in schools and is now in its 11th year! Schools can enter the competition through their local Bloom group. If there isn't a local Bloom group, they can still enter independently by filling in the entry form on the East Midlands in Bloom website, and returning by post or via info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

You can also find out if there is a local active group by enquiring from the same email address.

Schools who are following the RHS school gardens programme are also very welcome to enter. The aim of the judging is to "encourage and support the quality and development of gardens and encourage student involvement"- and you get an award too! The closing date for entries in 2017 is: **Friday 2nd June.**

Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden (visible to the public)

We had a good number of superb entries again in 2016, and our late President Frank Constable's sons, John and Andrew are kindly continuing the award in their father's memory. This year the winner is Pat Beasley's garden at 60 Saffron Road, South Wigston, Leicester.

We encourage you to enter many more gardens into this award in 2016, maybe hold a competition of your own in your area to discover your 'best' to put forward?

Once again, may we kindly request that you help our judges to help you by submitting the relevant **entry forms** to us with details completed by the closing date (this applies to all 3 Special Awards). If this is not done please do not assume judges will have the time to judge your unexpected Special Award entry on your agreed Judging Day, as they will have carefully planned their itinerary beforehand and may have to be at another place for a specific time. Can we request that if you withdraw your entry for any reason, please let us know as this will help us to keep our information accurate. The closing date for all three of these awards is **Friday 12th May 2017.**

Best Pub/Hotel Garden or display

This year's winner is The Quorn Grange Hotel, Quorn, Leicestershire.

Best Retail/Commercial Premises

Was won by Earl Shilton's Chris's Fish & Chips.

New Category for 2017!

After trials in three Bloom regions, the Britain in Bloom Federation has offered regions the opportunity to run a new category in Bloom – Town / City Centre. Our November Committee meeting approved us to offer this in the East Midlands in 2017.

This will take into account the central area of the town or city, and is primarily intended for communities that do not take part in Bloom at the moment. It has similarities to the existing Business Improvement District category, but without there being a need to have a BID in place.

A working group of judges from regions who operate the town/city centre category are agreeing the judging criteria, which should be available in January 2017, so we expect to give you full information at the February Seminar. We feel that this new category will be particularly useful to those of our towns with a Town Centre Manager in place, but where there is yet to be developed a Bloom project which embraces the wider environment of the town.

I'm sure you know places just like this – if so, do tell them about the category, or let Irene know and we'll follow this up at the first opportunity.

Subject to us being able to run the category in 2017, the first nominations to have the chance to be put forward into RHS Britain in Bloom will be for the 2018 National Campaign.

To be held at Leicester City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FZ on Thursday 16th February.

Registration from 10.00 am for 10.30 am start. Please use city car parks or travel by rail.

To reserve your place/s please complete and return this form BY **Thursday 2nd February**

Send to: *Irene Bates, EMIB Secretary, 64 Chaddesden Park Road, Derby DE21 6HD*

or by e-mail to: info@eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk

I wish to reserve: places @ £7 per person (to include refreshments and buffet lunch). Please inform us of any special dietary requirements.

Name/s of delegate/s: (please include any work roles)

1.

2.

3.

4.

Please continue on reverse of slip if more places are required

Representing

(name of entry, LA or community group, if applicable)

Contact Address

E-mail address:Telephone:

I enclose a cheque (made payable to East Midlands in Bloom) for £

Signed.....Date.....



*With Best Seasonal Wishes to You All
And here's to a
Blooming Good 2017!*