



EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM

From the Chairman...

East Midlands in Bloom continues to develop and strengthen as more and more communities and groups become involved in this remarkable community-based campaign, and once again we have record numbers participating this year. 57 entries took part in the 'main Bloom', with first time entries from Brigg, Breaston, Tattershall Thorpe, Desborough and Eastoft Gardening Club all distinguishing themselves with very good reports on how the judges found them. It's also worth recording that the number of Gold Awards reached twenty for the first time ever, showing that quality as well as quantity continues to rise.

We had good numbers in the Best School Garden – though I do hope that this number can increase substantially, as we should all be working hard to get young people involved in both gardening and community activity – and record entries in our 'special' categories for pubs and hotels, businesses and front gardens. Standards across these was also up, with increased numbers of Gold Awards in all sections.

It's Your Neighbourhood had a record year, with 179 community-based projects visited by the dedicated assessor team during July to September; this is growth of more than 10% on last year. Again, standards of entry continue to increase, with high numbers of Level 4 and 5 achievements being recognised. It's worth remembering that we only began to offer IYN (or as it was originally known, The Neighbourhood Awards) eleven years ago, with six entries in that first year. Part of the success of IYN is down to a catchy title – for which we must thank our EMiB Secretary, Irene, who came up with the name at a meeting of what was then called 'Regions and Nations' 7 years ago. By the way, on a 'national' scale East Midlands has the third highest number of IYN entrants amongst the Bloom regions – another success for all of you wonderful Bloomers!

Our Bloom year began with an excellent Seminar at Leicester City Hall (thanks to Leicester City Council for offering us this gorgeous venue), with informative presentations by the Bloom team from Congleton in Bloom, from Libby Goodacre of the RHS on School Gardening, Wales in Bloom Chairman Jim



PS Please see important information on p 6 and our 2018 New Entrants Workshop on p 10

Goodwin on 'self-assessment' and an enlivening presentation from our own Jo Preston on IYN. This set us all off on another busy gardening year.

The Awards Ceremony in the spectacular St Botolph's Church in Boston began the season where we recognised your achievements; many thanks here to Boston in Bloom, Boston Borough Council and St Botolph's for hosting the event so effectively. From here onwards it has been non-stop with local celebrations, in Nottingham, Northampton, Immingham, Quorn, Newark, Leicester, Melton Mowbray and Loughborough (and probably others that we don't know of). The Awards are very important, giving us all the opportunity to recognise the huge contribution of groups and individuals in our communities.

This Newsletter also features articles about the work of some of entrants and should give ideas and inspiration to all groups; Bloom is about sharing and helping as well as aspiring to win, and these 'bloom stories' are very much part of this. On the subject of which, we next have the chance to get together at the New Entrants Workshop, being held on 22nd February in Kegworth, Leicestershire, and I hope to see recent and aspiring new groups there. This will be followed by our Annual General Meeting in the afternoon.

Next year's Awards Ceremony is being hosted by Newark, and will be at the Newark and Notts Showground on 19th September 2018.

2017 was a brilliant year for our entrants into RHS Britain in Bloom! New participants Littleover in Bloom achieved Silver, and Mansfield BID achieved Silver Gilt; we also had Gold for Belper, Market Bosworth and Uppingham, and Silver Gilt for Oadby & Wigston, and two of the six (Market Bosworth and Uppingham) were Category winners. For the National Campaign in 2018, we have put forward Elmton in the Small Village Category; Draycott in Bloom in Small Towns; Immingham in Towns; Northampton in City and Evington in Urban Community. Two of these are 'first-timers' into the Nationals, and I am sure that you will enjoy the thrill of being involved. We are also delighted that RHS Britain in Bloom have recognised the continuing excellence of Market Bosworth by inviting them into the Champion of Champions Category in 2018. Finally, I do need to give enormous thanks to all the volunteer judges and assessors (for Bloom, IYN and School Gardens) who give their time and expertise to ensure that our campaign continues to thrive.

Also to our sponsors and supporters, whose backing in financial or 'in kind' terms enables us to be a viable organisation. Here my thanks go to Amberol, Amethyst Horticulture and new supporter FCC Environment (all Silver Sponsors); Barcham Trees, Dart Training, Taylor's Bulbs and The Art Department (all Bronze Sponsors) and of course the main sponsor of It's Your Neighbourhood, the Royal Horticultural Society. Now, onwards and upwards into 2018!

Jeff Bates,

Chairman, East Midlands in Bloom

FOOTNOTE:

After 17 years as Secretary of East Midlands in Bloom, Irene is retiring from the role; I'm retiring after 13 years as Chairman – but will continue as a Judge and whatever else the new Chairman feels I can assist with. It's been a wonderful (though at times stressful) role to have, and one that I will always look back on with fondness and with many good (and sometimes hilarious) memories to recollect. Let the new era begin!

Filming 'Breaston in Bloom' for our 30 minutes of fame!

This was our first foray into East Midlands in Bloom and as such we knew nothing about what lay ahead and had only a few in our team. So you can imagine my surprise when I was contacted out of the blue by a member of a London TV production company asking if we would like to take part in an upcoming programme? She explained a little about it and of course I said yes - the chance to be on the telly was something not to be turned down! Apparently they wanted some absolute beginners with no idea what they were doing - that was us alright! She cross examined me over the phone, which was then followed up with more phone calls, emails and also a Skype interview. Then 2 of their team came down to meet us all in our local where we always meet and interviewed us all thoroughly. Next was some impromptu videoing of Emma (my fellow co-ordinator) and I explaining what we were about to get into. After this they would select a short list of groups from around the country to be presented to BBC2 for their approval. We waited for the result in a few days time with baited breath - and not without panic - in case we got picked. And amazingly we did - apparently the Beeb loved us and were especially pleased that we had some younger gardeners and people who hadn't got a clue about gardening in our group. And so it began. The first filming day approached and we all considered our gardening outfits very carefully! No logos, no stripes, no black & white and of course we wanted to look good. Out went the old joggers and in came the chinos! We all had a daisy brooch to wear as our emblem so it was easy to spot a 'Bloomer'. The day was hot, and so was the presenter. But after repeating 'Hello Chris, welcome to Breaston' many times and from different angles we soon realised how hard this was going to be. We had to dig, plant, explain, repeat things, celebrate with prosecco, eat sausage rolls (our usual sustenance courtesy of a supporter!) do interviews. Etc etc. What a long day. We were exhausted. And what had we achieved - very little - as things had to be done how the crew wanted it not how we had planned. As our oval bed turned into a



squirgle we realised how much extra difficulty we had made for ourselves.

However of course we were loving it, and further filming days followed, with or without the presenter and even in the torrential rain. We got to know the crew really well - they were lovely people and really committed to making a good programme.

Judging day arrived and they wanted interviews on the day! Then the rain started again - ever repeatedly dragged traffic cones around in your heels and summer frock in a monsoon and on camera? They followed us around discreetly throughout the judging process though they did get in the way a bit. After several attempts at filming our arrival at the end of the route there were still more interviews! Once it was all over there was the double hiatus of no 'In Bloom' to do and no filming. It felt really odd.

We have been assured that our episode is looking great and despite all the extra stress we achieved a very creditable Silver award. Was it worth it? YES! Would we be filmed again? Maybe????????

Julie Rowlinson,
Breaston in Bloom



Oasis Community Gardens

Before our charity took over a derelict youth club building 7 years ago in the middle of a disadvantaged housing estate to open a Community Church and Centre we had not expected to be gardening or creating a community park but the site came with a larger piece of land which was just a field of very long grass which had formerly been where local kids played football but was by then abandoned waste ground which wasn't even fenced or gated. Our small charity worked hard to secure over £250,000 of funding to restore the buildings and begin to landscape the grounds and install play equipment for the local children to enjoy. So we became gardeners by default but then a few of us began to dream a dream to create the OASIS Community Gardens which would turn an abandoned field into a beautiful park and gardens which would be a place for all the community to meet, have fun, learn and grow, a place where people could create memories and feel a sense of belonging.

We originally gained funding to landscape the gardens, secured the area with fencing and began to plant trees and shrubs around the site. Since then we have planted many hundreds of trees and shrubs (many special species and topiary trees, fruit trees and also many native species supplied as whips by the Woodland Trust). We began to create a lovely park and garden for everyone in the community to enjoy and the dream continues today. Our aim was to create a 'heart for the community in the heart of the community' and to date we are seeing around 5000 people of all ages annually visiting the site and enjoying the seasons and celebrations. This year we gained a 'Lottery – Community Celebrations' grant which has enabled us to put on 'OASIS Four Seasons Celebrations – Spring Festival, Summertime Gala, Fireworks and Food and a Winter Wonderland Christmas Celebration event.

The OASIS Gardens now has the following - OASIS Geodesic Dome Greenhouse which is home to our Cacti Creations enterprise, Children's Pre School Play Village, Gazebo and Sensory Garden, Herb and Rose Gardens, Mini Orchard, Wildflower Reading area, Children's Wildlife Garden, Large Poly tunnel for growing Vegetables, Small tunnel growing flowers, Spring bulbs and House plants and Summer bedding, Raised Beds, Soft Fruit area, Composting corner, Chicken House, Play areas, Gala/Games Space, Liquorice Garden, Gardeners rest Caravan, Water harvesting and our Flowers for Life Circle.

We now have 3 Gardening Micro Enterprises -

OASIS - Gardening Enterprise (Growing vegetables, fruit and plants for sale, educating unemployed people in gardening skills, working with special needs/disabled in therapeutic gardening, Gardening Workshops for the community).

OASIS – Cactus Creations (Growing and selling cacti, creating mini gardens and fairy gardens, teaching people basic skills growing cacti and succulents).

OASIS – Flowers for Life (Growing and selling cut flowers of many kinds and using them in floral arrangements, bouquets and bunches, teaching floristry courses to local people, workshops creating seasonal arrangements and special occasion flowers, therapeutic work with people with mental health needs etc).

We have developed a Gardening Volunteer team who help to keep the Gardens in shape and to work in different areas. We have a Nature quest project which encourages our children and young people to get involved with gardening and conservation.

This year we have also had many extra celebrations and events in the gardens including 'Invite a Tree to tea' with the Woodland trust project, the Opening of our Play Village (created with a grant from Tesco Bags of Hope), a Butterfly Ball, Butterfly release, Community Bulb Planting day and much more.

We have had a fabulous year which has so encouraged our community, our volunteers and all the rest of the projects and groups that we run at the Community Centre.

- Heritage Lottery Grant – We have a grant to do a project discovering the past of the Worksop Liquorice Gardens and growing our own Liquorice Garden.
- Green Flag Award – We have gained a green Flag for the first time.
- Church Times – Green awards – We have been short listed for the finals for the Bio Diversity award.
- Groundworks – We have been shortlisted for the finals in the Best Community Project on a Housing estate award.
- Its Your Neighbourhood Award – Our greatest achievement which means a lot is that we have gained the EM Britain in Bloom Level 5- Outstanding and amazingly got 100 percent marks.

We love Britain in Bloom and we hope to keep developing our site and entering. Thanks to all who work so hard to keep this great project growing.

Steve Williams,

Centre & Project Manager, Oasis Community Gardens,
Worksop, Nottinghamshire



Blooming Roadworks in Oakham

The roadworks around the Town proved to be a real headache for us. It posed the question as to whether we entered the EMIB's competition this year. An inspirational idea was put forward by one of our team members and the theme of 'Blooming Roadworks' was conceived.

With the co-operation of the Rutland County Council, Oakham Town Council, local businesses and groups the idea became a reality. The colour scheme for planting was, red, orange and green.

Some of our original ideas of hanging road cones filled with flowers and wheelbarrows around the Town were limited by Health and Safety regulations, but we overcame this by having intuitive window displays.

A newly formed group called 'Men in Sheds' made wooden wheelbarrows which were placed in flower beds and wooden triangles depicting roadwork signs. The triangles were decorated by local schools and the Oakham Brownies and together with hard hats and small road cones were presented to local shops on the High Street to use in a window display to complement the roadworks theme and show support for Oakham in Bloom.

The result was both imaginative and eye-catching. A local florist stunned us by creating a display constructed wholly of flowers.

The Rutland Lions and the Brightways Centre, a Centre for adults with learning difficulties, planted up wheelbarrows which on judging day were wheeled out and displayed in Oakham Castle grounds.

An eye-catching feature in the Library bed is a huge peacock donated to Oakham in Bloom by Ashwell Prison when it was closed. It was made by prisoners and has become loved by everyone. The spread of the tail is stunningly planted with bedding plants and for our theme had its own hard-hat.

Craig Howat, Plant-Co-Ordinator with children from the English Martyr's School in front of the Library using magnifying glasses to look for bugs in the wheelbarrow. Well done! and thank you for turning out on a very wet day.

The support and co-operation of the local community and groups has been overwhelming. Everyone came together in a real war-time spirit.

Chris Morten

Chairman, Oakham in Bloom



Boston in Bloom

Our journey to the EMIB ceremony awards started in April 2016 when Claire, vice-chairman of Boston in Bloom and Cabinet member for Parks, turned to me out of the blue and said “we’re going to host the next East Midlands in Bloom awards. Boston has lots to offer and we should promote it more widely.” There then followed discussions with EMIB chairman Jeff, before embarking on the task of identifying a suitable venue for over 250 delegates. Eventually, we settled on the iconic Boston Stump at Claire’s suggestion.

There then followed a series of meetings between Adam, the church vergger, and a small working group overseen by the super-efficient Karen to plan the event. These highlighted a number of challenges, not least identifying convenient parking on a busy market day and feeding more than 250 hungry delegates. We called in favours from our Town Centre team to resolve the parking problem and decided to allocate volunteer stewards to help guide delegates from the car parks to the venue. The picnic box, containing a variety of Lincolnshire fayre, was our innovative solution to the catering challenge and to keeping queues to a minimum. Using our contacts we then approached a number of local businesses for their support to sponsor the picnic boxes, floral displays and pew end flowers.

Quality audio-visual equipment is a vital element of any successful event. We knew the sound system would be excellent as the venue has hosted many large concerts, but needed to combine this with a big screen that everyone could see from the pews.

It’s nice to show off the local community and we did this through ordering delicious petit fours, which were well received by delegates, and specially crafted bird boxes, both created by Boston College students. To add more visual interest we asked Transported, one of our partners, to bring their allotment washing line featuring images from a local allotment and a number of banners.

On the days running up to the ceremony the main challenges were dealing with the special dietary requirements for the picnic boxes (never realised there were so many!) and ensuring the presentation equipment worked faultlessly. Tuesday afternoon we were pulling out our hair as the IT equipment would ‘not talk to each other’. But after a few tweaks by our IT expert Jamie the equipment worked perfectly on the day.

The big day arrived on Wednesday 13th September with all our helpers turning-up from 8 a.m. Even the stormy weather didn’t impact on attendances, proving that Bloomers are a hardy lot! The feedback to the event was very favourable from both delegates and EMIB committee members who enjoyed the historic setting. Our team felt they had provided a very positive experience of Boston. A few hardy souls ventured out on the day to sample the tours of the Guildhall Museum and Fydell House, but we hope that more delegates will consider returning to our beautiful town for a leisurely visit in future.

Ian Farmer,
Partnerships & Sustainability Manager
Boston Borough Council



EXCITING CHANGES FOR 2018

After many years' service Jeff and Irene Bates are hanging up their clipboards in February 2018 and are standing down from their roles as Chairman and Secretary, they aren't going far, Jeff is staying as Honorary President and will continue judging, and we will no doubt continue to see Irene bringing up the rear!

So, what will happen in February?

At the Annual General Meeting the posts of Chairman and Secretary will become vacant and new people will be required to take up the roles.

The East Midlands in Bloom Management Committee have been working hard behind the scenes to make sure Jeff and Irene can retire knowing that the team are continuing the good work, and have formulated a list of seven exciting positions as follows:

Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Lead Judge, Sponsorship and Publicity.

So there's an opportunity in February for you to get involved, so if you fancy having a go at one of these roles please write to Irene with your expression of interest, or drop us an email with any questions and we'll get back to you.

We are also always looking for new judges, you don't need to know a lot about horticulture, the only essential criteria is to have a smile! Being involved with EMIB as a volunteer is very rewarding, you can learn new skills, make contacts and friends, learn from other entrants and judges and it looks great on your C.V!

If you would like to know more about any of these roles please contact Sharon Sutton 07726946718 for an informal chat, or email sharonsutton110367@gmail.com or Irene and Jeff Bates ...

EMIB CANNOT CONTINUE WITHOUT VOLUNTEERS SO GET INVOLVED AND PUT A SMILE ON SOMEONE'S FACE

A NOTE FROM IRENE

When the Tidy Britain Group relinquished running the Britain in Bloom Campaign back in 2000, it was left to the individual Bloom Regions/Nations to take over administration of their own area. This was how it came about that I got involved in my "secretarial" role. Following an interview with the then Committee, I was appointed to the post.

It was a very steep learning curve, but with the assistance of the Chairman, Doug Stacey I was able to pick up on what had been done previously. At the time there was no "It's Your Neighbourhood" campaign, nor were there any Special Awards or Best School Garden Competitions to organise. Kate Leather admirably ran the Children's Painting Competition, and it was left to me to write to and invite the winners and obtain all the certificates.

Back then, the internet was not in full swing, so all the entrants had to be invited by "snail mail" as it is now called,

and individual tickets to the Awards were posted likewise. I remember having to type on my home computer some hand written Bloom reports in time for the Awards and going to Long Eaton Town Hall to assist running off the certificates on their office printer. Certificates then were just standard A4 letterheads that could be purchased by anyone and were just overtyped with the results.

Later as I got more confident in the role, I designed the Children's Painting Competition entry form, the original East Midlands in Bloom logo and the accompanying stationery which then had to acknowledge the Derbyshire Building Society who were our main sponsor. Together with my graphic design contacts at Snake Lane Design, I was able to get a website up and running and also get the new letter-headed paper and newly designed certificates printed professionally.

I was involved with the national RHS Britain in Bloom meetings which were usually held in Birmingham at the time, and remember feeling very pleased when they chose the name I suggested – "It's Your Neighbourhood" to be the name of this new national campaign. Little did I know how big this campaign would later become! From a very slow start of around 6 entries in the East Midlands, it has now reached the astonishing level of 179 this year. It was actually 180, but one group sneakily entered twice under a different name! In later years the Children's Digital Photography competition was also introduced and I was heavily involved with that too.

Through the increasing workload of IYN, even though gratefully I have been greatly assisted with local area organisers at Nottingham, Leicester, Loughborough, North East Lincolnshire and Northampton, I felt I was unable to continue running the Children's Art & Digital competitions, so sadly these had to be given up.

I am grateful for the support of the present Chairman, who I have been working with for the last 13 years and who has been invaluable with his knowledge of the Bloom campaign and has assisted me greatly, particularly before the Awards Presentation, when an enormous amount of work is required within a short space of time.

I have met some wonderful people throughout the years, many who are still there since I started, and who I now consider to be my long standing friends. I am continually awed and inspired by their commitment, often in spite of some very adverse circumstances and would like to thank them all for making their place (and my involvement) much happier! I feel like we are part of a very large family and I will greatly miss you all.

Carry on Blooming!!! ©

(Hey BBC, is there scope for a film here?)

With warmest regards and best wishes for the future,

Irene

Thu 8th Feb	Closing date for EMiB New Entrants Workshop reservation forms and AGM nominations
Thu 22nd Feb	EMiB New Entrants Workshop , Kegworth Village Hall, Nottingham Road, Kegworth, Leicestershire, DE74 2FH AGM Venue as above 2pm approx. EVERYONE is encouraged and welcome to attend. All BLOOM groups who entered in 2017 are entitled to one vote at this important event.
Mon 30th April	Closing date for 'In Bloom' and 'It's Your Neighbourhood' entry forms
Fri 11th 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 1st June	Closing date for <i>EMiB Best School Garden Award</i> entry forms
Mon 2nd – Fri 13th July	EMiB judging period
July & August	EMiB It's Your Neighbourhood assessment period
Wed 19th Sept	EMiB Awards Presentation Newark Showground, Lincoln Road, Winthorpe, Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 2NY

2018 NEW ENTRANTS WORKSHOP

22nd February, Kegworth Village Hall, Nottingham Road, Kegworth, Leicestershire, DE74 2FH

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 10 of this newsletter), or download a form from our website: www.eastmidlandsinbloom.co.uk by **Thursday February 8th** to EMiB Secretary Irene Bates* (see address below).

If you were a Bloom or IYN entrant in 2017 we cordially invite you to stay for the AGM which follows the last session after lunch.

AGM

This will start after lunch at approximately 2 pm. It is very important that as many groups as possible remain for this important event. Every group that entered the EMiB Competition in 2017 is very welcome and is entitled to one vote by their designated representative. It is YOUR opportunity for your group to be represented and your views taken into account.

Any nominations for the *executive committee* must be received by Irene Bates not less than 14 days before the AGM (i.e. by Thursday 8th February 2018). 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

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM SPONSORS 2017



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.



FCC Environment (EMiB Silver Sponsor)
We are very pleased to welcome FCC Environment this year and they are proud to sponsor all Village categories, i.e. Small, Medium and Large Villages.



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.

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



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 2018, e.g. the 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



Attracting sponsorship for East Midlands in Bloom/Britain Bloom

Britain in Bloom

Patience Atkinson-Gregory of Amberol (www.amberol.co.uk) offers advice on obtaining sponsorship for

One of the many talents required by most Britain in Bloom groups is the ability to make a little money go a long way. As a voluntary organisation, usually with limited funding, many of the groups that we speak with are looking for ways to raise money to support their activity.

Business sponsorship is one of the most effective ways of doing so – if carried out properly. That's why we have written a free guide to attracting sponsorship based on over 45 years' experience working with Britain in Bloom groups and local authorities across the UK. The guide is available on request from Amberol.

We'd like to give you a taster of some of our top tips here.

- **Identify the benefits.** The first step is to determine what the benefits of sponsorship are for a commercial organisation so you can communicate them clearly.
- **Be consistent.** Develop a sponsorship structure to ensure consistency. You might decide to have different levels of financial support so organisations can contribute varying amounts. You should have a standard letter for applications which can be adapted to ensure consistency of approach.
- **Take responsibility.** Set up a committee or nominate someone to have specific responsibility for sponsorship/fundraising. Ideally, this would be someone with good connections in the area or who has experience in a relevant sector such as marketing.
- **Do your homework.** Before approaching an organisation, do a little research. Look on their website and get a feel for their ethos. Sometimes getting hold of the right person (particularly in a large company) is half the challenge. You could use a platform such as LinkedIn as a way of tracking down the right contact.
- **Giving something back.** Create a sponsorship pack for potential supporters explaining what you are trying to do as well as helping them get the most from supporting you. A sponsorship pack for businesses could include:
 - ✓ The background of the project – what are you trying to achieve, what are your aims?
 - ✓ An explanation of the sponsorship structure
 - ✓ A summary of the benefits of sponsorship/involvement
 - ✓ Photographs of examples of sponsorship and/or case studies
 - ✓ A template press release for the local media announcing new sponsorship
 - ✓ Fundraising suggestions – ways in which staff could generate funds internally for your initiative

Sponsorship in action

Market Harborough in Leicestershire has an active volunteers group (MHiBV). They receive support and a grant from the council as well as from local organisations such as charities and the rotary club.

MHiBV sell advertising space on their self-watering planters to local companies, which has proven a popular strategy. The group first started offering sponsorship in 2015 and the uptake has risen year upon year with all advertising space currently sold out.

Margaret Richards of MHiBV comments: "Sponsorship makes a lot of difference – it goes towards covering our expenses, our watering contract, plants and general running costs. It also means that we can take on extra projects, buy more planters and increase community involvement, including giving more support to young people. In 2016 we received £1000 in donations.

"We have a lot of verbal feedback when we are in the town weeding and planting; people often say how bright and colourful the planters look - some even say that they come to Market Harborough because the town looks so good."

Businesses are an important part of the community and the impact of Britain in Bloom is often significant, helping to boost trade and the local economy – as well as making a town, village or city a more pleasant place to live. It's important to communicate those benefits and work together for the good of our communities.

The sponsorship guide is available by calling Amberol on 01773 830 930, emailing info@amberol.co.uk or writing to Amberol at The Plantation, King Street, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7TT.

To be held at Kegworth Village Hall, Nottingham Road, Kegworth, Leicestershire, DE74 2FH on 22nd February.
Registration from 10.00 am for 10.30 am start. Free onsite car parking is available.

To reserve your place/s please complete and return this form BY **Thursday 8th 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*) or if BACS payment, Please tick ☐ for £ (amount)

BACS payment details: Unity Trust Bank: Sort Code: **60-83-01** Account No: **20326298**.

Signed Date

With Best Seasonal Wishes to You All
And here's to a
Blooming Wonderful 2018