



East Midlands in Bloom

Entrants Reports 2024



East Midlands in Bloom Reports 2024

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SMALL VILLAGE CATEGORY

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SMALL VILLAGE

Amcotts

Gold

Judged on 2nd July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to 'Ginny's Plant' mobile stall which was an excellent way of bringing funds to Amcotts Bloom Campaign and an opportunity for children to see plants growing from cuttings to maturity.

Introduction

The judges were met at Hook Farm by Trish Murphy, Councillor Janet Longcake (Mayor) and Councillors Julie Reid and Ian Bint who took on the task of showing the judges around the village. Throughout the tour judges saw many well planted floral displays, attractive residential gardens and met many of the volunteers who were keen to show how the community work together in making Amcotts a special place to live.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

Whilst viewing the village we met Amcotts 'Grandmas and Grandpas' who were responsible for planting and maintaining various hanging baskets, planters and planted areas throughout the village, along with local residents. These were appropriately sited and well cared for with healthy looking plants. We passed many well maintained and cared for resident's gardens on the tour. The Jubilee Garden (Safety Corner Garden) was well planted with a mixture of trees and shrubs, well maintained grass area, a nicely planted 4 Tier Tower Planter, Bug Hotel, Bird Boxes and 'Chatty Bench'. Paddy and Carol Amcotts Grandparents spoke to the judges about the garden and how popular it is. At St Marks Church, the churchyard was being well maintained, the paths, grass, planted areas and 4 Tier Tower were all looking nice. The hanging baskets on the Amcotts Bog Woman Information Board were colourful addition to the street scene. Hook Farm also hosted Amcotts Remembers Flixborough memorial and its 'planted' Potato Planter Machine with Lavender, Marigolds and other colourful pollinators. The Ingleby Arms looked nice with several hanging baskets and planted beds.

Section B: Environment

We saw many interestingly designed Water Butts (like a windmill) throughout the village and a variety of composting methods used. Whilst they had their obvious benefits for the village, they were also used for educational purposes, making the youngsters aware of environmental issues within Amcotts. The planting of Lavender, Hydrangea, and many varieties of pollinating plants along with the installation of Bat Boxes, Bug Hotels and the Butterfly Garden all contributed towards the welfare of the wildlife. We were treated to a pot of Amcotts Honey when we visited the 4 Bee Hives in Rose Queen Laylas garden where she spoke a few words about her bees, The village children take part in the annual butterfly and bird counts, which is a good opportunity for them to engage the school with this village activity. Amcotts is very proud of its local history, remembering the Flixborough disaster, the Amcotts Bog Woman, and their farming heritage. It was noted that the hanging basket brackets at the Bog Woman Information Board had been made by Steve Duree, Plant Steel a local business. Some very good wood carvings could be seen and enjoyed along the route. The street furniture is well maintained, and the village is very neat and tidy with no sign of litter, with all ages working together creating a safe and friendly environment for all.

Section C: Community

Community spirit shines through all aspects of Amcotts village life. With all year-round social activities being well recorded within little books beautifully produced following each event. Noticeboards throughout are well maintained, informative and kept up to date. To make the village as successful as it is, this could not be done without individuals' commitment, organisation and forward planning skills. It was lovely to see a couple of plant stalls raising funds for the village. e.g., Ginny's Plants displayed on what looked like a mobile fruit and veg stand. There was a tremendous input from Amcotts 'Grandmas and Grandpas' who contributed towards village life and the upkeep of the village. We saw evidence of engagement with the local school and local business. Funding was raised from social events, local businesses, and various charities. The judges heard all about Tiddy Munn folklore and Ollie the Owl (and Owl Trail) contributed towards the distinct character of Amcotts village. During the walkabout, the judges met newly crowned Boy Bishop Jensen and Rose Queen Layla who were delighted to meet and talk with the judges. Whilst visiting the village you become aware that the community spirit and organisational skills are excellent which is endorsed by the number of awards received from various organisations including CPRE, along with information on village noticeboards advertising of future events. Amcotts is a very clean and tidy village, with an awareness of conservation, working closely with the Parish Council, North Lincolnshire Council, the local School, and local business. The judges were presented with an excellent portfolio and additional leaflets and publications. The Community Hub formally St Marks church has a wealth of information on display featuring all aspects of village life and historical information on the Flixborough Disaster, village wildlife, the Owl Trail, and the local environment. Our tour was completed with a delicious spread of Lincolnshire food which was much appreciated as well as the opportunity to meet and talk to various people involved in the many village community activities.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

The planting of the planters could be a mixture of annuals and perennials to add more interest and avoid yearly planting and contribute to less watering. A few of the planters were looking a bit

tired and the large three tier planter required watering on the top tier at the Jubilee Garden. The Butterfly Garden required some more plants to attract bees other than just the Buddleia plant. It was good to see such interest from the children within this area, but sadly it looked as though it was ready for renewing. If 4 Tier Floral Towers are to be used in your landscaping scheme, plant selection must be considered very carefully. Sustainable planting is not necessarily the answer to everything. Watering is also most important and can be quite challenging.

Section B: Environment

The village was beautifully maintained, however understanding the uncertainty for the future at The Ingleby Arms, try and keep this area tidy and continue to maintain the planters and landscaped areas on behalf of the owner. You may consider working with the Environment Agency to improve the area towards the River Trent with landscaping to soften the appearance of the retaining bank? The Flixborough Disaster information was well documented. Consider expanding the information on Amcotts connection to the Doomsday Book, where the village name came from or the village's farming heritage.

Section C: Community

It was a pleasure to visit Amcotts and to receive your hospitality. The community spirit should be nurtured to maintain the enthusiasm within the community. Try not to overdo things which may result in tiredness and a lack of village commitment? Keep on doing what you do well and recruit wherever possible so that the more people involved results in less work for others! The judges were disappointed to note that there was no mention of the judges visiting the Parish Notice Board located on the shed of the Jubilee Garden. The Portfolio would be improved if photographic evidence of the village's spring floral display were included. Also, evidence relating to 'Press' support, litter picking events and the 'crowning' of next year's Boy Bishop and Rose Queen.

Marks

Section A: 35

Section B: 27

Section C: 28

Total Marks: 90

Medal Awarded: Gold



SMALL VILLAGE

Tattershall Thorpe

Silver Gilt

Judged on 1st July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to the Blue Bell Inn for being the main historic and community focused building in the heart of Tattershall Thorpe and its strong links to Thorpe Camp, Coningsby Airfield and RAF Woodhall Spa.

Introduction

On a slightly chilly overcast afternoon, the judges arrived at the home of Servais Coulber and were met by a number of Tattershall Thorpe 'bloomers' including Steve Wattam. Over a cup of tea, Servais outlined the group's work through a story board of photographs neatly laid out in the garage. The tour, mainly by car incorporated floral displays, wildlife areas, residential gardens and an idyllic mural put a smile on the judge's faces on quite a cold rain threatened day.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

As this is quite a linear village, most of the floral features across the village are located on North Road. There are a number of well planted and colourful tubs located at road junctions or at the War Memorial. The two Bus Shelters located at either end of the village have been beautifully enhanced through the planting of a variety of shrubs, perennials, and annuals at either side of each shelter. Well, maintained and looking good considering the difficulty of the ground conditions. The former Chapel {top of Chapel Lane} and now a residential property hosts the village War Memorial on an impressive brick arch which notes the names of those villagers who died in both World Wars. The memorial is tastefully adorned with colourful planted troughs. Also, some Lavendar, Marigolds and Geraniums had been planted along the fence side. Across the road the double raised planter had also been planted nicely. Both village entrances have been seasonally planted at the base of each sign and are being well maintained. The main floral feature of the village is the large half-moon bed located at the side of North Road. A colourful mixture of perennials / annuals and roses create an amazing display and certainly has a huge impact on the surrounding landscape. The island bed across the road has also been well planted and contributes significantly to the attractiveness of the village. The village entry signs were looking good and have been tastefully planted with colourful annuals.

Section B: Environment

It was good to see the two Bus Shelters situated at either end of the village along the main thorough fare. Floral beds had been created on either side of the shelters and had been planted with a mixture of shrubs and colourful annuals. With the woodland to the rear of the shelters

this landscape would have helped to support quite a diverse wildlife, birds, insects etc. The village appeared generally clean and tidy in particular the areas adjacent the main features of the village e.g., Blue Bell Inn, Bus Shelters, Old Chapel / War Memorial, and the landscaped Mural display. The grass areas were being maintained quite well. The former sand and gravel pits have been converted into a series of large ponds, walkways and picnic areas for residents and visitors to freely enjoy. A haven for wildlife to thrive and enjoy general tranquility. An incredibly special feature for Tattershall Thorpe. There is quite a strong heritage element to the village with its connections to World War 2, most notably Thorpe Camp and the Blue Bell Inn {built in 1257} which played host to pilots stationed at Coningsby Airfield. Bats currently frequent a number of the buildings within Thorpe Camp.

Section C: Community

Along with the portfolio provided by Servais, a display of photographs was able to be viewed in his garage showing the range of activities that had been carried out around the village. There were a number of well-informed interpretation boards on display around the village. The community mural located at the edge of the village on North Road was particularly well presented. The mural depicting Tattershall Thorpe's heritage and village life generally was very impressive. Beautifully underplanted with a wide selection of trees, shrubs, colourful annuals and wildflowers. The Blue Bell Inn has been purchased by the community and hopefully as time progresses will become a major hub for the village and visitors. Along the route of the tour there were a number of attractive residential gardens. It was good to see on the Notice Board a note informing residents of the 'in bloom' judging day.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

Along the route the judges saw some lovely residential gardens, consider taking the judges to see more of the village and the efforts that have been made to make their front gardens lovely therefore contributing to the overall appearance of the village. The Blue Bell Inn looked nice on the day the judges visited the village. As it is the 'hub' of the village, consider increasing the size and number of the floral displays. It has huge potential to give the village some extra 'wow' factor through vibrant colourful displays.

Section B: Environment

The converted gravel pits are a real asset to the village and local wildlife, consider spending less time there which would allow you to show the judges other aspects of Tattershall Thorpe. Overall, Tattershall Thorpe was clean and tidy, but it is important to remember that wherever the judges are taken {going from A to B} the route needs to be free of weeds in the roadside gutters etc. Carr Woods sounds a lovely place perhaps the judges could visit the woods, find out more about it. Are there Bird and Bat boxes and how many are there? Do volunteers make them? The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust could give you some good support on this aspect. Consider introducing some wildflower areas within the village.

Section C: Community

Consider inviting the Judges to view the inside of the Blue Bell Inn {even if it is closed} particularly as there appears to be strong photographic evidence of its link to Coningsby Airfield, Thorpe Camp, and other elements of historic interest. Consider developing stronger links to Camp Thorpe itself. Perhaps the judges could spend 5 or 10 minutes looking at the camp and perhaps meeting personnel who might have a story to tell. The judges are aware it can be difficult but consider making some of the residents / volunteers available on the day so that the judges can talk to the stalwarts of your entry. Consider developing links with the Caravan Park

located adjacent to the Blue Bell Inn. They may be interested in contributing to your entry through their own floral displays. In your Portfolio, the judges would love to read about the number of volunteers who turned up to help in your cleanup campaign in June.

Marks

Section A: 33

Section B: 22

Section C: 20

Total Marks: 75

Medal Awarded: Silver Gilt



SMALL VILLAGE

Ranby

Silver

Judged on 1st July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to Clive Ebdon, Tony Wilks, Rachel Moss and Cheryl Finney for their undoubted enthusiasm and ongoing commitment to Ranby and its residents'

Introduction

On a slightly overcast but warm morning the judges were met with a welcome cup of coffee and a newly formed Ranby in Bloom Committee. The year's activities were outlined by Rachel via a digital presentation with Clive, Tony and Cheryl providing additional information relating to specific activities and what the judges will see along the judging route. The judges had a very enjoyable tour incorporating The Chequers Inn, Residential gardens, Chequers Wharf, and floral displays. Well, done, Ranby.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

Overall, the first impression you get when arriving in Ranby is that everywhere is clean, neat, and tidy. The floral display at the entrance to the village is attractive and well presented. The judges enjoyed the walking tour through the village where some very good floral displays could be seen, particularly the hexagonal bed on Beechwood Crescent planted with a mixture of annuals, perennials, and shrubs. Margaret does an excellent job maintaining this display. The Bus Shelter was also a delight and has been improved since last year. Well, done Sue and Malcolm. The planters and raised beds along the route were colourful and added to the attractiveness of the village. The brick planter was full of colourful petunias, geraniums, marigolds etc and was a nice feature. The judges were treated to a number of very attractive, colourful and well maintained residential gardens, in particular Beechwood Crescent and Chequers Close, including No.7, to name just a couple. The two Hydrangea pots outside The Old Post Office were quite striking. 1 Beechwood Crescent {Margaret} presented a lovely front and side garden covered with a range of trees, shrubs, and other sustainable planting on a very difficult site. The Chequers Inn with its tubs, troughs and hanging baskets contributed significantly to the overall village impression. Chequers Wharf was well planted and looked very presentable as did Ranby Oaks with the beautiful seat and planted raised bed. The judges met Claire at Ranby Primary School, who was delighted to show off the school's shrub beds, a couple of planted tubs and wall troughs. In the back {adjacent The Fun Field} the judges could see a dozen or so planted tyres. Some of them were very good.

Section B: Environment

A strong feature of the village is the excellent grass maintenance throughout the village. Beautifully cut, edged where appropriate and everywhere neat and tidy. Chequers Wharf and along the canal side where it could be viewed by the judges is a lovely feature for the village. The Wharf itself is attractive and is a popular visitor attraction. The stretch of wildflowers running along the side of the Ranby Fun Field is a developing feature and future visits by judges will enjoy it as it matures and is managed properly. New wildflower areas are planned in other locations. Street furniture looked clean and quite well maintained. In Philip's private garden {adjacent main road} his allotment was a joy to see. It looked healthy and well maintained. The judges were informed that he also keeps Bee Hives. Perhaps the judges might be able to visit next year. St. Martins Church of England is a relatively new building to the village and the wide open grounds are being maintained by volunteers. Well done - it is quite a challenge. Congratulations to Tony for using his garden as the village's plant producer. Plants grown from seed and developed in his Green Houses until ready to be planted out.

Section C: Community

The judges were impressed to see Rachel's Digital Presentation of how Ranby had been preparing and developing their entry to this year's competition. Very Informative and a welcome addition to the judge's visit. Their 'Whats App Group' has taken off and is the main communication tool for the village. They have received some sponsorship and partnership working with local businesses, most notably from P J Properties and Woodland Trust. Good to see that the Chequers Inn is fully involved with the 'bloom' campaign. The regular 'Clean Up' team do an excellent job, often numbering as many as 20 volunteers. Ranby has engaged the services of the Ranby Times. Perhaps next year a reporter will photograph the judges and interview them as they follow the tour. Everyone likes a success story. The Seth Ellis canal boat is quite an asset for the village, perhaps more should be made of this feature / facility.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

The judges felt that the low brick planter did not work well with low annuals. Consider introducing some taller perennials and herbaceous planting which would re-emerge each year, be more significant as a display and cost less {not replaced each year} in the long term. The Chequers Inn rear car park is very bland just now. Consider introducing some planted troughs located between the bollards. Consider planting bigger plants in some of the tubs around the village. They would give a bigger impact than low growing varieties.

Section B: Environment

During the tour, general discussions and within the portfolio there is little evidence of Ranby's historical context. e.g., consider providing more information about the Chesterfield Canal, old buildings like the Old Post Office, the Chequers Inn, connections to WW1 or WW2. Perhaps there is a famous person from or near to Ranby etc. Who get involved. The judges are aware that you have plans for developing a wildflower area near the War Memorial. Consider expanding the idea into some parts of St. Martin's Church of England grounds and around the Village Hall. Consider introducing water catchment techniques to some of your buildings e.g., St Martin's Church of England, Village Hall, Chequers Inn, Fun Field Building.

Section C: Community

The judges are looking forward to seeing how Ranby Primary School gets involved with your 2025 campaign. Consider where you might be able to develop further partnerships e.g., HMP Ranby.

Try to get the Ranby Times to be more involved with your campaign. The Chequers Wharf is quite a feature in Ranby. The Canal Trust / volunteers should be more involved with your campaign. Try to get a member of the Trust / Canal Boat crew to be around on judging day so that the judges can see the garden and talk to a representative of this facility.

Marks

Section A: 29

Section B: 22

Section C: 17

Total Marks: 68

Medal Awarded: Silver

VILLAGE CATEGORY

SPONSORED BY FCC ENVIRONMENT



CATEGORY

LUBENHAM IN BLOOM

GOLD

Judged on 2ND July 2024

Judges: JUDITH WARNER and LIZ ALUN-JONES

Judges Award: For the war memorial volunteers for this beautifully maintained memorial garden with year-round colour

Introduction

Lubenham retains its rural identity even though it lies two miles from Market Harborough. It is a delightful village to visit with its many open spaces which are owned and managed by the village. The volunteers are enthusiastic and give a lot of their time to making this a village to be proud of. The Bloom group are improving the wellbeing of the village by providing more natural planting to encourage wildlife. Each year the Bee line is extended around the village. The War Memorial at the centre of the village is particularly eye catching.

Areas of Achievement

Section A - Horticulture

The planting throughout the village is maintained to a high standard with an increasing number of perennials and drought tolerant planting. There are displays of sempervivum at the Old Pump and at the Village Hall, which also has wildflower planting to encourage pollinators. The War Memorial has a stunning display of red roses and lavender plants, a small wildflower meadow and a 'secret' garden planted with perennials and shrubs. The planting around the village looked very healthy and was of a high standard. The Beeline was started a few years ago and continues to extend around the village. There are many wildflower areas as well as bee friendly planting. The sunflowers, in the Bee Corner, will look stunning later in the year. Work has continued at All Saints Parish Church, and it has succession planting producing flowers yearlong and two large planters frame the church door and sections in the churchyard have been sown with wildflowers.

Section B Environment

Lubenham has several initiatives to enhance the biodiversity of the areas. To add to the volunteers who undertake data recordings, River Wardens have recently taken samples from the River Welland and are currently surveying the water voles in the vicinity, assisted by a wildlife camera located by the river. There are many hedgehog houses, log piles, bug, and bird houses etc throughout the village promoting wildlife and biodiversity. Due to climate change, this year was the wettest on record and the river Welland flooded quite badly, and the community had to work hard to clear the many affected areas including the Cart Bridge. However, this area is

looking good and still retains its pollinator border. Fruit trees planted a few years ago are establishing.

The War Memorial has a compost area for use by the volunteers and an excellent Heritage Board. The Heritage Group launched the Lubbenham Heritage Trail comprising of a leaflet, information board and plaques on selected buildings.

Seeds are saved and many plants are donated or reused for successional planting. It was good to see the new bench on its foundations with nearby planters containing brightly coloured annuals.

The Church has been acknowledged as being an Eco Church since bat boxes have been erected. The village is scrupulously clean and tidy and even the litter bins and signs had been washed.

Section C Community

The Green Team, comprising Charlotte, Mia, Joshua, Arthur, Oscar, and Barney, from All Saints Primary School were busy growing fruit and vegetables and boasted a pollinator border. Pond dipping is frequently undertaken, and a new mini orchard has recently been planted in the school grounds. It has also gained the Green Flag Eco School status. Lubbenham in Bloom works with other groups and sponsors within the village. The volunteers have fund raising activities during the year including the Lubbenham Scarecrow Festival and Open Gardens. The Air Cadets assisted with the car parking at this event. The village has a newsletter which is delivered to every house in the village. Dr. Shelton and team recycle donated tools, and the proceeds are donated to local charities. Allotments were well used and looked thriving. Each had their own composting areas. The Community have also been knitting and crocheting flowers to celebrate RHS 60 years of Bloom.

Areas for Development

Section A

You could consider entering the garden area along the driveway, containing the stumpery, for the 'best front garden' award.

The Primary School obviously encourages the children with gardening and biodiversity and should consider entering the Schools Award.

Section B

Due to the flooding around the Cart Bridge signage had been delayed. The judges look forward to seeing an Information Board to explain its history in the future. It would be interesting to know what your wildlife camera picks up – especially if it's the water voles.

Section C

The volunteers work hard at maintaining a high standard of work within the village and perhaps it would be helpful if local young people could become involved – the Air Cadets could spare some time or even students who would be interested in conservation.

Marks

Section A: 36

Section B: 28

Section C: 27

Total Marks: 91

Medal Awarded: GOLD

VILLAGE

Blooming Milford

Gold

Judged on 10th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to the residents of Lavender Walk for their amazing individual gardens which collectively have created a beautiful, colourful walkway for everyone to enjoy.

Introduction

The industrial village of Milford was largely created by the Strutt family during the 18th and 19th centuries. The heavy industry has long gone leaving views across the Derwent Valley and a community dedicated to making Milford a lovely place to live. The judges enjoyed a very interesting tour ably 'guided' by Dave and Pat. Along the route the judges met bloom volunteers happy to show off floral displays, wildflower areas and riverside walks.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

The tour began by visiting the 'Triangle' just across from the Social Club. A mixture of trees / shrubs and perennials. Very colourful and will also provide winter interest with the selection of evergreen shrubs on display. Immediately below this area on the bank supported by a stone raised wall overlooking the main road over 2,400 specifically selected bulbs have been planted which will provide flowering displays throughout the year. The village War Memorial was looking particularly good with colourful troughs, boxes and wall baskets using begonias, lobelia, geraniums etc. Hoping Mill Meadow Spring Garden with its range of colourful trees and shrubs looked particularly good. The use of Bark Mulch finished off the display beautifully. Along the route the judges saw decent quality hanging baskets on lampposts and the 4 tier tower at the junction of Foundry Lane and Derby Road was also very good. Millers Way corner {both sides of the road} was particularly good. Colourful trees, shrubs, perennials on display which gave this area of Milford the definite wow factor. Some tubs and troughs were also on display on a gravelled area adjacent to the apartments. Milford Mews was also quite special and a particular mention for Elsie who does her 'bit' to support 'Blooming Milford'. The judges saw many attractive residential gardens e.g. Quarry Cottage, The Old Bike Shop etc. but they particularly liked Lavender Walk. All the beautiful individual gardens made this cul de sac walkway very special.

Section B: Environment

Milford are lucky to have the Derwent Riverside Walk within the village. A lot of demanding work has been invested to make it a very special area. With its 4 community orchards planted strategically along the route, several quality benches (with daffodil spring planting) to sit and watch the river and the picnic area for village / 'blooming' activities. It is a very beautiful tranquil area. There are bird and bat boxes, bug hotels and a hedgehog house. Wildflower areas have been created along the way. Part of the walking tour took the judges passed Marts Meadow

Allotments which are privately owned but can be clearly seen from the pavement. They looked very clean, tidy with a wide range of produce on display. The judges saw the entrance to Makeney Hall Hotel which has been planted with many spring bulbs.

Throughout the route the village was clean and tidy with no evidence of litter and detritus.

Milford is within the Derwent Valley Heritage Trail and there is plenty of evidence of the village's heritage through its buildings {former mills}, Interpretation Boards and street signage {Foundry Lane}. Milford Community Greenspace is a very special project. Created from 3 allotments the aim was to provide a green area for the Milford School pupils throughout the year. This wonderful location [views across the Derwent Valley] contains a Sensory Maze, Forest School Activities, Vegetable Plots, Fire Pit / Story Telling, Woodland and Wildflower areas, designated composting facilities and not forgetting the 'living roof' on one of the sheds. A really amazing place for Milford's youth. Milford has managed to install various displays of art within the landscape, mosaics, and sculptures. The 4,000 litre rainwater collection station at Bridge View Allotments is very impressive and the amount of work put in by volunteers has to be applauded.

Section C: Community

It was good to see that several businesses were supporting the 'bloom' campaign notably The Elephant and Peacock and the King William with their hanging baskets. The Holly Bush Inn was particularly good, displaying many colourful hanging baskets troughs and boxes. Chris Wilbraham should be very pleased with his contribution to Milford. The Social Club was also well planted with more than 20 extremely colourful hanging baskets, wall troughs and free-standing troughs. A very good display well done Jeff. The 'Bloom' campaign was well supported by Radio Derby who had been out earlier in the day to find out more about 'Blooming Milford'. There is quite good evidence of all year round activity May Day Parade, Apple Day Celebrations, Plant sales etc. The community spirit within Milford is very good. Many hours of volunteering are recorded covering a number of projects including the day to day maintenance of beds, troughs, hanging baskets, Balsam Bashing Party and keeping thoroughfares tidy.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

Continue to work with local businesses and private organisations and try to encourage them to install some of their own hanging basket displays like the King William. e.g. Primary School across the road from the Social Club. The judges saw some lovely residential gardens. Consider including more of them within the walking route - further into Millers Way housing complex? Try to find suitable locations for additional wow factor planting along Milford's main roads.

Section B: Environment

The judges heard a lot about Bridge View Allotments, if there is time, consider including this facility for visiting next year. Some additional information relating to Milford's rich Industrial Heritage would be good. There was mention of a historical trail? Consider where additional water catchment schemes could be introduced e.g., Social Club, Marts Meadow Allotments,

Section C: Community

More information regarding business partnerships and sponsorship would enhance your portfolio. Whilst the Greenspace project is excellent and you want to tell everyone about the monumental efforts by everyone to make it happen, the judges felt that too many pages had been spent in the portfolio solely on this project when you could have included other relevant and important information such as Recycling, Spring Floral Displays, all year round activities, local press information / support etc. I know the judges just missed one of the schools visiting Greenspace by minutes but consider arranging for some children to be present during judging time. Continue to develop your relationship with the local Press. Consider arranging a privately engaged photographer to take photos on judging day which could be uploaded to your web page and Facebook.

Marks

Section A: 35

Section B: 26

Total Marks: 88

VILLAGE

Newton Solney

Gold

Judged on 10th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to the Children of Newton Solney Pre-School for their inspirational planted raised beds, miniature pond, and individual Seed Tray gardens.

Introduction

On a slightly overcast but warm morning the judges were met by Karen Brittan in The Unicorn pub car park. Based on last years 'Brewing with Barrels' theme the tour covered all the key elements of the village including the Pre-School, Main Street, St. Mary the Virgin Church grounds and views of the River Trent. A lovely tour incorporating floral displays, manicured grass areas, residential gardens, and woodlands. At the end, the judges were treated to a relaxing cup of tea and delicious cakes provided by Jane and Sue.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

Overall, the tour around Newton Solney was quite impressive with plenty of attractive features for the judges to take in. Along the route the judges viewed several locations {grass verges, hard standing} where barrels, boxes and troughs had been planted with a variety of colourful annuals, perennials and in some cases shrubs. e.g. Bottle Brush, Hostas, Hops, Holly Hocks and the usual Geraniums, Marigolds, Begonias, and Impatiens etc. Some very good plantings were on display. The judges liked the hanging baskets particularly on the two Bus Shelters and the Finger Post Sign by the green. The Unicorn Inn and the window boxes at the Brickmakers Arms were good. On several of the street corners and pavement / wall edges, Holly Hocks and Hostas were growing with low growing perennials. The Alms Houses at Sunnyside were looking particularly good in the sunshine. A couple of beds with Hydrangeas and neat shrub borders adjacent the houses were good. The recently relaid lawns were lush and developing nicely. The gardens at the back of the Alms Houses were particularly good leading to another area of the grounds showing a range of good quality mature colourful shrubs. Throughout the walking tour, judges were able to view many beautiful residential gardens which played their part in making Newton Solney a very pretty village.

Section B: Environment

The majority of the grass areas viewed were being well maintained as was the Bowling Green located adjacent to the Village Hall. Streets and the respective street furniture {bins, benches etc.} were clean and tidy. The grass space for children at the Unicorn Inn was good and the Silver Birch wooded area is a delight. At St. Mary, the Virgin's grounds the judges could see that there were two grass maintenance regimes were in operation. The neatly mown areas of the 'open'

cemetery was looking very neat and tidy, and the closed area was more relaxed with longer grass benefiting the natural flora and fauna. The dedicated wildflower area was excellent showing a good variety flower type. The Tom, Dick and Harry compost heaps were doing well and are a real benefit for the many planted boxes, tubs, troughs and hanging baskets around the village. The 6 beautifully kept allotments located at the rear of Sunnyside Alms Houses were being well maintained and were growing a wide range of fruit and veg. It was good to see that reference to the Brewing Industry was evident through the display of planted barrels along the tour. Also interesting to see hops growing as part of a number of displays across the village. The judges enjoyed the walk down to the River Trent and the confluence with the River Dove. Perfect area for wildlife. The Interpretation board was interesting - very informative. Owl Boxes were on display as well as bird and bat boxes in other locations. The Sedum 'living' roof at the Pre-School was lovely to see.

Section C: Community

At the end of a very interesting and enjoyable tour, Karen gave a very good concise and to the point summary of what had been happening in Newton Solney over the last 12 months. Keeping everybody informed across the village, the group uses What's App, the village Notice Boards, regular meetings at the Unicorn Inn {hosted by Hannah Beasley} and regular Newsletters. Jacob regularly puts out You Tube Videos. Fund raising is carried out through plant sales, donations and additional funds are acquired through the Parish Council {£500} and local businesses. Newton Solney Pre-School was a pleasure to visit. The children are very enthusiastic growing a range of plants on the raised beds / tables. Their individual 'seed tray' gardens were amazing. Next door 'Forest School' had a Willow Tunnel, Outdoor Classrooms, Bug Hotels, an amazing facility for the local children.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

Some of the floral displays would be improved if they could be bolder and with more impact. This can be achieved by increasing the size of the beds / tubs or increase the number that are grouped together. Some areas were in the process of being renovated / improved. The judges will be keen to see how these have developed next year.

Section B: Environment

While there was quite a good reference to the Brewing Industry within your entry, why not consider Newton Solney's other famous industries e.g. Clay digging, Brickworks and of course Fishing. The wildflower displays at St. Mary the Virgin Church yard was particularly good. Consider where else in the village this wow factor could be introduced. e.g. Difficult verges or on the edge of woodland or at the village hall. The judges look forward to seeing the proposed water butts that will be installed at the Alms Houses and at the Pre-School. Art in the landscape is always a challenge. Consider how you might introduce some elements into village life.

Section C: Community

During the tour it was noticed that the judges were not taken to see Newton Park Hotel. Consider encouraging the hotel to take part in your 'bloom' campaign and you might consider entering it for one of the 'specials'. Continue to engage with local businesses in order to develop partnerships, gain sponsorship or funding in kind. Consider introducing an Interpretation Board for the wildflower area in the churchyard. People are interested to know what they can expect to see in a wildflower meadow. The judges did not meet many of Newton Solney's hard working volunteers. Consider arranging some volunteers along next year's judging route.

Marks

Section A: 33

Section B: 27

Section C: 27

Total Marks: 87

Medal Awarded: Gold



VILLAGE

Elsham

Silver

Judged Tuesday 2nd July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen and Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award to Elsham Parish Nature Reserve, formerly an old quarry site now transformed into a wonderful wildflower and wildlife facility which as it develops will be fully enjoyed by villagers and visitors alike.

Introduction

On a dry but overcast afternoon we were met at Elsham Village Hall by Sandra Van Oosterhout and Andrew Horner. They provided welcome refreshments and discussed their involvement with this year's first entry into East Midlands in Bloom for Elsham village. The village is picturesque with attractive housing and gardens within a rural community. A very good first time entry. Well done, Elsham.

Section A: Horticulture

The tour commenced at the village hall where planters were looking colourful with a combination of annuals and perennials. To the back of the hall was an attractive newly planted herbaceous border with a wide variety of plants on display. In the landscaped area at the front of the Hall, is a small memorial garden in memory of the Elsham Wold Airfield and its WW2 connections. An attractive sculpture of a Lancaster Bomber Aircraft surrounded by red poppies, within a bed of shrubs and perennials was beautifully displayed. Walking through the village towards the Elsham village sign the judges viewed several attractive gardens. At the Village Entrance Sign, a well planted border of annuals and perennials welcomed the visitor. This flower bed was thoughtfully planted with a great choice of colour and interest by Di and Andrew. We passed the old Telephone Box, with 9 creative planters attached to the windows looking very healthy and colourful with a mixture of annuals. We also saw the Play Park with well maintained grounds and with a great selection of play equipment. Several well planted barrier troughs were also on display at the entrance. The beautifully painted old horse drawn plough share was another attractive feature, with a fixed base and a barrel planted with annuals. As the judges continued their walking tour through the village a lovely grass Island Bed with planted borders was being maintained by Di. Mixed annuals and perennials were on display and the word Elsham spelt out in white stones created quite a feature. Throughout the village the judges could see well maintained verges and grassed areas. Special mention for Paul Richardson who personally ensures that the grass verge outside his home is always in tip top condition. During the walking tour, judges were impressed to see that resident's gardens were beautifully planted and being

well cared for. e.g. 16 New Street, 7 Astley Corner, 37 Church Street. Too many to mention all of them individually but they all contributed significantly to Elsham's colourful street scene. At the Home Farm Care Home, we saw an attractive colourful display of trees, shrubs, and wide range of perennials to the entrance of the home. All the village planted areas and containers were well stocked with healthy plants being well maintained.

Section B: Environment

Elsham's real attraction apart from being a quiet attractive residential village is the Nature Reserve at the site of the old Quarry. On the day of our visit the open spaces were covered with Oxeye daisy, teasel and purple thistle with grassland covering the chalk. Over the years many native trees have been planted offering dense woodland which contrasts with the areas of open space. This area is a nature reserve for wildlife as well as many varieties of wildflowers. This area is well managed with good signage for the visitor. There is an awareness throughout the village of consideration towards wildlife within the environment, with wildflower beds, a native pink Hawthorn recently planted and perennial planting replacing summer annuals. Bird boxes, bat boxes and hedgehog houses can be seen around the village. There is evidence of pride for Elsham within the community as paths and open spaces are neat and tidy. All Saints Church in its woodland setting was looking very picturesque and well maintained. Outside the Nature Reserve entrance was a newly created wildflower area with bench. This very nice little feature which is developing well.

Section C: Community

Throughout the visit there was constructive conversation from Sandra and Andrew regarding the future planning of the village and its involvement in East Midlands in Bloom. Sandra mentioned that the residents are kept informed of village news / activities through Facebook, Elsham Website and Notice Boards. Local Press are the Scunthorpe Telegraph and the Grimsby Telegraph. There is a great sense of community spirit which no doubt will be drawn upon. Funding and support has come from the Parish Council, the North Lincs Council and receiving of grants from Tesco, Anglian Water who painted benches and the Telephone Box and local businesses such as MFG garage, Nelipack and T R Window Cleaning who did excellent work cleaning all the road signs, salt bins and bus stop. Volunteers within the local community do organised litter picking twice a year, and they are lucky to have a local 'handy man' who regularly clears the paths of weeds and detritus.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

The planting around the village is great, to a good standard and varied, with consideration towards watering, and prioritising wildlife. Keep this up and think about other areas that may benefit from additional displays, may be at bus shelters and communal areas? You may consider some additional planting within the church yard as it is an 'open' church yard? You explained about the play park land being rented, but adding a few native trees may give shelter and soften the boundary to this area? Involve more residents who have some lovely gardens to become involved. Consider entering the Best Front Garden Award next year or the Best Business e.g. Home Farm Residential Home

Section B: Environment

You are well aware of the impact that the village and surrounding areas have upon your environment, continue with this approach, and involve villagers to become aware of the ethos of your village life, promoting your sustainable practices to all. Promote water harvesting, composting, bug hotels, bird boxes etc. Consider introducing a series of Interpretation Boards within the Local Nature Reserve for wildlife and wildflower information. With the help of the Wildlife Trust consider going for SSI status. Also, at the wildflower area located with its own bench on the way to the former quarry. More information regarding Elsham's heritage would be beneficial - Elsham Wolds Airfield, Elsham Hall, Richard Hornsby Agricultural Engineer, Wallace L Sargent Astronomer, George Green - American Civil War etc.

Section C: Community

Continue to research sources of sponsorship from local business, your Parish Council and North Lincs Council. Look for new opportunities for funding etc. Adding the Squadron Badge onto street signs and positioning the plough within the village gives a great feeling of community respect for your rural and social history, so look for additional interest relating to your village to promote. Try and set up an 'in Bloom' Group to organise and promote the activities within Elsham village life, so that the tasks associated with 'East Midlands in Bloom' are shared between the community and not the responsibility of just a few. Promote your litter pick days to encourage more to become involved. Try to develop links with your local school and other voluntary organisations. In the news and events listed on the Parish Council Website it was noted that you listed all the people / volunteers who had been carrying out tasks various tasks in the village - grass cutting, planting, watering etc. It would have been nice to this in your portfolio. Again, the judges could have looked up your list of events and activities. Consider listing some in your portfolio. Try to develop links with Radio Scunthorpe / Radio Lincolnshire. There was difficulty in opening the Digital Portfolio. Consider a different format of presenting it or print out a copy in advance for the judges on arrival.

Marks:

Section A: 32

Section B: 24

Section C: 18

Total Marks Awarded 74

Awarded Silver



VILLAGE

South Ferriby

SILVER

Judged on 4th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to Virginnia and Ruth for the beautiful gardens created, lovingly maintained and much admired at Cliff Road, Horse Pond, High Street and North End.

Introduction

South Ferriby is a very attractive picturesque village located close to the Humber estuary, surrounded by rural countryside. The Judges met at David Mouncey's house where he gave them a brief introduction to the village and showed a collection of photographs of previous projects undertaken and certificates of awards received. Ann Boulton then took the judges on a tour of the village where many attractive gardens, planters and colourful hanging baskets were seen.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

All the planters, hanging baskets and floral displays consisted of a mixture of annuals and perennials, with some lovely combinations of planting. All were maintained to a high horticultural standard. It was a pleasure to meet Linda and Lesley at their roadside garden on Sluice Road. Their creativeness in landscaping and healthy planting along a previously discarded strip of land beside a busy road was a credit to them. At Beaulah Fields, the Play Area, Bowls Club, and outdoor Gym equipment were all well maintained, being neat and tidy. Some lovely fruit trees and colourful shrubs also adorned the area. The land was originally gifted to South Ferriby by Eastwood Cement in 1954 and extended to form this lovely park in 1996. At Horkstow Road we saw some a couple of attractive raised flower beds of seasonal planting located on either side of a nice bench. The planting along the High Street wall was most attractive, with creative thought given to a difficult growing area. This long stretch of busy road has been transformed by this planting scheme. A never ending display of colourful annuals, perennials, roses, and various shrubs has been lovingly planted and maintained by Virginnia and Ruth. At 'Woodville' House and the Old Methodist Chapel the judges saw well planted colourful hanging baskets and planters. Cliff Road and Horse Pond were a delight to see with a variety of colour and planting combining annuals with perennials. The Rise was also very good. All plants were healthy and well maintained. The judges thoroughly enjoyed their visit to North End, where they saw the wonderful gardens at Oxlip Cottage and The Farrishes. These were extremely well planted, very colourful and a wide variety of plants used. The planted boat was an attractive feature by the entrance sign to the village and the planted wheelbarrow at the beginning of Northend was also very good.

Section B : Environment

There is a feeling of considerable pride within this community, with the streets being neat and tidy and no sign of litter. The communal areas were beautifully kept with seating at various locations. An awareness of care for the wildlife was seen at the Horse Pond where there was a bug hotel and an ideal habitat for supporting pond life. Along the Cliff Road there was an effective system for the collection of spring water which was fed through a hosepipe to water the plants. The banks here were cleared in parts giving space for additional planting and for spring bulbs. Planted bank opposite Oxlip Cottage was very impressive with a whole variety of shrubs and perennials on display. Horse Pond is an amazing feature and is located just off the main road through the village. The woodland at the back of the pond is excellent for wildlife along with the bug hotels and pond itself. There is seating for the public so they can relax and enjoy the view as well as the wildlife. Little paths take you through the site which gives the visitor a different perspective. Hidden in amongst the plant foliage there is some art / sculptures on display. The overall site is well maintained and a feature that South Ferriby villagers should be proud of.

Section C: Community

There is signage throughout the village and on display along the High Street wall are mounted awards from previous year's received from Britain in Bloom and CPRE Best Kept Village. Several sponsors are also displayed which indicated that over a period a variety of businesses and organisations have invested into South Ferriby. e.g. Oak Medical Services, THM, Henry Clark and Sons to mention only a few. To maintain such a well kept village there must be a good level of community involvement, but unfortunately, we did not meet many residents from different organisations. The village has several events through the year including their Summer Fair and village bonfire. Sponsorship for the village is fairly healthy and as a result they can undertake new projects from time to time. They use Facebook as their main source of communication as well as the parish website which helps to promote village events and activities.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

Just keep on doing the great work! We saw some lovely planting, with a varied selection of flowers all beautifully cared for and suitably planted within their appropriate place. We commented that most of the propagation and planting as well as maintenance was undertaken by Virginnia and Ruth. To help them in the future it may be an idea to recruit more support to maintain this high standard? It would have been good to have seen the 'all year round' planting within the community spaces, to appreciate the seasonal changes. This could be shown within a portfolio. Looking at last year's report the judges were taken to see some allotments and a community orchard. This year the judges did not see these locations so consider putting them back into the tour.

Section B: Environment

We saw some composting within the garden at the Horse Pond, but not much more around the village. Villagers could be encouraged to have more compost facilities along with more water butts? There were wildlife friendly practices seen around the village. Consider trying to expand on this practice across the village. An opportunity for the school, young people, and other groups to take an active part in the conservation of the village could also be developed. The history of South Ferriby could be developed and promoted, with an opportunity to tell the story of the local Nelthorpe family, the industrial history of the Cemex Cement works and the village 13th century church, which would have been worth visiting. Consider adding your local school and parish church to future tours.

Section C: Community

It would have been good to have met and to have seen more groups or representatives from the village taking part and being involved with East Midlands in Bloom. Your beautiful village must have many who would welcome this opportunity? The local school could become more active within the village engaging pupils in all aspects of village life, they could assist the village in all areas of IT, social media etc. A portfolio on arrival is always useful, giving information on the village, the involvement of village groups, and the proposed tour giving the names of people to be met at various stages. At the end of the day, the judges had a coffee break at the Nelthorpe Arms, and they suggested to the owners that they should consider participating next year. The owners said they would so the judges will be looking forward to seeing their contribution to your entry.

Marks

Section A: 32

Section B: 21

Section C: 18

Total Marks: 71

Medal Awarded: Silver



VILLAGE

New Holland

Silver

Judged on 4th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award to Alison and Jon Nettleton for the huge contribution they make towards New Holland's entry to the 'bloom' competition and their commitment to supporting the local community.

Introduction

We were met and welcomed at the 'large brick' roundabout which is the main entry to New Holland village by Parish Councillor Louise Hudson and members of New Holland's dedicated team of volunteers. The village is located on the bank of the River Humber and is a historic seaport in North Lincolnshire. Though weather conditions were not ideal, the judges met several volunteers along the way and enjoyed an interesting and varied tour.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

Around the village we saw mainly colourful annual planting in tubs, planters and hanging baskets. The visitor is welcomed into the village with displays on the roundabout in six planted barrels, at the base to the 'Tommy' statues and at the village sign. Here the grass was neatly mown, and kerbs were well maintained. The long rectangular central bed located on the grass bank has been superbly designed and well planted with colourful lobelia and begonias as well as New Holland depicted in lettering. There was some attractive planting in the triangular bed opposite the Arbor Forest Offices and at the Railway Station with its low raised 'sleeper' bed and picnic table. Along the Millennium Way at Marsh Lane, we saw the tyre planters which looked colourful with perennials and annuals that are maintained by the WI, Elsie, and her helpers. At the New Holland Community Centre, there was some excellent planting in window boxes and hanging baskets, which enhanced this part of the village. The roundabout has recently been improved with colourful planting and the positioning of a small boat in the centre adding a colourful display of annuals. Louise Hudson has been doing sterling work on this site to try and improve the entrance to the village. Her efforts have not been in vain, and it is becoming quite a feature. To each side of the road are positioned a 'Tommy' sculpture with seasonal planting. The tour then proceeded along Marsh Lane, the Millennium Way and Park through the village to the Railway Station. The planted triple tower outside the station was well planted and maturing nicely. The new big planters on, and near the station platform looked very colourful with geraniums and lobelia. The triangular bed across the road from the Community Hall was looking particularly good.

Section B: Environment

New Holland benefits from the Lincoln Castle Way by-pass keeping the commercial heavy traffic out of the village, enabling the village to be quieter and a more peaceful place. This has given the community an opportunity to look towards the future, planning areas of conservation,

sustainable planting and creating wildflower meadows. Throughout the village are residential gardens and planters giving displays of annuals and perennials. There are areas of natural beauty with established trees, especially along the Millennium Way and Marsh Lane where the woods have bird boxes and are a natural habitat for wildlife. The benches throughout the village were very nice and obviously being well looked after. The grass and flowerbed maintenance carried out by Alison and Jon Nettleton on behalf of the village was very good. They obviously enjoy making New Holland as attractive and welcoming as possible.

Section C: Community

Reading the New Holland Village Newsletter, there is a good sense of community spirit within the village. The Grandma's Pantry within the Community Centre offers a focal point for village life and social events. The Parish Council are active within the village supporting funding to improve the environment. The Newsletter communicates well with residents advising of events and activities throughout the village. Good to see that there was an article about East Midlands in Bloom 2024 Competition. The judges were aware of the Village Notice Board on display. A good way of informing residents of village news and activities. The Scout Group offer the young people an opportunity to experience the activities of the Scouting organisation. It was good to see the very unusual and thought provoking seat sculpture on Millennium Way by Pete Rogers, which created interest along the walkway. A very peaceful place to sit and enjoy the surroundings and bask in the sound bird song and insects. The New Holland Railway Station is maintained with the help of local volunteers who have transformed the area over the years, making it the attractive place with the colourful planters that it is today. Grandma's Pantry / Community Hall with its wall troughs and hanging baskets is an excellent feature and significantly brightens up this part of the village. The Recreation Ground / Sports Field and play area looked good and was being well maintained. Congratulations to Alan Rank for all his hard work keeping New Holland tidy and Elsie Dent along with other WI volunteers who help to maintain the planted tractor tyres. Good to see that a number of the main industries in the area have supported New Holland through sponsorship of floral displays or village activities.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

Continue with the good work that you are doing and encourage others to become involved in the New Holland Bloom Group where they could help with plant propagation, planting, watering, and maintenance of open public places. Encourage residents to improve and maintain their own spaces with hedge trimming, path maintenance and grass cutting aiming to enhance their environment. Encourage more residents to enter their garden into the competition. It was a pleasure to view Brian Lyles Garden at 'Farringford' on Marsh Lane. The planting of the Christmas Tree and the creation of the area in 'Memory of our Queen' are good examples of good practices to improve the environment. The area around the new scout hut development should be given thought to regarding future planting, water butts, and sustainability. If possible, consider showing the judges more residential gardens along the judging route. The judges felt that the 'Brick' roundabout could be further improved by removing more bricks in an area (e.g. 6 bricks by 2 or 3 bricks) to create a larger planting space which would heighten the floral impact. The planted boat is a lovely idea and is quite a feature in this wind swept part of the village. Consider increasing the density of planting here which again will help to create a bigger wow factor.

Section B: Environment

Think about how the collection of water and its storage for watering the planters, hanging baskets etc. that could be located around the village. Are there any suitable locations where water harvesting off buildings can be achieved.? Consider creating communal areas for composting and encourage residents to use water butts and to compost their own garden rubbish. The areas around the school, Millennium Park, Millennium Way, and the Recreation Ground could become areas where consideration could be given towards wildlife, with appropriate planting to encourage more diversity of species. The judges noticed a plaque relating to New Holland Airfield. There was no mention of this either in conversation or in the portfolio. It is obviously an important part of New Holland's heritage. Consider including more information about this in your portfolio or even develop a planting scheme theme around it. Would it be relevant to have an Information Board about New Holland Airfield and its importance to the village. Does New Holland have history of Clay Pits, Boat Building, Ferry Crossings etc. which could be referred to in the Portfolio. There is potential to develop a wildflower meadow somewhere within the New Holland Recreation Ground. The judges will look forward to seeing this takes shape in the future.

Section C: Community

Consider creating a more formal / recognised 'In Bloom' Group to organise, encourage and involve more people, businesses within the community to become involved. Alan and Louise organise litter picking days to ensure the village is kept as tidy as possible. Consider taking photographic evidence as they collect litter around the village which can be put in the Portfolio. The same when community bulb planting takes place. Continue to use the Community Centre to house village activities and the Village Newsletter which gives general and 'Helpline' information to the community. Develop a relationship with the school to become involved with the village, enabling pupils to become aware of environmental issues affecting their lives. Consider including a visit by the judges to your local primary school where they could perhaps meet some of the children and see how they grow plants and help with the watering. In the future, the school should consider entering the school category of East Midlands in Bloom? While the local Scout Group are waiting for their new building, consider helping them to develop a small garden or have planters on display around the hut or by the fence. Improving the look of this area would benefit the village overall. Keep looking for funding from local authorities, community groups and local business to support future projects and improvements to New Holland. It was good to see the Notice Board, but I do not believe there was any mention of the 'Bloom' competition or on what day the judges were coming to New Holland?

Marks

Section A: 27

Section B: 18

Section C: 20

Total Marks: 65

Medal Awarded: Silver



VILLAGE

Mareham Le Fen

Bronze

Judged on 11th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to the children of Mareham Le Fen Church of England Primary School for their beautifully planted raised beds containing a mixture of colourful shrubs, perennials and annuals that were well maintained and a credit to the school.

Introduction

On a cool overcast morning, the judges were met at the village Community Hall by Andrew Everard, Clerk to the Parish Council. After receiving a welcome refreshment, the judges were taken on a tour of the village which included the local church, Primary School, and residential properties. Returning to the Community Hall, Andrew gave a brief presentation outlining what the village had been doing over the last few months and their aspirations for developing the village. Well done Mareham Le Fen

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

At the Community Hall, Andrew showed the judges the planted pots and the colourful raised bed. The shrubs planted on either side of the 2 benches were very nice. Throughout the tour the judges were able to view a large number of very good, colourful and well maintained residents' gardens e.g. The Hever, Owl Cottage, 26 Church Rise, Ormsby House, Old Chapel Cottage, The Willows and Fieldside. These were just a few when many more could have been mentioned. It was good to see that the pupils at Mareham Le Fen had bought into horticulture in a big way. Edward and Millie enthusiastically showed the judges the 3 planted raised beds at the front of the school and another 2 or 3 at the back of the school with a number of individual plant pots. Some of the beds had been planted with pollinators to encourage the bees and others had a mixture of shrubs and perennials. The majority of the plants had been grown from seed. In the spring there is a display of bulbs. It is good to know that the school has a thriving Gardening Club. The Royal Oak, a lovely thatched 17c building is located at the hub of the village and is quite a feature. Painted white and set at a cross roads it's hanging baskets and planted tubs and troughs make a nice venue for the villagers.

Section B : Environment

Mareham Le Fen's heritage is quite well documented. Listed in the 1086 Domesday Book as Maun - Lord of the Manor was William 1. St. Helen's Church of England dates to the 13c and within its grounds there is a medieval stone cross. The churchyard was being well maintained. Main grass areas were looking neat and tidy and the allocated area for the wildflowers was looking for a treat. 'God's Acre - wildflower meadow was initiated in 2020 and has thrived over the last 3 years. Consideration should be given to taking this concept to other village locations. There are 3 War Graves within the churchyard which the Parish / villagers are responsible for. The Royal Oak is Grade 11 listed and at the far end of Main Street there is the remnants of a

former windmill though the judges were not informed about its former use. There were a number of well crafted and well maintained benches along the tour. The children at the Primary School have built a beautiful Bug Hotel. This construction is constantly maintained and monitored to see what insect life takes up residence.

Section C: Community

The judges were informed about the range of all year round activities which takes place in the village. Some is also documented in the portfolio. Activities through the year include, Community and social events, Garden Club, Revesby and Mareham WI, The Parish Council recently purchased a New Notice Board for their notices and its available to be used for community fliers promoting local events. Social media is also a method to stay connected with the community. It was noted that the East Midlands in Bloom competition was published through their website, notice board and social media. It was good to see that some partnership working has taken place with representatives from Gleeson Homes planting a Commemorative Tree.

Areas for Development

Section A: Horticulture

The Royal Oak is such a big white building dominating the street scene. Its appearance and attractiveness could be improved if the hanging baskets were bigger and perhaps some wall troughs or free standing troughs along the frontage. Some grass areas across the village were pretty good but there is room for improvement. Try to secure a reputable, reliable grass cutting contractor in time for next year's judging.

At the Community Hall, consider using fewer individual pots and have larger raised beds, these would need less watering and have a greater floral impact. Consider increasing the size of the beds around the 2 benches and increase the density of the planting. Consider visiting the Village Bowling Green as part of the tour next year perhaps the judges could meet a couple of the regular users on the day.

The low finger post (Moorside, Wilksby and Tunby Woodside) on the large triangular piece of grass land is crying out to be planted with wildflowers or plant a large perennial bed. - save on mowing... Consider something similar on the triangular bed by Horncastle Road. It would be good if you could persuade a local farmer to cut the grass on the Mareham United Football pitch until such time the club is formed and operating again.

Section B: Environment

Try to ensure that the selected route for the tour is free of weeds in the gutters, weed growth at base of walls and litter. There is some documented information about Mareham Le Fen's heritage. Consider trying to make more of this through planting schemes, Interpretation Boards etc. The Bus Shelter appeared bland consider introducing a couple of hanging baskets or shrub borders here. It was disappointing to see litter and plastic bottles under the bench adjacent the Royal Oak. With the help of volunteers, try to check the route just prior to judging. Remember that wherever you take the judges - walking or driving the judges judge what they see. So, plan your route carefully ensuring that as far as weed growth in gutters, base of walls etc is removed.

Section C: Community

Consider arranging volunteers to meet the judges on different sections of the route so they can tell the judges how they help your campaign.

In your portfolio consider showing evidence of 'local press' support for the village and your bloom efforts e.g. group litter picks or bulb planting

Photographic evidence of Mareham Le Fen's Spring bulb display would be extremely helpful.
Continue to engage local businesses for sponsorship / partnership working. e.g. Gleeson Homes.

Marks

Section A: 20

Section B: 16

Section C: 16

Total Marks: 52

Medal Awarded: Bronze

LARGE VILLAGE CATEGORY

SPONSORED BY FCC ENVIRONMENT



LARGE VILLAGE

Market Bosworth

Gold

Judged on 12th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & John Constable

Judges Award: To Nicole who has been dedicated to watering and maintaining the 6 containers of multi-coloured bedding plants and cordyline around the Market Place War Memorial in 2024.

Introduction

Judges were met by Peter Bailiss who introduced Park Ranger David Luther and Chris Hooker from Market Bosworth's in Bloom group. Market Bosworth (MB) appeared in the Doomsday Book and is, of course, well known for the battle in 1485 which decided the destiny of the English Crown. The village's heritage is therefore well known, and the bloom group have made the most of this tourist attraction and used it to increase the impact of their endeavours.

Areas of Achievement

Section A : Horticulture

Pretty much all that the judges were shown throughout the village was impeccable - hanging baskets, planters and a range of planted displays consisting of predominantly annuals were colourful and healthy. The planted Butterfly Sculpture planted with a display of red and white begonias was displayed alongside one of the main roads into the heart of the village. Red and yellow begonias and blue petunias surrounded a RNLI 200th Anniversary promotion board located outside the entrance to the Market Bosworth PC Memorial Garden. Judges were told that Market Bosworth 'Bloom' members have strong links to Cromer Lifeboat Station. The tranquil space of the memorial garden is mainly laid with trees and shrubs, an ideal haven for birds and wildlife. Adjacent is the well maintained Parish Field where local events are held throughout the year. The D Day Memorial beds of red and white begonias, blue petunias surround the flags of the main 'allied' nations, UK, Canada, and the USA. Adjacent was a further display showing Landing Craft LC 85 approaching what was a heavily defended beach. Both displays were stunning particularly as they are located adjacent to a very busy main road. The entire war memorial display was being maintained splendidly by Dick Handy who lives next door and pupils from The Dixie GS.

Judges then visited St. Peter's Churchyard which was also being impeccably maintained. We met deputy church warden Jane Glennon who joined regular volunteers on the second Saturday every month to keep the churchyard tidy for residents and visitors to the village. The vast majority were well cut so graves and memorials were kept clean, easily accessed, and visited.

The undergrowth at the southern corner of the churchyard had been cleared and an excellent garden overlooking the churchyard and church had been created by volunteers. The intention was that the flowers grown in the garden could be cut and used as graveside decoration or in the church itself. An excellent and thoughtful development.

As judges walked through the village some of the 120 stunning hanging baskets and 100 troughs were seen. Gill from Bridge Farm Nurseries explained that her company provided all the plants for Market Bosworth's campaign each year and they were planted up and delivered in June. Gill herself is a bloom group volunteer. Throughout the walking tour the judges saw many beautifully kept residential gardens and small businesses contributing to the village's floral display e.g., Park Street, The Old Red Lion, Pink Boutique, Living Wild, Bosworth Antiques, Rainbow Cottage, Jaffles@No.3 Cafe/ Bar, The Wheatsheaf Courtyard, The Old Gaol and many more. The 100 troughs and 120 hanging baskets have water reservoirs and are watered by Rotary Club volunteers John and Bill using an electric water bowser.

Section B: Environment

The Leicestershire CC Country Park is being maintained by David Luther and a team of volunteers who contributed 1,500 volunteering hours in 2023. 12 heritage variety apple trees have been planted in a community orchard and an orchard trail is planned. The 2 hectare Arboretum was started in 1972 and is being added to with the assistance of Bloom Group members - 10 identification boards assist the public to understand some of the planted species that are not all indigenous. These 37 hectares (ha) diverse habitat Country Park with its Green Flag Award is an excellent facility for Market Bosworth and the surrounding area. The 1ha Wildflower Meadow has been developing nicely over the years and the 1 okayha Bow pool and Stew ponds attracts a diverse range of wildlife. The new toilet block with its rainwater harvesting system, solar panels and a biological digester system helps to reduce maintenance to a minimum. From April to September wildlife surveying is being undertaken and additional training is being given to volunteers. Habitats have improved both naturally and artificially and the feeling was that numbers of raptors, barn owls and weasels have increased. Over a period of time 4 Bee Hives have been installed and now produce honey which is sold in the village. A small wildflower meadow has been created in St. Peter's Churchyard. Cowslips and Snowdrops have been introduced and were being monitored for their success. Heritage within Market Bosworth is well documented and includes listed buildings, The Battlefield Railway Line, Ancient Market Town with Roman occupation, The Dixie Family and Bosworth Hall. There is good evidence of 'art' in the landscape e.g. The Butterfly Sculpture, Wooden sculptures in the Country Park, Planted Police Helmets and King Richard 3rd plaque in the market square.

Section C: Community

The Bloom Group is to be congratulated for receiving the King's Award for Volunteering Service in 2023. The citation mentioned the creation and maintenance of horticultural excellence, environmental responsibility, and community involvement. The group is well funded with an annual appeal mailing being distributed to every household. Judges were provided with a lengthy list of community and business supporters. Substantial Parish Council support as well as numerous plant sales and raffles as well as returns from sales of Country Park produced honey. The Bloom Group helped to organise the National Gardens Association of gardens in the village and so received a percentage of ticket sales. The improvements carried out by volunteers were helped by the provision of a bench manufactured by Bolsover Woodlands (of Chesterfield) who employ people with learning difficulties maintaining woodlands.

The Bloom Group also assists with the Fire Station planting and maintenance while also helping with gardening clubs at 3 schools in the village. Advice to residents is freely given along with tree planting and litter picking throughout the village.

Involvement with The Market Bosworth School is well illustrated in the portfolio. Judges met with Peter Folwell and Peter Loosely outside The Dixie GS where some of the signs from a competition to design an RHS Celebratory poster inspired by the 60th Anniversary and the theme of 'Friendship' were on display. We learnt how the school has fostered links with schools in China, Germany, Mozambique and France and this was reflected in depicting their national flags in plants. The Bloom Group shares the cost of plants used at the school and helps with the planting.

Good to see that you get support from the local Press / magazines e.g., Aspect and Graphic. It was good to meet Rue as your 'on the day' photographer. The judges were delighted to meet Nicole Mecaun on the day, particularly as she takes great delight in maintaining the beautiful troughs around the Market Place War Memorial.

Areas for Development

Section A : Horticulture

Whilst there was a cordyline in most troughs all the other plants used in containers were annuals. It would move with RHS guidelines if areas that might be more suitable for perennials could be considered and or trialed. There were only a few examples of Market Bosworth through the seasons and the inclusion of more would give the judges an idea of how the village looks at other times of the year. For example, there must be some interesting colour in the Country Park in the autumn whilst spring flowering bulbs either naturally occurring or planted would be good to see.

Section B: Environment

The entry could have scored even better if there was more evidence of water recycling demonstrated and actual evidence of composting activities would also be beneficial. The judges were told that after trials, you had concluded that peat free compost did not produce the quality of plant required. The judges felt that the Country Park could have sufficient land in a suitable location to develop your own 'home developed' compost. Perhaps mixing in some 'home' produced compost with a peat free brand would not only support the RHS principals and help to produce a satisfactory product. There was mention of surveys of wildlife taking place in the Country Park. It would be interesting to learn of the outcome of such surveys and how results may influence future practice.

Section C: Community

Unfortunately, parked cars obstructed the view of the outstanding D Day memorial for passing traffic. It was a great shame that such an outstanding contribution could not be located in a more visible position - or the car parking restricted. It was good to hear that discussions are ongoing with the Rotary Club to upgrade the woodland play area in the Country Park. The judges will look forward to seeing how this proposal develops. Unfortunately, the judges were unable to meet any pupils or staff from local schools due to the time of judging. It would be beneficial if a visit could be organised next year by joint arrangement of an earlier judging day, particularly the Bloom group is involved in 3 school gardening clubs. Continue to develop links with the local press and it would be beneficial to have a member of the Press on judging day.

Marks

Section A : 37

Section B : 27

Section C: 26

Total Marks: 90

Medal Awarded: Gold



LARGE VILLAGE

Great Coates

Gold

Judged on 8th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & John Constable

Judges Award: to Natasha's Homecare facilities and their contribution to the Scarecrow Competition and village bloom entry.

Introduction

The judges were given a warm welcome to Great Coates by Dawn, Mike, and Emma along with members of Cambridge Park Academy, Great Coates WI, a representative from CAST Musical Theatre and volunteers supporting the village entry. Warm weather followed the judges around the very enjoyable tour which ended with refreshments back at The Venue in the Village.

Areas of Achievement

Section A : Horticulture

Great Coates is quite a 'busy' village with traffic laden roads passing through it and in particular the area around St. Nicholas Church which is situated beside one of the main routes into the village. Here, judges were shown 7 or 8 well planted, colourful barrier baskets, boxes, and troughs. A very difficult location to grow and maintain floral displays. A very impressive display as you enter the village. Along the route the judges saw many attractive front gardens e.g. The Avenue, Blackthorn Drive, Cooks Lane etc. Opposite 10 The Avenue was the first of three planted pony traps on display. This area, The Rockery, is one of the oldest parts of the village and is looked after by neighbouring residents. A lovely feature and further enhanced with the colourful and beautifully presented Pony Trap. Blackthorn Drive Island bed was a real winner with its mixture of annuals and perennials, it is still being looked after by William Dixon and the elephant feature continues to make you smile as you walk past it. The Venue in the Village is the main hub of Great Coates, and it has plenty to offer in terms of floral displays. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Garden looked a picture in the morning sunshine. Plants have matured and the wide range of mixed planting on display is becoming quite a feature in its own right. The unusual former Cow Byre site is quite unique to the village and has been treated subtly with quite attractive sustainable planting which is an important element to Great Coates rural heritage. Further on, the former site of the village 'Sheep Dip' is being well maintained. Well mown grass and majestic mature trees set off this part of the village to its best potential. On the main green the judges viewed the second Pony Trap on display. Again, well planted with a mixture of colourful annuals accompanying a planted trough and box. The Barrier Baskets and recycled bins at Robins Walk were good. Nice idea to use the old bins again. The Railway Station Level Crossing had beautiful Barrier Baskets on display for drivers to enjoy while waiting for the trains to pass through. The station platform is being kept clean and tidy and the developing King Charles III Coronation Wildflower bed is starting to take shape and is looking pretty good. Woad Lane Fernery is struggling a bit, but it is important to experiment with different types of Ferns to see which ones will thrive. The Flax Field to the rear gives a nod to Roman times as does the name of the Lane itself. The 'In Bloom Express' with its 3 carriages is an attractive fun roadside feature which is nicely planted and well maintained. Tommy's Mound with its commemorative bench,

shrub and rose beds were looking lovely. The umbrella hanging basket display was particularly good this year and quite a feature within the village. All the village entrance signs were nicely planted with troughs. At the far end of the village several very well planted Barrier Baskets and more recycled bins marked the entrance to this end of the village. The 3rd Pony Trap was located here and again it was planted with a variety of colourful annuals. Dedicated to Private Thomas Hinch, a farm waggoner who was killed in action in 1918 with no known grave. It is novel to see the 3 Pony Traps located across the length of the village.

Section B : Environment

St. Nicholas Church and churchyard looked very good with it's well maintained grass areas, trees, and shrubs. The villagers are responsible for maintaining 2 Commonwealth War Graves on site. The formal War Memorial, located at Great Coates Nursery School was being well maintained as were the planters situated on either side of the wall plaque commemorating the fallen in both World Wars. Formed from the Sutton Estates the village's heritage connection is covered with the Romans, formerly a Moated Village with the 13th century St Nicholas Church, farming with the Cow Byre and Sheep Deep and strong connections to both World Wars. The 'bloomers' have been busy introducing more sustainable planting and less but colourful annuals in certain locations. Wildflower displays have been developed along roadside verges and in Great Coates Railway Station. The Community Orchard is beginning to establish itself now and the area known as Herbert Rollett Way, which undertook a huge transformation, is looking very good now. Pear Tree Paddock is a site to watch as it develops with the guidance and support from Emma of the Wildlife Trust. As part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative the villagers planted 70 trees across the village and in the grounds of the Venue in the Village. It was good to see that Great Coates received a Civic Award in 2023 for 'Environmental Impact' which obviously reflects everybody's efforts to make Great Coates special. Judges were impressed with the North East Lincolnshire Council's 'Love Great Coates' Collection Cart. It certainly looked the part. Also, the information in 'Great Coates Village Magazine' which provided Waste and Recycling Information for the remaining part of the summer. Watering has become a little easier with a new high pressure tap being installed, and the lovely yellow bowser will not have to stand 'idle' for so long as it fills. Grass areas were being maintained beautifully and there was no evidence of litter or detritus along the route.

Section C: Community

The Portfolio provided important information regarding Great Coates in Bloom members and names of companies and organisations who have provided support through funding or in kind e.g., HSH Coldstores, East Midlands Railway, Dalkia, Great Coates Village Council, Great Coates WI, Pennells Garden Centres and CAST Musical Theatre along with many undisclosed private donations. Community spirit within the village appears to be thriving with many documented year round activities taking place e.g., Scarecrow Festival with 86 entries on display this year, Santa visits, Halloween, Easter Fun with Buggy, and Brandie and not forgetting McMillan Coffee Mornings to mention only a few. In addition, this year they held a special D Day 80th Anniversary event. Residents are kept informed of village news / activities through the Council Website, the Great Coates Village Magazine, and Notice Boards around the village. The judges noted that in both these communications East Midlands in Bloom and Britain in Bloom judging dates were mentioned as well as an appeal to help keep the village tidy. It was a pleasure for the judges to meet Steph, Archie, and Kerry from the Cambridge Park Academy. The students contribute significantly to keeping the village looking lovely by helping to maintain the hedgerows, creating, and maintaining several planted box beds at The Venue in the Village as well as providing a composting bin and bug hotel. The judges were welcomed to the Great Coates Nursery School with 2 beautifully sung songs from Charlotte, Ada, Charlie, Cecilia, Annabelle, Lacey, Charlie,

Annabelle, Polly, and Lyla and were then shown their school garden and Forest School area. There is evidence showing litter picking events that involve many of the volunteers (between 16 and 20) coming together and children helping with plant watering duties. It was good to see Natasha's Child Care facilities and the beautifully created display with Scarecrows, planted wall troughs, hay bale, paper flowers and butterflies - all located on the edge of the pavement outside her home.

Areas for Development

Section A : Horticulture

Whilst you have a number of well planted Barrier Baskets, perhaps you could consider introducing additional hanging baskets (lamp posts, buildings) or 'umbrella' hanging basket stands.

Section B : Environment

Whilst there were pictures in the Portfolio of the 'Living Wall', it would have been nice to see it. Continue to 'up grade' the quality of some of the roadside / wallside / sub station intrusions.

Section C : Community

The judge's would like to have seen further evidence of Press involvement and general support for Great Coates in Bloom apart from the articles in the Village Magazine. No 'press' were around on judging day and it didn't appear that anybody was taking pictures of the judging during the route or on a more formal basis. Continue to develop partnerships with local companies and mainstay industries. Consider installing additional interpretation boards in specific locations to further promote Great Coates heritage.

Marks

Section A: 36

Section B: 26

Section C: 27

Total Marks: 89

Medal Awarded: Gold



LARGE VILLAGE

Deeping St. Nicholas

Silver

Judged on 12th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & John Constable

Judges Award: To the children of Deeping St. Nicholas Primary School for the beautifully planted and well maintained floral troughs and vegetable garden.

Introduction

On a slightly chilly overcast afternoon, the judges arrived at the Vine House Farm and over a cup of tea, Paul Barrett and Steve Embleton outlined what had been happening throughout the village and at Vine House Farm itself. The walking and driving tour incorporated floral displays, wildflower areas, residential gardens, and a visit to the local Primary School.

Areas of Achievement

Section A : Horticulture

The planted troughs and planters viewed throughout the tour were colourful and were well maintained. Nice to see the colourful planted troughs located below the Parish Council Notice Board and the Book Box facility. The mixed planting on the triangular bed has been developing well. Colourful perennials mixed in with a range of all year-round interest shrubs is a delight to see. Known as The Sensory Garden, it certainly fulfills its objective. The judges enjoyed visiting the Primary School where the children were keen to show us how they watered their planted troughs at the entrance to the school. Great care was being taken as they were obviously proud of their endeavours. Judges were told that 4 new bigger planters have been distributed across the village and are much more impressive than the previous smaller ones. Some attractive and well maintained residents' gardens could be seen during the tour e.g., 24 Haywain Drive with their 2 excellent hanging baskets.

Section B : Environment

As the judges progressed through the tour, it was noted that grass maintenance across the village was pretty good. There was some evidence of weed growth in street gutters but little evidence of litter or detritus. The main wow factor of this year's entry was the particularly good wildflower areas located adjacent to Vine House Farm Shop / Cafe. The field had been laid out specifically for the showing of wildflowers along with specific areas dedicated to Butterflies, Willow Tunnel, Play Area, Little Apple Orchard, Lake Area, Sun Flowers etc. Composting was taking place as part of the visitor educational experience. There were plenty of Interpretation Boards across the different areas of the site explaining what might be seen at each location. Solar Panels were also discreetly located were used to generate sufficient energy to power the cafe. In a small corner of The Green, an area had been laid to wildflowers, this was developing quite well. On the opposite side of The Green is a small stand of trees / woodland, some work has been carried out to try and improve this area. Ferns and Cyclamen have been planted but it will take a little while to establish. Judges were told bluebells can be seen here in the spring.

Section C : Community

The judges noticed that in the Village News Magazine, you have the Pride of Deeping St. Nicholas Awards which cover subjects such as Planting throughout the village, volunteering to help with hedge maintenance and bramble clearance, making and repairing planters. Well done to everyone who helped to keep the village neat and tidy whether you received an award or not. The Book Box (Blooming Books) idea was very good. Perhaps the idea could be expanded to other parts of the village. There is evidence of local business support and partnership working. EDF Energy / Deeping St. Nicholas Wind Farm Advisory Group has been quite supportive / beneficial to the village as have Albany Garden Services, Classic Print and not forgetting Vine House Farm itself. Communications within the village is mainly done through social media such as Facebook, Deeping St. Nicholas Chatter, Village News, and the Parish Council's 6 Notice Boards. It was noted that there are quite a few year round activities in the village, these include Singing on The Green, Tabletop Sales, Dog Show, Local Gardening Club and activities, Village Fete, and the always available Chatter Natter Table. The community memory benches located within the gravel bed on the Triangle have been beautifully made and are a major feature at this site.

Areas for Development

Section A : Horticulture

Along the route the judges saw some lovely residential gardens, consider taking the judges to see more of the village and the efforts that have been made to make their front gardens lovely therefore contributing to the overall appearance of the village. Is there an opportunity to consider introducing hanging baskets to lamp posts or free standing stanchions in some locations within the village? In the Village News, there is mention of Littleworth Park and St. Nicholas Park. Consider taking the judges there next year.

Could horticulture be used to bring the village together? Perhaps organise a village hanging basket/planter competition - judging can be done from photographs? Hold a communal planting event - offer some advice possibly with the support of a local garden centre?

Section B: Environment

Overall, Deeping St. Nicholas was clean and tidy, but it is important to remember that wherever the judges are taken the route needs to be free of weeds in the roadside gutters etc. The judges read some information about Tongue End Nature Space. It would have been interesting to hear more about it and what you are proposing to do. Consider visiting Deeping St. Nicholas Church as part of a future tour that could also allow some introduction of local history and heritage. Consider introducing more wildflower areas within the village.

Section C: Community

Whilst the judges received some good information about the village during the walkabout and over a cup of tea, additional important data could have been provided through a portfolio for judges to reflect on after the visit eg photographs of spring floral displays, litter picking campaigns, bulb planting events, photographs of volunteers planting the floral boxes / troughs, Name the local businesses who get involved with the village and in helping you make the village look attractive etc. Anything that it is not possible to show judges on their short visit. Consider trying to engage Lincolnshire Free Press, Spalding Guardian, or The Voice in your future campaign. The judges saw one of the 6 Notice Boards near The Triangle but there did not appear to be any notification in it regarding the East Midlands in Bloom judges proposed visit on the 12th July.

Given the layout of the village, expanding the judges tour maybe challenging but a widened range of projects and sites is necessary to develop Deeping St Nicholas' EMiB entry to its maximum potential.

.Marks

Section A: 24

Section B : 20

Section C: 20

Total Marks : 64

Medal Awarded: Silver



LARGE VILLAGE

WELDON in BLOOM

LEVEL OF AWARD: SILVER

Judged on 2nd July

Judges: JUDITH WARNER and LIZ

ALUN-JONES

Judges Award: For Weldon Parish Councillors, for their leadership in the community and supporting the recently formed Weldon in Bloom group.

Introduction :

This is Weldon's first entry into East Midlands in Bloom. Weldon is a suburban village on the outskirts of Corby, Northamptonshire and was originally part of Rockingham Forest. Weldon in bloom have created wildflower areas, rescued overgrown areas, and created new flower beds. Many of their plants have been grown from seed, repurposed or acquired from elsewhere. Weldon is mentioned in the Domesday Book and has several heritage buildings. The Cricket Club is part of village life and is the oldest cricket club in Northamptonshire. It is the hub for many group meetings including Weldon in Bloom.

Areas of Achievement

Section A – Horticulture

The 12 regular volunteers have worked exceptionally hard creating 10 raised beds and planters on the High Street and by the War Memorial and Village Green which boasts large and small planters around the seating area creating an attractive corner. Nearby is a mock tank surrounded by wildflowers, which are becoming established with sandbags planted with red, white, and blue petunias. The Village Green is a large open space with mature trees and newly planted beds. Plants were chosen to attract butterflies and bees and a colour scheme of red, white, and blue reflecting the theme of the D-Day landings.

Pocket Park is a natural beauty spot where the pond sees much biodiversity. Whilst there is still work to be undertaken to eradicate the Himalayan Balsam an amazing amount has been removed over the past couple of years and plants are now beginning to naturalise. Volunteers have planted a wildflower area at The Leys and areas are left unmown to encourage wildlife and wildflowers. Weldon is one of a few areas of the UK which can boast of having Meadow Saxifrage.

Gandy Field is a recent project with work starting in 2023. The plan is to turn an overgrown public footpath into a 'friendly' area. The volunteers have begun to plant a sensory garden and two willow tunnels which are becoming established. Sunflowers grown from seed by local schoolchildren through the RHS project Grow with it, have been planted along the fence line and a wild area on the other side of this narrow strip to encourage insects.

The Gandy is a thoroughfare and has become a popular route home for schoolchildren and dog walkers.

At the Cricket Club is a newly created, large, raised bed with a D-Day theme, planted with over 300 purple and white petunias and marigolds which appeared to be healthy and bug free. All plants were raised from seed by the volunteers in a donated polytunnel.

Evidence of activity and colour throughout the year was demonstrated in your portfolio.

Section B Environment

There has been a settlement in Weldon for over a millennium and it has some interesting buildings and history. The Parish Church grounds are well-maintained and includes many listed gravestones. It would have been good to hear some of the history or visit some ancient buildings, such as the Roundhouse on the tour. An information board has recently been installed in Pocket Park. Although most of the areas we saw were well presented and maintained there were one or two neglected areas. Most notable was the site adjacent to the village stores. This has recently reopened and presents a recognised opportunity for development.

The PC employs a parish caretaker one day a week for grounds maintenance, grass cutting and watering. Overall, the village was well presented. There is an active litter picking group and there was very little litter to be seen.

Having originally been a part of Rockingham Forest the landscape retains many areas of woodland and wild spaces including The Leys and Hills and Hollows. This is managed by Weldon in Bloom and is an SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The Willowbrook running through it is delightful and is home to an abundance of wildlife including red kites, wildflowers, and a rare species of Meadow Saxifrage. There are plans in place to install a bridge over the stream to make a rewarding circular walk.

The Parish Council have a written environmental policy which the In Bloom group adhere to, respecting wildlife and the environment wherever possible in their projects. The Gandy is a good example of reusing and upcycling - all the shelters and structures in place are constructed from repurposed items. The bug hotel with viewing portals was very imaginative. Bird and bat boxes are also in place. The new self - watering planters and benches are made from recycled material. Plants are grown from seed in peat free compost but water for all the containers and planters comes from domestic water supplies.

Section C Community

The Parish Council are very supportive and make up a core part of the In Bloom group. Other support comes from the Knit and Natter group who made knitted poppies for the War Memorial. Many local residents care for planters near their homes. A local youth group and children from the local church group (Rock Solid) planted 500 native bluebells on the Village Triangle and sunflowers on The Gandy were grown by pupils in the Village School.

The cricket club is a hub for village events including the fête and Weldon in Bloom meetings. Local businesses have been supportive and there are plans to credit them on planters such as the D Day themed display at the cricket club. The signs were not ready for the judge's tour. Good use is made of the National Community Payback scheme, with participants having painted railings on the village green, planted trees and bulbs and cleared undergrowth.

A Best Front Garden and Best Container competition is planned, and judging will take place in August. Social media and Instagram are used to good advantage as is Weldon Wide the local free magazine.

The War Memorial, Village Green and Triangle are used for village activities throughout the year and for carols around the tree at Christmas.

Areas for Development

Section A

Some of the mature trees on the village green need attention.

Consider entering one of the best front gardens into EMiB special awards next time.

The concrete planters on High Street look a bit tired and dated and many of the plants looked dry and unhealthy. These would benefit from an overhaul.

Section B

The wildlife areas at The Leys and Hills and Hollows have so much to offer. It would be good to see the results of wildlife surveys if they have been carried out, and if not maybe local school children or youth groups could be involved in producing some.

Water conservation could be improved by adding water butts at the Cricket Club or at the planned new development next to the Village Stores.

The group is already planning development of the waste area adjacent to the newly reopened Village Stores. A golden opportunity for the group to showcase a new project for the community. The judges look forward to seeing it in future.

Section C

Signage crediting local businesses on planters is always appreciated and might encourage new sponsors.

Consider working with other groups such as local history/ heritage groups to produce a town trail or information boards.

Marks

Section A: 22

Section B : 20

Section C: 19

Total Marks : 61

Medal Awarded: SILVER

COASTAL CATEGORY

SPONSORED BY AMBEROL



Sutton on Sea

Gold

Judged on 12th July

Judges: Jeff & Irene Bates

Judges Award: To all the members of the Sutton on Sea Gardening Group for their enthusiasm and commitment to their community

Introduction

The visit began with an introduction at the Bacchus Hotel, which was exhausting in itself, hearing about the immense workload that the Bloomers thrive on. The tour, from the coast to the lovely allotments and everything in between, showed how much difference can be made by group efforts. New areas are being developed all the time, the group is not just about maintaining, but also about developing and modernising. All sectors of the community were involved, and the tour ended with refreshments at the Bacchus where the judges were able to thank all for their outstanding work.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

There are very clear changes taking place in how planting is designed and managed, with traditional 'summer bedding' being reduced in many areas to be replaced by more sustainable perennial flowers and shrubs, but still with high levels of seasonal impact. The floral impact of colourful baskets, troughs and other containers throughout the town is wonderful, with maintenance standards very high. New landscaping is evident on the seafront areas, and with much more to come once the major new development of 'The Colonnades' is completed. Planting at the Anchor and all other seafront areas is very good, being adapted all the time to reduce maintenance and environmental impact.

Entrances to Sutton were enhanced by colourful seasonal displays, now featuring more perennials, on every major road. All areas were well-maintained. The Allotments showed that excellent gardening was taking place, with good crops everywhere and no vacant plots.

Residential gardens were seen to good effect in Sandilands and other streets as we passed through. One garden was visited as a 'Special' entry and indeed it was, superb in every way.

Section B: Environment

The main areas seen on route included Acre Gap, where a large swale is present to assist with flood alleviation, and at the same time is an excellent wildlife site with open grassland and reedbeds. The open area known as 'BT land' is a popular walk-through from residential to the main shopping areas, and the Bloomers have created a splendid annual wildflower border along one margin of the path. The Springs caravan site is well-maintained with environmental

considerations in the forefront of all their approach to caring for their site. Composting is evident everywhere, with a good example being at the Diana Memorial Garden, still being managed entirely by the Bloomers and with no 'waste' being wasted, with everything composted on site. Weed management throughout the entry is 'by hand' with no use of herbicides; all plants are grown in pest-free growing medium; pots and containers are washed and re-used; rainwater capture is present everywhere that this is possible, and the newer planted areas have focused on pollinator-friendly plants.

Section C: Community

There is involvement evident from all sectors of the community, and on the route the judges met representatives of the business sector (at The Bacchus Hotel and Steve Wood Motors), heard of the support from the Town Council (e.g. maintaining seats and benches if the group report any that need work) and voluntary sectors including the Rotary Club, as well as seeing work with which young people had been involved at the Meridale Centre. Other youthful contributions were seen from The Beavers, children's involvement in a fun day where a mural was painted and bug hotels made; a schools poster competition was also evident. Sutton on Sea in Bloom also support the local Food Bank.

Grants to the Bloom have totalled around £8k this year, from businesses, Town Council and in-kind donations from the Rotary Club and others. Fund-raising activities by the group, such as coffee mornings, a social event and sales of their calendar have brought in well over £3.5k. A remarkable 1663 volunteer hours have been logged by the group in the first 6 months of the year.

Areas for Development

Section A

The tour tended to feel rushed at times, and it may be worth considering how much could be gained from having a more visual display at the start of the visit, covering areas not on the judging route, but allocating more time to spend at some of the main highlights. Your new Memorial tree (the King's Tree) is clearly suffering from its location. The species (*Sorbus commixta*) is not well-suited to an exposed coastal location, and you should consider relocating it to somewhere off the seafront, but still prominent, where it may well be able to thrive.

Section B

This section has some scope for improvement. Judges spent some time at the BT Land, and a flying visit to Acre Gap, as well as hearing of other things that have been implemented. Acre Gap would definitely justify a longer time spent in order to appreciate it, and you could consider having a specialist in the local environment present on the day to speak to the Judges on these specific topic areas.

Section C

This section is short, because the Judges are limited to 'wonderful,' 'amazing,' 'outstanding' at the wide-ranging involvement of so many in your lovely community and the efforts made to make it even better. We can think of nothing to suggest!

Marks: Section A: 32

Section B: 25

Section C:29

Total 86



EAST MIDLANDS

SMALL COASTAL

TRUSTHORPE CLANGERS

SILVER GILT

Judged on 12th July 2024

Judges: Irene and Jeff Bates

Judges Award: For: 'The Food and Friendship that flourish through Gardening' theme running through Trusthorpe's community projects.

Introduction

Trusthorpe is a coastal village situated on the Lincolnshire coast. The villagers pull together with projects for fundraising which they plough back into their community. St. Peter's Paddock is where many events are held, and this year unveiled a new permanent much needed gazebo. The theme of 'Celebrating Food and Friendship that flourish through Gardening' was truly uplifting. The community's determination to progress is limitless, ably led by Diana Povah and dedicated volunteers. From themed gardens to the Trusthorpe Triangle, The Springs colourful garden areas and floral displays at the church, this was a whirlwind tour buzzing with enthusiasm.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The individual gardens at St. Peter's Paddock were a delight to see – so many themes admirably designed and planted with a mix of annuals and perennials all grown by the community. Examples include the Remembrance Garden, a tribute to Trusthorpe with beach and countryside, a community vegetable garden, and themed gardens. The flower tubs and tiered barrels were looking colourful with mixes of petunias and lavender plants as were many other colourful containers planted by the volunteers dotted around the area. At St Peter's churchyard is a tiered planter painted in red, white, and blue and planted with a mix of marigolds and geraniums. The same planter is used for spring bulbs too. The flower displays inside the church were admirable and skilfully arranged. Annuals and perennials were seen around the village hall and the Trusthorpe Triangle was a delight to see with the colourful troughs and wheelbarrow planted with bright reds, pinks and white nicotiana. Trusthorpe Springs hosted a riotous display of annuals in the most brilliant and eye-catching colours, including succulents that must have caught the eye of any passer-by and was a very welcoming entrance to this holiday park.

Section B

The understanding of sustainability and biodiversity is clearly ingrained with the group, as from the start of the tour in the St. Peter's Paddock area, there was evidence of composting, rainwater harvesting and interest in biodiversity. This was evident in the number of bird boxes, feeders, hedgehog boxes and bug hotels seen during the tour and future plans for much more in the churchyard. Signs on the notice board showed posters about the Big Garden Butterfly watch, a water life quiz, and a water-life photographic competition for next year's calendar. For all ages, a 'Paint a Birdhouse' or 'Something for the Garden' competition is held. An amusing 'ladybird' litterbin was seen in the Paddock with red and black hanging baskets in the tree above. One of the themed gardens was of many aspects of seaside nature and sustainability. Many recycled items are used to good effect in these individual gardens. In the community garden is a vegetable growing and bird & butterfly watching area. RSPB Big Garden Bird-Watch weekend and the Big Butterfly count have taken place this year. The Trusthorpe Triangle community garden has a rainwater harvesting butt, bird tables, and immaculate benches for the community

to use and enjoy this area, surrounded by several large, sponsored planters and a brightly planted wheelbarrow.

There is much evidence of local identity and pride of place, as seen on the information board pertaining to the sluice gates and the Trusville promenade. In the latter area the SS Friendship boat and treasure chest has been renewed and Trusthorpe has been chosen as one of six sites which will be monitoring coastal erosion. Of note, judges were shown photos of the impact of the 1953 devastating floods in the area. There were artefacts and displays of Saxon and other history inside St. Peter's Church., which are undoubtedly of interest to locals and visitors alike. At Trusthorpe Springs a disused brickworks building has been preserved and is open for all to see. The understanding of biodiversity, nature studies involving photography of local wildfowl including bitterns is wonderful to see, as is the conservation at the edge of the lake. It is highly commendable that as much as possible of the clearance in the area is added to the composting area.

Section C

So many individuals and groups combine to make this community thrive. The Knitters and Natters group was highly evident through their work with the helicopter postbox toppers and coffee mornings to raise funds for the Lincolnshire Air Ambulance. The knitted bees and honeycomb tree wrap around trees at the Triangle was eye catching. The embroidery of the kneelers at the church was very impressive, particularly the one with sunflowers. We heard about the bell ringers from whom the 'Trusthorpe Clangers' gets its name and their aims for '125 Year' celebration of Lincolnshire Ringers. Other fund-raising events include carol singing, photography evenings, a pantomime and much more. This year the funds enabled a new lawn tractor to be purchased, which will help enormously in St. Peter's Paddock. New bird, bat and swift boxes are planned for the churchyard and more information boards are planned on the Trusville promenade. It was pleasing to see your EMIb certificates displayed outside the village hall.

Areas for Development

Section A

Some of the hanging baskets and planters might have been improved with the addition of some trailing plants and possibly planted a little earlier, although we realise the spring weather has been unfavourable this year. Could youngsters be encouraged to grow something – a sunflower competition, or maybe a mini-village-show where they could display what they have grown?

Section B

You do very well in this section, and it will be nice to hear about the progress of installation of new bird, bat, and swift boxes in the churchyard in due course. If you have a survey of birds, butterflies, or insects, consider a signage board to show what you have in the area. If you have the funds, it would be good to renew the sluice gate signage board and maybe add a little more of your history of the area. Consider an area of native wildflowers in the churchyard or leave areas unmown with just paths running through. It will be interesting to hear about the coastal erosion survey in the next few years and we hope we shall visit again to see the other interpretation boards along the Trusville promenade.

Section C

It is good to see sponsors acknowledged on the planters in the Trusthorpe triangle. You are a very busy and active group, and we commend you for that. Continue to promote yourselves and carry on with the good work. Consider simplifying the judges' route and concentrate on your strong points. You have done sterling work, and we were greeted by the wonderful town crier at the start of the tour, and of course the very welcome refreshments at the end of the tour which made us feel very much at home and enabled us to speak to so many of you. Thank you!

Marks Section A: 28 Section B: 26 Section C: 22 TOTAL: 76

URBAN CATEGORY

SPONSORED BY AMBEROL



URBAN COMMUNITY

Littleover

SILVER GILT

Judged on 9th July 2024

Judges: Irene & Jeff Bates

Judges Award: For: The RNLI display bed in the village centre, signposting routes to the sea

Introduction

Constant rain did not dampen the enthusiasm of the dedicated stalwarts of Littleover in Bloom, as judges were taken to see the inspiring community garden at Carlisle Avenue, Sunnydale Allotments, Hannah Fields, and several other spots with planters brimming with annuals perennials and shrubs, lovingly planted, and maintained by this dedicated group and their supporters. Progress has been made with the planting of new trees along the verge way, and the Hunt the Plant campaign was a wonderful initiative. 79 words

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Carlisle Avenue Community Garden – ‘Carlisle against Crime’ admirably instigated and led by Dawn Green was a delight to see with the mix of perennials and shrubs including lavenders and phormiums. Outside Littleover Methodist Church was a row of delightfully planted containers with colourful annuals such as marigolds, geraniums, and lobelia, and it was pleasing to hear the planting of these had involved some of the much younger members of the congregation. A colourful front garden was seen on Brayfield Road and several other streets along the route were looking lovely. Of considerable note were the planters along the main road into the village. The planting and maintenance of these is all done by the volunteers and many groups are involved, including the WI. The planters are also planted up with bulbs and winter bedding so that there is a nice display in the spring along with the Rotary ‘Purple for Polio’ crocus bulbs which have been obtained. Hydrangeas along the shop fronts were looking particularly lovely and it was pleasing to see that businesses along here were keen to be involved, with even a planted bathtub across the road at Costa Coffee. The main bed in the village, this year commemorating 200 years of the RNLI was hosting a newly painted RNLI inspector, a signpost indicating the direction to coastal areas and a seagull. These were amongst an eye-catching area planted with perennials and shrubs with an extra splash of colourful annuals. The use of sempervivums to create the ‘200’ was a clever idea.

Section B

The history of this urban village which has partial Saxon and Roman origin is acknowledged in the portfolio. Within the Carlisle Community Garden there is a new ‘Tommy’ sculpture and across

the road is a new steel bench, created by a local craftsman. Litter bins and benches were generally in a good condition and there was no evidence of litter or dog fouling on the day of the visit. Peat free compost is used in the planters, and it is pleasing that Derby City Council are now not charging for the watering of the hanging baskets. All other watering is done by volunteers, using containers, and aided by some businesses that allow them to use their water, and a water butt sited on one of the properties. Many of the plants are donated and used within the planting schemes. A raised bed has been repaired and replanted in the central area and several new trees have been installed near the roadsides, with the help of local businesses. Sunnysdale Allotments were a delight to see with recycled items being used as containers for the produce grown; with water harvesting and compost making areas in evidence, and a very healthy crops of produce visible. In Hannah Fields, likewise, there were composting areas, rainwater harvesting, no pesticides used and even a new composting toilet on site. Everything can be used here; even unloved furniture is given a second home. Bird boxes and bug hotels were in evidence and an exciting woodland area where Forest school children are taught.

Section C

The community come together to make their fundraising a success. As part of the 'Great Big Green Week 2024' in June, a competition was held to involve all ages to identify as many plants as they could. There are plant sales and events in the autumn for Remembrance Day, and wreath making events in the winter months. It is pleasing to hear that a garden competition is being held, as that too helps to promote the Bloom group. The group have their own Facebook and Instagram page to promote what they do, as well as contact with Radio Derby. It was good to meet local councillor Hardyal Dhindsa along the route. Cubs are involved with litter picking and planting crocus and the WI take pride in planting and maintaining the tiered planter in the centre of the village. The Littleover in Bloom sign has been renewed with the help of local artist Peter, and all groups and individuals are gratefully acknowledged in the portfolio.

Areas for Development

Section A

This has been a difficult year for everyone due to the prolonged wet and cold spring. Consequently, some of the planting had not had time to establish as well as it might have done under better circumstances. It is difficult to say whether to concentrate on drought tolerant plants or water loving ones due to the changing climatic conditions, so maybe a mixture of the two with spare plants on standby if needed might be considered? The annuals looked healthy and were clearly enjoying moist weather, but it was a shame that the gazanias had closed up due to the weather.

Section B

It is pleasing that the council now water the hanging baskets free of charge, and it is hoped that this will continue, as it does help to boost the look of the area and can only benefit the image of Derby as a whole. As mentioned in previous years, the watering by the volunteers is rather difficult and we hope that sponsors, or businesses might help to raise funds to enable you to purchase a water bowser or an IBC to avoid you having to transport large water containers in your cars.

Section C

It would have been nice to hear more about your contacts with Radio Derby and how you promote yourselves, in addition to Facebook or Instagram. It was excellent that the Littleover Methodist church printed the flyers for the Hunt the Plant competition, and it would have been interesting to know whether this had initiated more interest from the larger community. Perhaps something similar along the lines of supporting Littleover in Bloom with your logo clearly evident could be printed and distributed to everyone who is helping your campaign. This could be placed in the windows of all supporters and may generate some more support. Regrettably and out of

your control, the steamed-up windows in the vehicle in which we were travelling made it difficult to see and appreciate Littleover more fully. A map of the route taken would also have been appreciated with the stopping points highlighted. These are Just minor points to consider as what you are doing is truly excellent and a credit to everyone involved. Long may you continue!

Marks	Section A: 32	Section B: 25	Section C: 26	TOTAL: 83
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URBAN

EVINGTON IN BLOOM

SILVER GILT

Judged on 1st July 2024

Judges: JUDITH WARNER and LIZ

ALUN-JONES

Judges Award: Chris Hossack for his hard work and enthusiasm for the environment and heritage of Evington

Introduction:

Evington is only 3 miles from the centre of the City of Leicester. Friends of Evington promote conservation and environmental improvement in this community whilst keeping loyal to Evington's historic "village." The Friends of Evington also work with other members of the community, both volunteers and the LCC, to maintain the many green areas. The Evington Echo unites the community with regular coverage of events.

Areas of Achievement

Section A - HORTICULTURE

There are many planters, both large and small, which are mainly planted with perennials and appear healthy. St Denys' church had a combination of seasonal displays. The small community garden in the car park opposite the church contains perennials and fruit bushes and was designed by D of E candidates. The War Memorial Gardens include two large round beds which have recently been planted with Canna in the centre to give height and marigolds and lobelia. Later in the year this will put on a splendid display. The Village Hall Garden and Evington Village Green Gardens are maintained by Jean and Margaret. The beds contain perennials and shrubs which were well established and give a splash of colour to these areas. Many of the plants were grown or donated by residents.

High Street flats have a wild garden maintained by Sue and Veronica. Outside the Library, a new bed had been created. The Cosmos had been grown locally. Evington Park boasts many mature trees including a splendid Mulberry Tree. There were also pretty flower beds of roses surrounded by box hedging. Fruit and nut trees have recently been planted. The bowling club had many hanging baskets along the length of its pavilion making a pretty display.

Section B - ENVIRONMENT

Piggy's Hollow, which is a former moat and fishponds, has been left undeveloped for many years and therefore no soil disturbance. Plant studies have been undertaken by Leicester University. Paths are mowed around part of the site to give access, and it is a haven for wildlife. The Arboretum adjoins and makes for an extensive green area which would have been good to visit. Addy, the Litter Champion, organises regular litter picks. She is encouraging younger members of the community to become litter Wombles. Native and wildflowers, attracting biodiversity, were a theme around the village. The street furniture was in good condition and the area was relatively little free. There are many interpretation boards about the local history which are mostly maintained well. The judges were not shown any composting or water saving methods.

Section C – COMMUNITY

The Evington Echo advertises the many events held throughout the year. There are organised walks and archaeology teams at Piggy's Hollow and a tree trail in Evington Park. Councillor Zuffar Haq spoke highly of the work the Bloom undertakes and was aware of the importance of the working with Leicester City Council. The tennis courts at Evington Park have recently been revamped with the assistance of funding. Other clubs also meet in the park including the bowling club who are encouraging school children to try playing bowls. Leicester's Seed Library has set up to encourage everyone to sow grow and enjoy food. Seeds can be ordered from the Evington branch library. It was good to see it was being used.

Evington Hall is currently vacant, but the group continues to maintain the grounds with the support of park rangers from Leicester City Council. Students from Judgemead Community Collage enjoyed a day learning about litter implications in conjunction with climate change.

Areas for Development

Section A -Horticulture

The Library Manager, Marcia, is proposing to join the Leicester Library's 'Let's Get Growing' campaign by putting some raised beds around the library to grow a small selection of fruit and vegetables for the community. She also hopes to put in a water butt on the side of the building. Volunteers will help with gardening. To encourage the school children to grow plants, a raised bed at 'The Cedars' will be made available for them. It will be interesting to see what they decide to grow.

Section B - Environment

To encourage more planting and support from the local shops although a great start has been made by Ginns and Gutteridge outside this frontage. Acknowledging the sponsors is key to gaining more sponsorship. Some of the litter bins would benefit from a clean up.

Section C - Community

It would be good to see multi-cultural groups doing work together, creating other ideas in the parks and gardens especially school children's involvement.

Marks

Section A: 32

Section B: 24

Section C: 24

Total Marks: 80

Medal Awarded: SILVER GILT



URBAN

Chellaston

Silver

Judged on 4th July
Warner.

Judges: Liz Alun – Jones and Judith

Judges Award: to Moira, Toni and the Chellaston Scouting group for their planters celebrating the Olympic Games.

Introduction:

Chellaston is an ancient settlement recorded in the Domesday book. It is now considered a suburb of Derby yet retains a strong sense of community. The In Bloom group have been entering IYNs for a number of years but this year have progressed to their first entry to the In Bloom competition. The judges met the team at St Peter's church and were taken on a well-planned and interesting tour. There are colourful planters and floral corners on show managed by a variety of volunteer groups. There is a developing community orchard and an impressive community garden.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The Chellaston volunteers have been enhancing public spaces in their community since 2017 originally as Chellaston Community Volunteers and later as Chellaston in Bloom. Their original aim was to improve areas no longer maintained by the council including overgrown wasteland and redundant planters on High Street. Places visited on the well-planned tour included St Peter's churchyard, which boasts its own 'green group' who maintain the planted borders and wildflower areas in the church grounds and have created a maze. Other areas included 'WI corner' which was very well tended, a square planter containing a collection of wildflowers maintained by the Guides, and the Pinfold which is managed by the local history group. On the High Street we saw planters outside the shops, the corner planter containing drought tolerant plants, and further along a brick planter with perennials including bright geraniums. These are all cared for by Chellaston in Bloom volunteers. All are planted up slightly differently depending on availability and suitability of plants and overall are well maintained with some healthy plants. Planting includes perennials such as lavender, Hebe and Cistus. With colourful additions of Erysium and Osteospermum.

The grounds of the bowls club were planted up in traditional style and were very well tended by volunteers. A water butt was in place and dead plant material is composted onsite. The Ridgeway planters maintained by the scouts were interesting and colourful although a little dry. Plants are donated by volunteers and grown locally. Perennials are being planted with the aim of being more sustainable. A local nursery is supportive and provides plants at cost. Some areas such as the corner maintained by the WI and community orchard have been underplanted with spring bulbs. The highlight of the work of the volunteer group to date is the community garden. Originally a disused toilet block this is now an attractive and peaceful place to sit and reflect on the High Street. Opened in 2022 it is home to a Cornus Kousa, an herb bed, a spring display of tulips (as near to the Chellaston Beauty as possible) and a colourful central planter filled with annuals, perennials, and bulbs for year-round interest. The garden is enjoyed by workers during lunch breaks and the wider community for plant sales and Christmas carols.

Section B

Chellaston has an interesting history, and this is celebrated with good information boards in the community garden, a plaque at the Pinfold and in the booklet produced by the local history group. The seating in the community garden is both attractive and practical. It was thoughtfully chosen to prevent litter accumulating under the seats. A local foundry produced the striking archway over the entrance with an oak leaf motif and wall art showing the Chellaston tulip and an alabaster miner. Areas maintained by the volunteers were neat and tidy but throughout the tour the judges saw many areas which were less well tended with litter and untidy street furniture. Litter picking is carried out regularly by 'the Wombles' but there is room for improvement. The community orchard and nature reserve planted on the old brick works site is impressive. Planting of native trees including fruit trees, medlar and nut trees has taken place in three phases. Trees can be purchased and planted by groups or in memoriam. The Nature reserve and orchard is maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers who meet once a month. Trees are well cared for following a practical lesson on pruning. Bat and bird boxes are in place here. In the churchyard and in the community garden log piles and bug hotels were noted. Understanding of the importance of sustainable gardening is evident although sometimes difficult to employ in all areas given the size and layout of the entry. Peat free compost is used for propagating and planting up.

Section C

The strong volunteer group plans activities in advance and uses social media to inform about meeting times and task lists. Groups meet a minimum of monthly throughout the year. Engagement with other community groups was clearly seen on the judges' tour. Planters are maintained by the Guides, WI, and local history group. The Ridgeway planters have been planted by Chellaston Scouting Groups. These were delightful and clearly involved hands on planting by the children. The series of planters celebrate the Olympic Games each using a different colour of the Olympic rings and information about the continent represented. A session on pruning technique was organised at the community orchard. Everyone reported to have found it helpful, and volunteers have since practiced the techniques learned in their own gardens. The group uses social media and a local free magazine to promote activities and encourage new volunteers. The list of local supporters at the community garden and in your portfolio is impressive. Funds are made throughout the year from plant sales and a 100 club.

Areas for Development

Section A

Your outline plans to further develop a wildflower area in the churchyard are in place and would be a very welcome addition. The wildflower area managed by the council would benefit from some management and you may wish to consider taking on responsibility for this. We passed some attractive front gardens and pubs on our walk, and you may wish to encourage them to enter the floral awards next time.

Section B

In future years it would be good to see evidence of biodiversity in the nature reserve using butterfly or wildlife surveys and these are accessible from RSPB websites amongst others. The active community Scouting groups might be able to do this. Litter can be difficult to manage in a large community, working with schools and youth groups can bring rewards. We saw little evidence of water harvesting although this has been considered. The site of the community garden is leased from the council and so access to water and electricity has been limited but composting and water conservation could be used in the churchyard or on the community centre which is currently being refurbished.

Section C

More evidence of your future plans in your portfolio would be helpful. Consider getting a bowser to make watering easier or invite local houses /shops to assist with watering. Signs for sponsors which support planters could be considered and it may assist in encouraging other sponsors. You may wish to consider visiting a school or allotments on the judges tour next time. Although it was impressive that so many volunteers wished to be involved on the day, it was often difficult to hear all the information being delivered as the group was spread out and it would be easier with a smaller group. Consider using just a couple of guides next time with a chance to meet key volunteers along the route and at the end of the tour.

Marks

Section A:27

Section B:24

Section C:25

Total Marks:76

Medal Awarded: Silver Gilt



URBAN COMMUNITY

Scartho in Bloom Silver

Judged on 11th July

Judges: Jeff & Irene Bates

Judges Award: To Corrina and Steve and all the team who care for the lovely grounds of St Giles and St Matthew's Church

Introduction

Arriving at the start of the visit we were greeted by Michelle Hose and Lee Robinson, the 'go-to' people for Scartho in Bloom. The tour began with their entry into the Best Pub/Hotel Awards, The Rose and Crown, with a cheerful display of hanging baskets, containers of perennials and well-maintained shrub borders along the main road frontage and adjacent to the car park. From there the tour commenced, almost all done on foot, taking in a diverse range of features all of which were enjoyed despite the unseasonably cold weather.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: Horticulture

Lovely front gardens were seen on many areas, perhaps the highlight being on St Giles Road. Louth Road had additional planting with good maintenance evident mainly done by community effort. At St Giles with St Matthew Church, Steve and Corrina showed evidence of a range of activities that have taken place over recent months with all sectors of the Community, from maintenance of borders by the church to creating new borders on an area that cannot be used for new interments. Here plants that are being 'rescued' from elsewhere are being planted, and with a clear focus on plants that benefit wildlife. Tree and shrub maintenance is being carried out to ensure plants are in good condition, with particular attention paid to appropriate pruning and only relevant weeding.

The Community Garden includes bush and tree fruits, a wildlife pond, a lovely pergola, and a wide range of ornamental plants. Water butts are present here to minimise impact on mains supply. The streets are appropriately brightened up with barrier baskets and small planted areas and self-watering planters near Pelican crossings; a very attractively landscaped roundabout was also passed on the route.

Domestic gardens were seen in good condition, and very colourful, on St Giles Road, Louth Road, and other areas, with some seen where their entrances opening directly onto the pavement adorned by beautifully planted pots.

Section B: Environment

A walk across the large community open space of 'Rose and Crown field' began the main tour. This is an attractive amenity space used for a range of community and sports activities, and with a commendable focus on enhancing the margins with appropriate native trees. The far side has a surfaced footpath through it, with swathes of daffodils along both sides. Beyond the path is an area with a pleasing group of Swedish Whitebeam in the middle of natural grassland, with timothy, fescues and bents all outstandingly beautiful at this time of year. Yellow rattle is being established in some of the grassed areas to reduce the vigour in the grasses and thus increase the spread of wildflowers. Further back, native bluebells are gradually expanding along the fringes of native woodland, of field maple and deciduous shrubs. Footpaths pass through the

woodland to housing beyond, with all paths in good condition despite the weather. The Bloom group have installed bird and bat boxes and bug hotels at suitable places throughout the woodland. A Badger sett is also in this area and known to be in use. It was noted by the judges that although this is well-used by dog-walkers and young people, both litter and dog-fouling were insignificant. Lee is, very sensibly, waiting for desired lines to appear in the grassland before considering where defined footpaths would be created, both through the grassland and the woodland.

Section C: Community

There are effective links between Bloom and Community groups, businesses, and relevant local authorities. This is clearly evident in the support gained from the Rose and Crown (the 'Best Pub/Hotel' nomination this year and how their car park is also able to be used by the community when visiting the adjacent field. The local authority is contacted to ensure that Bloom activities are taken into consideration as appropriate.

The close links between the St Giles and St Matthew Church volunteers and Scartho in Bloom is a notable success, with excellent cooperation including sharing of plants, and of skills, evident. As well as the Best Pub/Hotel nomination, Michelle and Lee had nominated Yvonne Nichols garden on Stockham Court as their entry in the Frank Constable MBE Best Front Garden category of Special Awards. Unfortunately, it does not fulfil the criteria as it is not visible from a public space, but nonetheless the judges were most impressed by how beautifully planted and stunningly-colourful it was, and very sustainably managed entirely by Yvonne, who is also part of the Bloom group. It did make a very fitting conclusion to the tour, as refreshments were provided there by Yvonne. The garden could have graced an RHS Flower Show, quite outstanding.

Areas for Development

Section A

Plan the route carefully to show more of the attractive streets and front gardens that were glimpsed on the route. Try to include the clear involvement of some of the businesses that have enhanced their frontages. The route passed by a well-landscaped roundabout that deserved a closer look. The wonderful Community Garden would benefit from increased maintenance or decline may set in.

Section B

The 'Rose and Crown field' and its associated woodland is a great asset to the community, and you have exciting opportunities and ideas as to how this develops. Try to get more groups involved with the area to carry out monitoring, surveying and habitat management whilst still ensuring that it remains an open space with recreational uses on the main area of open grassland.

Section C

This section is the easiest to develop further as it was evident to the judges that levels of commitment must be significant but were not actually on show. Involvement of young people should be made evident, whether through visiting a school, seeing work by Scouts, Guides, Brownies etc. Route planning and a presentation about the work throughout the year should also be reviewed

Marks: Section A: 31

Section B: 23

Section C:20

Total 74

SMALL TOWN CATEGORY

(Sponsorship available)



Small Towns

Town Barrow in Bloom

AWARD Gold

Judged on 14/07/24

Judges: Griselda Kerr and Mary Bagley

Judges Award: The Station Project. For the work that all the volunteers and East Midlands Railway who have transformed the Station at Barrow into a delightful place with their raised planters and artwork.

Introduction:

Barrow Upon Soar is in the Soar Valley in northern Leicestershire, between Leicester and Loughborough, within Charnwood Borough District Council. It has a population of nearly 6,000, has the wonderful Holy Trinity church and railway station and sits in an area of limestone famous for its fossils and wildflowers. One notable fossil, the plesiosaur *Atychodragacon megacephalous* nicknamed the "Barrow Kipper", was found in 1851 and is now in the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery with a replica in Charnwood Museum. This history is celebrated with a beautifully sculptured Barrow Kipper on the sign on the roundabout (Jerusalem Island) and a fabulous village fossil trail.

The overall impression of Barrow in Bloom is a wonderfully cared for place where there are many initiatives working in partnership with local authorities, the Parish Council and volunteer groups to enhance the area horticulturally, environmentally and for wildlife, all of which greatly enhance the quality of life for local people and visitors. I think it is fair to say that both Griselda and I were very touched at the amount of effort that has gone into this entry and the wonderful things everyone has achieved by working together in partnership.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Barrow Deep Lock was adopted by Barrow in Bloom in 2020 "helping to make life better by the water" and has area been very thoughtfully and carefully restored to turn a former rough and overgrown site into a beautiful area with raised beds and places to sit to look over the River Soar. The views over the water, the restored towpath (May 2024) and careful use of plants create excellent all year-round interest (including some lovely bulbs in the spring) whilst keeping the wild riverside flowers and wildlife where appropriate. The thoughtful selection of plants and the wonderful 60m of raised containers were to be seen on Platform One at the train station. One of the clever things achieved here is the bright mixture of annuals and perennials in the raised containers with the bank behind being retained for wildlife. Again, the show will be good throughout the year. In addition, the restored Riverside View (please see Section C) has an excellent range of plants for spring, summer and winter interest whilst considering where the native flora can be encouraged. This is an example where the In Bloom Group and the volunteers have worked to create and preserve an excellent horticultural balance, using excellent techniques with excellent maintenance. The volunteers weed and water every week where necessary. The grass area was particularly well created and maintained. Prairie plants including

grasses have been used in the exposed windy areas in the new Cemetery extension to extremely advantageous effect. The plants are of excellent quality all along the route, all well-tended, well fertilised and maintained. There were no weeds seen and, following the wet and warm weather we have had this spring and early summer, this was quite fabulous. Jerusalem Island, home to the famous Barrow Kipper sign, is an absolute joy of floral heaven. It was once looked after by the now disbanded Barrow upon Soar Gardening Club but volunteers, amongst them many from the club, are still maintaining and improving it. It has fabulous all year-round interest with many of the plants donated from people throughout the village. All the plants were flourishing, healthy and many in full flower on the day of the visit. The Sensory Gardens in King George V Park are maintained by In Bloom volunteers, and they have created a horticultural haven with many interesting plants with spring flowering bulbs and plants planted by the community for all year interest. This area is immaculately maintained and has a lovely mixture of textures and colours. It is a great addition to the park. Thousands of spring bulbs have been planted including snowdrops and daffodils with more planned for planting in the Autumn.

Section B

There are two areas in the church yard that has been left unmown until the end of June for quite a few years for wildflowers and wildlife. These are now well established and are very species rich with the meadow saxifrage spectacularly flowering taking over from the earlier celandines. This has also created a habitat for the mining bees with their small 'molehills.' In every appropriate area consideration is taken to enhance local flora and fauna. The raised planters in Deep Lock are made from recycled materials and there has been good use of branches and old pruning's to make a dead hedge at the bottom of the steep bank as habitat for wildlife. The High Street planters have been replaced with self-watering ones which saves water and makes it easier to keep up the excellent standard. Water is also collected off the Parish Council roof and a resident allows the volunteers to use to use water from her water butt. The Cemetery at Cotes Road has been very thoughtfully extended with a balancing pond, with supporting geomesh and new drainage. The wildlife areas all have beautifully mown grass paths through the long grass to access the benches in this peaceful and reflective area of the cemetery. Everywhere, any challenge is thought through and remedied. Wherever, things are recycled: the granite sett pathway to cottages behind the Scout Hut have been repurposed to form the edging to the new round planting bed. There are also bug houses and a water butt installed. There is careful consideration of materials, recycling as much as possible and with the use of anti-graffiti varnish. The Pennywort Group was formed last year to deal with the invasive pennywort in the waterways. They work using equipment from the Canal and River Trust with the British canoeing, Paddle UK, and the Leicestershire Outdoor Pursuits Centre to remove pennywort effectively. It was great to see the bug hotels, bird and bat boxes throughout the route and the new swift boxes up on the church to support wildlife. There is a good relationship with the RSPB and bat walks are arranged. Everywhere the benches were in excellent order and refurbished each year with some lovely memorial benches along the route. Fences and railings are also extremely well maintained - for example, the fence on the Railway station, Platform 2 has been painted as a backstop to the new artwork (driven by Bloom).

Section C

Fabulous interpretation and signs are all round Barrow starting with the illustrated village map at Deep Lock. They are all in very good order, give interesting and historical information about the village and are kept clean and well maintained. The new test artwork on the railway station is excellent (plans are to extend it following strength testing of the fence). Its bright colours compliment the pink containers and use illustrations of local flowers and wildlife. The volunteers brought all the material for the raised plants etc down the steep set of steps. Nothing was going

to put them off their plans! There are many instances where the In Bloom group works hand in hand with other groups and organisations. For example, at Deep Lock they work with the Canal and River Trust volunteers and they together have contributed to the Green Flag award for a long length of the canal, and with Parish Council donating a bench. Riverside view is great example where local businesses, Charnwood Borough Council and the In Bloom volunteers all worked together to transform the area. All the railings, benches and planters are refurbished in addition to clearing all the weeds and rubbish, levelling of the area, adding of topsoil and seeding of a lovely grass area. This area is now a delightful place to go with well cared for memorial benches, that feels open and safe with wonderful views over the river. Nothing stops the volunteers so when the Gardening Club is disbanded the volunteers arrange to continue the work and develop it further with many strong friendships made. In Bloom persisted to gain the permissions for Platform One at the railway station and all the sleepers and topsoil were then carried down the 42 steps.

The Barrow Scouts have joined into a wider project 'The Routes of Remembrance Artwork' which brings together seven other groups. It is great that the final whole picture will be displayed at the Station. One of the wonderful things across all sites is the donation of plants by local people and the volunteers. This contribution makes many of the areas very interesting whilst achieving a great year-round interest. The ethos that everyone can contribute makes for an outstanding success in all the projects.

New projects (e.g. the planting of Narcissus 'Tête à Tete' this autumn) and extensions of existing projects are planned for next year.

Areas for Development

Section A

There is little to flag here. One addition could be to use decorative plant labels for the plants to enhance knowledge and interest. The new rose beds at Holy Trinity Church are only very newly established and the judges were certain that the volunteers would be fertilising and pruning them appropriately. Some more ground cover plants could be used to good effect.

Section B

There could be even more water butts installed and also local compost sites further developed. It would be good to see how each project has improved the biodiversity with flora and fauna recorded and to have an annual update across the area using the work done at the wavy bank area as a role model.

Are there any areas that can be especially developed for greening solutions to address air pollution from the trains or roads?

Section C

Carry on your fabulous partnership working and increase the knowledge and understanding about horticulture and the environment in Barrow and the region.

Marks

Section A: 39 Section B: 28 Section C: 29.

Total Marks: 96

Medal Awarded: Gold



Small Towns

Uppingham in Bloom

GOLD

Judges Award: For Josh, Rose and Keith from Uppingham School for redesigning Mercers Yard.

Introduction:

The judges were welcomed by Uppingham in Bloom Chair Sarah Medley, Bloom secretary Deborah Martin and Keith Dunne, the Deputy Gardener from Uppingham School. Following an informative presentation (The Bloom group now entering their 5th decade – started in 1983) and having been presented with copies of the Bloom portfolio, the judges were taken on a conducted walkabout of the Town Centre using a mini bus tour of outlying areas. Both elements provided judges with a clear insight into the ongoing work of UIB and their priorities for regenerative projects that deliver a horticultural offer to the town. The year round efforts being made by all sectors of the community under the direction of UIB demonstrated the pride of all who live here. The judges made their way on foot through the centre of this lovely historic town. It has a rich past which is acknowledged and celebrated. There was an opportunity to meet some of the In Bloom volunteers along the judging route and when the tour concluded and welcomed refreshments were shared. These volunteers include several well respected ex committee members, who have stayed on board whilst stepping down from their positions, meaning that the new group can build on their experience for which they are grateful.

Areas of Achievement

Section A: This year the funds from Council have been reduced from £3,000 to £2,000 so that fundraising and sponsorship has been vital, and the standard of floral displays and street grounds maintenance was excellent throughout the judging route. The attention to detail to keep the streets looking at their best was noted by the judges. Much of the annual planting is sourced from a local plant nursery and some planters have the addition of healthy perennials/ topiary to give a varied balanced floral displays- no corner or passage in the town was left uncared for. The planters/ hanging baskets in and around the town were bright and vibrant with healthy summer annuals. The colour co-ordinated yet simple planting of the antirrhinums really was effective in several places around the town. The well-maintained vegetable box maintained and planted by the Brownies was a highlight in the Crown Passage as part of its redesign- as were the topiary pots and planting next to the Crown pub from balcony to ground level with irrigation installed to keep all plants well - watered and the owners of Rutland Antiques Mark and Diane Evans whose planters complimented the work of the Bloom volunteers along the thoroughfare were noted. It was good to hear how the ongoing maintenance of the pathways extended to the business owners supporting the Bloom keeping on top of the areas. Several attractive flower beds tended by the gardening team at Uppingham School flanked the roadside on the judges route with a mix of topiary, climbers, perennial, summer bulbs, foxgloves all added to the visual wow factor! Other community planting at the entrance to Uppingham was showcased in the portfolio as spring daffodil bulbs added a “joyful note” in front of the town sign. It was good to hear about how the bulbs die back and verge grown in the same area

allowed the presence of the Bee Orchids this Spring! Tod's terrace continues to be an area to celebrate with the planting by the residents outside their properties complementing the Bloom work.

Section B : The town's historical links were evident through the history and tree trails devised to take visitors around Uppingham including the use of QR codes to inform visitors.' The orchard at Tod's terrace contained local heritage apple trees all of which were thriving and now had under planting of Spring bulbs. The lavender walk at the War memorial, was another well maintained heritage area by Bloom, as detailed in the portfolio. The football area is being maintained to a good standard and Bloom have added in more trees as a part of the Queens Canopy pledge. During the judging tour, no litter was visible with hard paved areas and footpaths being maintained overall by Bloom volunteers to an excellent standard; the positive impact on a reduction on anti-social behaviour was noted by the judges. LED bulbs were being used in all street lighting, 2 electric charging points in the car park, 6000 tonnes of Rutland green waste is composted and is used in an anaerobic digestion plant to generate green energy. The success of the Litter Picking team was highlighted in the portfolio as was acknowledgement of the Uppingham School composting plant which recycles 85% of green waste which was seen on the tour and the judges were impressed with how this is then shared with all voluntary groups in the town including Uppingham in Bloom. The regeneration of Seaton Road roundabout with well-considered sustainable credentials was also a success of the work of Uppingham in Bloom this year.

Section C : A particular strength of Uppingham in Bloom continues to be their ability to clearly evidence all year-round commitment to not only sustaining but developing a focus on supporting the traders and local people with their planning schemes and projects mainly in the town centre. They have a clear set of priorities which are reflected upon by the committee and provide a clear plan for the year and the decades ahead. The Bloom group works closely with many voluntary groups including the Rotary Club, Uppingham First, the WI, the Brownies, Uppingham School and Leighfield school. The Bloom group have worked with Uppingham Town Council (UTC), Rutland County Council and have contributed to the 'Town Plan.' Local business support is very good, ranging from the sponsored supply of plants by Welland Garden Centre to those in the town centre buying hanging baskets from Bloom or supporting with their own floral displays to enhance the high streets and beyond. Local pubs including The Falcon Hotel, The Exeter Arms (a seating area with a jolly and uplifting pop of colour on a difficult corner in the town) as seen on the route along with Restaurant 23's garden (an immaculate oasis of green calm for diners to enjoy) which have all worked hard on their gardens to provide outside spaces to be enjoyed by their clientele and support the Bloom ethos. The primary school garden continues to be developed well with a good sustainable approach with good community links. The promotion of UIB through local radio, local newspaper, the local Village Diary, newsletters and community engagement for fundraising is a credit to the group as they keep the profile of Bloom in the mind of the community throughout the year. The production of the informative, detailed portfolio which included photos and text about out of season activities and local companions/ fundraising all helped to give as much information as possible.

Areas for Development

Section A :Consider for those super new planters in Mercers Yard more perennial sustainable planting in this shady site and as detailed in the portfolio the development of central evergreen topiary/ bulbs/ and long term incorporation of trees to enhance the canopy and aid pollution reduction. Perhaps also include an information board in this area to celebrate and share the

work/ history of the area. The work on Dairy corner is ongoing perhaps consider removal of ivy and planting with perhaps a Hydrangea Polaris and the Town Council helping with the undulating pavement area which could really improve the area as somewhere to pause and sit for the townsfolk. Now orchard is established in Tod's terrace area could there be a chance for the grass / wildflower plugs including yellow rattle to be grown and then mown pathways around and through the trees made to encourage biodiversity (and for the younger townspeople to enjoy exploring) to enhance the area further. The school garden at Leighfield is developing but the staff there needs further support to develop the soil quality and volunteering support for the enthusiastic work of Pauline.

Section B: You have plans to further develop the environmental area for increased biodiversity at the Arboretum through a new wildlife volunteer group at Uppingham School who can make and create wildlife homes (bat/bird boxes etc) to go into the area- we look forward to seeing this in the future. Consider in the sensory garden at Tod's Piece popping in some bird and bee baths in the garden for the wildlife as it is essentially a 'dry garden. Also the Pleached Hornbeam hedge is requiring some protection from vandalism. Sadly, some graffiti was present near to the skate park however the judges noted that this was the only example and that Bloom were aware and do keep on top of this very well with the support of the local police and town council. What about conserving water around the town? With so many local traders on board can some water collection be a part of their support e.g. butts in strategic places to harvest water. The judges would also suggest that the local allotment is included in next year's route if possible to see the developments and possibly the results of some biodiversity studies around the insect population (the big butterfly watch, Citizen Science surveys) in the church yards in the town- local primary school could be involved. In the Arboretum area in areas of the long grass perhaps clear a circle around them and perhaps some mown paths rather than the grass being cut very short and the rest left to total wilderness will encourage the biodiversity and aesthetically naturalise the area for the many visitors who enjoy using it.

Section C : The development of the Uppingham in Bloom logo in conjunction with the primary school is something to look forward to seeing come into fruition. Continue to consider how to promote the Bloom around the town in the gardens you maintain etc and any projects you carry out – use your new logo so make sure it's on show to celebrate what you do! It would be good if the UTC encouraged community recognition of the Bloom's service over the past 40 years with a public "Thank you" - perhaps linked to a campaign seeking more volunteers to take pride in their town. Perhaps consider more links into those living in the new housing developments and those with younger families moving to Uppingham and develop Mini Bloomer groups through Toddler groups, preschools who you mentioned use the Tod's sensory garden area regularly could they get involved? In talking with Mike development of the website is something as a team you wish to develop further, along with new Facebook page, so as suggested on judging day why not talk to IT experts at the Uppingham school staff or older students who can offer help with this and support the Bloom in this way going forward.

Marks

Section A: 37 Section B: 24 Section C: 29

Total Marks: 90

Medal Award: GOLD



Small Towns

SILVER

Kirton in Lindsey

Judged on 3rd July
Schofield

Judges: Griselda Kerr and Emma

Judges Award: For Tanya Salvador and Sarah Wilkinson for their enthusiastic teamwork over the past year, taking the lead in what has been transitional year for the Kirton in Lindsey in Bloom committee.

Introduction:

The judges were welcomed by Kirton in Lindsey in Bloom representatives, Tanya, Sarah, and Martin. The tour started at the Klassic Park Community hub. The judges made their way on foot through this lovely historic town located on Lincoln cliff, with views stretching across Lincolnshire. A lovely town with a rich past and strong community and a Bloom group of volunteers with a positive future, it now has a population of 3000+ having grown rapidly in the last few years. There was an opportunity to meet some of the In Bloom volunteers at The Town Hall, the former prison, where the tour concluded and welcomed refreshments were served. These volunteers include many members of the disbanded Bloom group of last year, who stayed on board whilst stepping down from their positions, meaning that the new group can build on their experience in this transitional period.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The standard of floral displays and grounds maintenance was generally good throughout the judging route. Much of the annual planting is sourced from a local plant nursery and beds have the addition of healthy perennials to give a varied floral display. The planters around the Market Place, some tiered and some on lampposts were bright and vibrant with healthy summer annuals. The well-maintained War Memorial Garden is an attractive roadside feature, and the judges toured several well maintained beds tended to by the Town Council gardener which complimented the work of the Bloom volunteers. It was good to hear how the maintenance of the cemetery and the War graves Commission is now aligned to synchronise the ongoing maintenance of the area. On route, Mr and Mrs Bartlett's residential front garden was delightful and a credit to their hard work, work which included several other local beds along the roadside that Mr Barlett also proudly designed and cares for. The Grandads plough sculpture and memorial bed along with several others noted along the roadside on Traingate, reflected his personal dedication and his pride in the place he which lives as well as his support for the In Bloom team. Several attractive other flower beds tended by other community groups or volunteers were visible on the route including outside the Doctors Surgery, Station Road, at the front of the Cemetery and on Steep Hill all offering a variety of seasonal bedding, perennial plants, and shrubs.

Section B

The town's historical links to agriculture (the potato plough sculpture), to its RAF and army links and the wide range of historical buildings were all evidenced in the Bloom route (and will form part of their future plans). At the War memorial, another well maintained area by the Town Council gardener Susie Barratt, with attractive and well-maintained perimeter railings and metal

bench seats on the attractive Green, was accompanied by the Peace rose gardens (containing 'Silver Anniversary,' 'Peace' and 'Warmest Wishes' roses, maintained by the Bloom group. The large expanse of grass known as The Green is being maintained to a good standard. During the judging tour, no litter or graffiti was visible with hard paved areas and footpaths being maintained overall to a good standard; however, the recent weed killing by the council had meant that the Bloom volunteers had been able to complete the task of tidying due to timing. The natural environment at Klassic Park was well maintained and the Mini Bloomers had built a lovely bug hotel and have plans to develop the biodiversity in the area along the field edge. Nature is being considered in the work of the Kirton in Lindsey Bloom group activities to develop habitats and the local wildlife needs e.g. The big Wildlife Walk. As a group they participate in the RSPB birdwatch and butterfly watch, with plans for more surveys to be done through Citizen Science with the children and volunteers over the coming year. The success of the Litter Picking team was a highlight in the portfolio where with KCOM and the excellent co-operation of New County Glazing in Bloom were able to clean the Market Place. This was followed by a reciprocal event to clean up the Community Centre.

Section C

After a year of changes in the Kirton in Lindsey Bloom committee there continues to be many sustainable plans for the future development of key areas, with funding secured and local community support for the next few years that will see changes and improvement which will prove to be of great benefit to the town through the Bloom groups endeavours. Since the last judges visit many aspects of improvement suggested for this aspect of Bloom were evidenced on today's visit. This includes the development of the Bloom logo on promotional posters etc and on the Hi- vis vests (and for the Mini Bloomers too!), local quarterly magazine adverts and written and social media updates, the production of a detailed portfolio which includes photos and text about out of season activities and local competitions (scarecrows, wheelbarrows, garden competitions, hanging baskets) to help us give as much information as possible. All are a credit to the group. The various boards seen during the tour helped to paint a picture of the Bloom work we could not see on the day of judging e.g. events and activities throughout the year and spring and winter photos. Involvement with the 'Love in a Cup' Community Partnership, the Women's Institute's involvement, and support from Kirton Rocks, local businesses (The Family Bean, The Brick Hut, Kirton Fish Bar, Jack's Patch Garden Centre, Number 12 Chocolatier, New County Glazing) are all evidenced in the portfolio. Collaboration with the Town and District Council and the local community as a whole was also clear in the information shared in the presentation at the start of the tour.

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider a dry run of the route prior to judging to include checking weeding in gutters and the area near the Morrisons to ensure that on the day the route is of the highest standard so that the impression creates an overall WOW factor! Also consider including those lovely entry beds near the town signs! The Conservation Area with mature cherry tree near plough memorial needs fairly urgent pruning work by Council as it is blocking traffic signs, and its low canopy makes mowing difficult. Try to give the planters more height perhaps by using a few perennials in the planting to give them more substance.

Section B

You have plans to further develop the environmental area at Klassic Park with wildflowers to attract insects on the bank area next to the bug hotel with the help of Mini Bloomers, and support from Kirton Rocks for the border and snake idea- we look forward to seeing this in the

future. Consider some further development of information supporting the heritage of the town and develop some interpretation boards perhaps with QR codes to inform visitors and locals of the importance of the town's link with agriculture etc. The plans for Steep Hill reading room forgotten history is a wonderful plan which would be wonderful to complete. Look at ensuring the bins, road signs and gutters are all clean on the judges' route and that street furniture and any areas next to the Klassic Community Hub are tidied and clear of clutter particularly as this is start point on the judge's route. Blooms plans for water butts and collection are key to employ more sustainable elements to the Bloom gardening routines over the coming year. Perhaps also include more information regarding the recycling and composting elements into the portfolio too?

Section C

Continue to consider how to promote the Bloom around the town in the gardens you maintain etc and any projects you carry put – you have a great logo so make sure it is on show to celebrate what you do! It would be good for judges to be able to visit the primary school as you form links with them through the children at Mini Bloomers? Also invite the local press on the day to promote all things Bloom.

Marks

Section A:31 Section B: 18 Section C: 21

Total Marks:70

Medal Awarded: SILVER



SMALL TOWN

Repton

Silver

Judged on 11th July 2024

Judges: Richard Stephen & Nicholas Litherland

Judges Award: to the newly constructed Social Area and landscaped gardens at Repton Parish Council Allotments for the use and enjoyment of allotment holders.

Introduction

The judges arrived in Repton on a warm bright day where they were met by Owen Jowett, Tony Brown, and Alan Topham in the town's Village Hall. Over some light refreshments the judges were briefly informed as to what had been done over the last few months in preparation for the day's visit. During the walking tour the judges saw a wide range floral displays, contributions from residents gardens and many quality hanging baskets and planted tubs from participating businesses.

Areas of Achievement

Section A : Horticulture

The tour began by viewing the very attractive and well planted shrub beds outside the Village Hall cafe. The attractive silver, grey, yellow themed display is maintained by Pauline of Maple Tree Cafe and is a credit to the town. Located in this area was the first of the large colourfully planted Parish Council Hydro Tubs. Progressing through the town, it was nice to see that St. Wystan's School had taken part and had displayed a host of planted wellington boots and small pots. A lovely contribution to the 'bloom' campaign. The 2 Bus Shelters had a couple of hanging baskets on display. In the middle of the town stands the Market Cross which had many individual different sized pots with colourful annuals located around the base of the cross. A couple of planted troughs on a central island also looked quite good. The judges paid a brief visit to Repton School entrance where the students had provided attractively planted 6 wooden troughs. Inside the entrance, on either side 2 beautiful borders of colourful annuals were on display. Also, the grass maintenance in this area was particularly good. The entrance to the Parish Church of Wystan had a couple of planted tubs. The churchyard looked as if it was being well maintained. As the judges walked through the Town, they were able to view many beautiful front gardens e.g., 2, 34, 44 and 44a High Street, Mercia Court, Sweet Pea Cottage, 6 Burton Road to mention only a few.

Section B : Environment

The judges saw very little of the Town's grass verges but what was seen appeared to be quite well maintained. As mentioned earlier both the Parish Church and Repton School grounds were a pleasure to see. At the end of the tour the judges were taken to see Repton Parish Council Allotments. Around 26 plots were viewed, and it was clear to see that they were being well looked after with a wide variety of fruit, vegetables, and flowers on display. The newly constructed social area with garden was very good. Composting was taking place and water butts were being used for water reservoirs. Adjacent the allotments was the cemetery. Though the judges weren't taken there officially, it was worth a mention as it appeared to be being maintained to a good standard. There was some information relating to Repton's heritage and

it's connection to Vikings (Repton Festival), not forgetting the Market Cross. Inside the grounds of Repton School was an amazing piece of sculpture. This appeared to be a couple dancing on top of a striking plinth. In the main, the streets were clean and tidy though there was evidence of weed growth in gutters but no detritus.

Section C : Community

It was obvious to see that many local businesses had made huge efforts to support the Town's entry into the 'in bloom' competition. The judges saw some stunning floral displays of colourful hanging baskets, planted tubs and troughs. Calla Clinic, Bulls Head, Samaras Hair and Beauty, Repton Clinic, Royal British Legion, The Red Lion, Mulberry Beauty Salon, A. Moss Family Butcher, Health and Wellbeing Centre, Repton Post Office and many more helped to brighten up the town's appearance. Well done all of you.

Judges were informed that Social Media is the chosen way to convey news to residents and businesses - Facebook. There was little information about the range of all year round activities that take place in Repton other than Repton Festival.

Areas for Development

Section A : Horticulture

Consider introducing bigger but fewer troughs / planters around the base of the Market Cross. Market Bosworth is a good example of how this display can be improved. At the base of the Basle Rathbone building, there are a couple of gravel areas which would lend themselves to additional planters. Consider where additional planters could be introduced into the street / open space scene to give Repton greater wow factor. Several buildings (private and public) had hanging basket brackets. Consider how these might be filled next year. Dragon Court looked as if it would be ideal for a floral display.

Section B : Environment

There was very little information about Repton's heritage. Consider providing information about your heritage connections and what the Town is famous for e.g., Repton School, - Famous People - Harold Abrahams, Bunny Austin, Roald Dahl etc. St. Wystan Parish Church, Zytek Engineering Ltd. Roman and Viking Occupation, Dooms Day Book, Consider getting The Repton Village History Group involved. Some of the street furniture was looking a bit tired e.g., bins and bollards (outside Repton Post Office). Consider introducing a program of refurbishment. Consider introducing / creating wildflower areas e.g., difficult to maintain grass verges, in the cemetery or churchyard, edges of playing fields (Mitre Field and Broomhills Playing Field). Consider including visits to the Churchyard, Cemetery and Mitre Field as part of your tour next year. Remember that wherever you take the judges, the route to get there (walking or driving) will be judged. e.g., weeds in the gutters and base of walls etc.

Section C : Community

It is suggested that you provide a portfolio for next year's judges. This can include photographic evidence of how Repton looks in the spring. Photos of volunteers litter picking or planting the tubs and troughs. This could also list the names of local businesses who participate in your campaign either through sponsorship, in kind or financial donations or providing their own floral displays. Evidence of 'Press' support through articles can be shown in the portfolio. Consider introducing some of the volunteers to the judges on the day or getting representatives from Repton School or children from St. Wystan's to talk to the judges about what they have done. Encourage the local press to attend Judging Day, they can then interview the judges about their visit. If not then consider taking your own photographs of the judges to send to the local press or up lift to Facebook.

Marks

Section A: 28

Section B: 20

Section C: 21

Total Marks: 69

Medal Awarded: Silver



Small Towns

Town Long Sutton

SILVER

Judged on 8th July 2024

Judges: Griselda Kerr and

Mary Bagley

Judges Award: For James Bailey for his fabulous commitment to collecting litter over the last 7 years, where he goes out every day to ensure that Long Sutton is beautifully litter free.

Introduction:

Long Sutton 'The town that says it with flowers,' is a very attractive Fenland market town in South Lincolnshire close to the Wash with a population of just over 6,000. Its still vibrant Friday market was established during the reign of King John. There are many local nurseries in the area growing on a large proportion of the nation's bulbs.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The great strength of Long Sutton in Bloom undoubtedly lies in the tremendous impact made by its hanging baskets which line West Street and Market Place. These are co-ordinated in their colour scheme, (mostly an impactful golden orange, largely begonias, although the fire station had, appropriately, fiery red pelargoniums) all of which contrast beautifully with the local stone. The many planters around the town reflect the same colour theme, different each year. The annuals, purchased with help from Peter Ward at Leverington Nursery, are then grown on in the two large In Bloom polytunnels with all the Bloom volunteers involved in the planting out - illustrating great teamwork. Good planning and year-round interest is supported by the spring display, evident from the excellent presentation of photographs and Facebook page, given us pre-tour by Kay. She showed us the sensational display at the church of late winter of crocus and of 2,000 – 2,000 tulips in late spring planted by volunteers with daffodils at the Pop-Bottle Bridge Garden and hyacinths in tubs and troughs around the town. The volunteers have been planting 1000s of bulbs over the years to make a real impact in the town. The hedge laying round the Shrubberies Reserve was good and it is exceptionally pleasing to hear that volunteers come in season to learn how to do it. The improvements undertaken by Bloom to the Co-op Garden is to be commended. There was no sign of weeds in any of the planters or the hanging baskets and the gutters were clear of weeds. There were several people who had made a real effort to bring colour and vibrancy to the town with bright annuals, perennials, and shrubs. Of particular note were the gardens along John Swain's Way.

Section B

All plants are composted, and the growing medium of the baskets is recycled or added to the compost when tired. Old plastic bags are recycled as liners for the baskets, old drainage pipes are used as planters and old pots are recycled into the community. Efficient watering of all the baskets and planters once a week, an enormous job done by one man (who is paid by Bloom to do this) using a long lance attached to an IBC in the Blooms' own Watering Van (carrying its logo back and sides!). The feed added to the water is donated and the plants as a result look very healthy. The absence of litter in the town centre was very noticeable and full marks must go to James Bailey who has litter picked daily for the last 7 years with great effect. The redesign of the War Memorial to stop lorries driving over the corners has been well done by Bloom. The Local

Nature Reserve, The Shrubberies, has a good project for increasing the biodiversity through the planting of a thousand wildflower plug plants, preserving species rich hedges through laying, has an effective grazing regime and the biodiversity is monitored and assessed for improvements. It was good to see a large bug hotel sited in an upturned boat at Common Pit. The Transported Art Group has added some lovely artwork to the town including the Mosaic at Pop Bottle Bridge Garden. The most exciting vision of Long Sutton in Bloom lies in its proposal for community wood to provide the first and only woodland in the area open to the public. It will provide huge benefit to the local populace and to the environment – we strongly commend Bloom’s proposal being put forward to the local and County authorities.

Section C

There is clear evidence of civic pride through large swathes of the town with a large number of pretty gardens in many different neighbourhoods. It is clear that the work of In Bloom in Long Sutton has done much to encourage this civic pride, increasing the attractiveness of the place for residents and visitors alike. The local garden and ironmongery shop gave a wonderful display of the efforts of “Keeping Long Sutton Blooming” with salient facts, seeds, and flowers. Several people were stopping to look at the display. Over 90 Long Sutton Traders, individuals and local groups, in particular Long Sutton Men’s Shed (we met leader Dave Webb) support the In Bloom effort by purchasing hanging baskets prepared by Bloom and providing time and resources such as making and mending benches, collecting litter, providing fertiliser, maintaining and servicing the In Bloom watering van and the physical hanging of the baskets. It is great partnership working for BP Autos to provide their expertise free for the watering van and the In Bloom provide them with lovely hanging baskets. Bloom has a close relationship with the South Holland District Council and the Parish Council who, as well as assisting with the litter clearing, provide valuable financial support particularly for plant purchase. It was evident to the judges when walking round the town how conscious the town is of Bloom efforts. There is a very good Long Sutton Bloom logo on most of the planters, there is an attractive pony trap outside the Library and the Butcher’s Bike outside the Butcher’s shop carries a planter and a Bloom notice, the local tool shop had a delightful and large display welcoming the judges. At the Rainbow Nursery, Mandy Walton showed the judges a wonderful example of how 3 – 5-year-olds are introduced to nature and their environment, with a wormery, snail house, bug hotel, a fruitful pear tree planted in a large tractor wheel (where a duck’s nest with its eggs was discovered by the children), potatoes in grow bags and other crates of veg and plants – even a blueberry in fruit as well as posters of butterflies, wildflowers and bugs to aid identification at an early age. The children’s artwork showed how much they have observed and learned from growing their own produce and about the creatures the soil and plants support. There is evidence of fundraising with regular quiz nights and the sale of baskets that are made but not used.

Areas for Development

Section A

Consider choosing plants that do more to attract pollinators which might also be more resilient to wind and rain – particularly those in the planters where there is greater opportunity for the use of perennials to give height and maintain year-round interest. Some more varied planting would give the War Memorial and many other planters in key positions a greater impact. It would be worth while checking the gardens round the church to make sure they are weed free before a visit. Pop-Bottle Bridge Garden has become overgrown with weeds. The *Garrya elliptica* is in urgent need of pruning and if at the same time the *Elaeagnus* was removed (which is nearly dead and anyway does not have a long-life span), it would give more space to the Field Maple. Then if the two cordylines were removed which seem a bit incongruous in that setting, there would be the opportunity to plant something like a crab apple or silver birch (whilst not

cramming things in!) and be able to regain the lovely picture that it clearly used to be. This bed would benefit also from the bramble and bindweed being removed so that the shrubs and perennials could thrive with less competition. The Council will need to help with the heavy work required here. Annie's Patch is very sad, and the judges hope that funding is soon found to replant the area to restore it as a much-loved wild-life garden. They realise this is a priority for Bloom.

Section B

Some of the signs need attention -The Mosaic at Pop-Bottle Bridge Garden, the sign giving the fascinating history at Common Pit and the Long Sutton town sign (which is otherwise prettily underplanted with Salvia 'Hot Lips' and Arum Lilies), the Long Sutton Trail sign and the Park signs, all need some care and it is time to touch up many of the beautiful oval logos on the planters. Apart from the Shrubberies Reserve (part of 'Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust) and verges coming out of private estate, there were no wild-life areas seen by the judges. The verges were cut short and green areas in both the two parks had no longer grass wildflower area set aside for wildlife. This should not be difficult to establish with the co-operation of the Parish Council and would enable the introduction of wildflowers and considerably improve biodiversity. Perhaps Bloom could raise awareness of the terribly sad state that is afflicting the benches and littered and weed filled surrounds of Common Pit which is no longer suitable to visit. The group should be able to help by drawing attention to it and calling for volunteers and Council input to address this historic and potential beautiful area. Some of the benches and litter bins throughout the town could do with a clean, some are in need of replacement, and some of the railings are in need of a coat of paint.

Section C

Consider putting a notice about Bloom on the lovely Pony Trap in Trafalgar Square. The Council's large and attractively constructed Millenium 2000 notice stand could very well carry Bloom information showing what Bloom has done, is doing now and this could include a call for new members of any age i.e. involving more of the community, stressing the point that no-one needing horticultural knowledge, only a desire to help keep the town beautiful. Might there be a chance to start 'Mini-Bloomers', using the resources of the excellent Nursery School who are already building bug hotels, wormeries and enjoying planting.

The judges thought the In Bloom Group have made a remarkable difference to the town. All the hanging baskets and containers are very effective, colourful and bright. Fabulous that so many businesses take part and that they, and the Parish Council, support Long Sutton In Bloom. It is a very well-deserved Silver Medal.

Marks

Section A: 26 Section B: 18 Section C: 20

Total Marks: 64

Medal Awarded: SILVER

TOWN CATEGORY



TOWN CATEGORY

Bourne in Bloom

GOLD

Judged on 8th July 2024
Leach

Judges: Stephen Dando and Audrey

Judges Award: To the “Don’t Lose Hope Community Shed” for its impeccable garden, creative use of space and recycled materials, commitment to sustainability, ongoing work with volunteers and active engagement within the community.

Introduction

Bourne, a historic market town in south Lincolnshire, has been entering Britain in Bloom since 2013. The Bourne in Bloom committee work with volunteers, businesses, schools, organisations, and local government to plan and deliver activities and events. The judges were welcomed at Bourne Town Hall and then taken on a well-planned tour highlighting many aspects of Bourne in Bloom. It was particularly interesting and enjoyable to meet so many of the people involved in making Bourne in Bloom come to fruition.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The many colourful hanging baskets, planters and hanging baskets create a lot of impact and leave a memorable impression. The hanging baskets featured colour combinations of begonias were particularly effective. Planted areas including flower beds, grass areas and verges were well maintained and weed free with healthy plants. Planting is changed seasonally with the summer plants being replaced by winter bedding to maintain interest. Following the previous year’s judges’ comments the judges were pleased to see more perennials and drought tolerant plants being included in the planting, for example, the window box at the “Don’t Lose Hope Community Café” included several pollinator friendly perennials.

Despite very challenging weather conditions this year Wellhead Park and Memorial Gardens are a credit to the gardeners with well maintained grounds. They are continuing to improve woodland management by removing diseased and inappropriate trees and replacing box plants with more appropriate and colourful plants. The BRM garden designed by Debbie Cookie, is an attractive and colourful area featuring well maintained topiary and colourful planting in excellent condition.

The Friends of Bourne Woods have created a beautiful community orchard with 107 trees including more unusual fruit trees such as quince and medlar to introduce people to different fruit. Following a very wet start to the year they are looking to plant the most appropriate species for their conditions.

Bourne Cemetery is a green, peaceful haven for people and wildlife, particularly in the Garden of Contemplation where the planting is simple but effective.

The judges enjoyed being shown around the developing gardens and varied spaces at Willoughby Academy and hearing how the pupils made use of the gardens, including harvesting, and eating produce they had grown themselves.

Section B

The tour gave the judges a good opportunity to learn about Bourne's historic and natural heritage and it became evident that this is a town with a strong sense of community, local identity, and pride of place. It was a pleasure to meet so many enthusiastic and knowledgeable members of the community.

Street furniture was in good condition. The street cleaning team and the regular teams of litter picking groups have done an admirable job as no litter was observed. Bourne takes part in the Great British Spring Clean, an annual week-long event involving major employers and litter picking groups. Following comments in the previous year by judges, no litter was observed this year in Wellhead Park.

Judges were shown around Bourne Town Hall by Hilary Bloomer who gave us an interesting talk on the history of the building and showed us a fascinating exhibition of photos. The Heritage Lottery Funded Bourne Town Hall Restoration Project aims to restore the building to provide spaces for exhibitions, performances, and community events, to reenergize the town centre and to find ways to involve the community. Baldock's Mill and Bourne Heritage Centre, run by volunteers from the Bourne Civic Society features an excellent well-maintained exhibition highlighting Bourne's heritage and history including the Charles Worth Gallery and the Raymond May exhibition. The natural heritage is also acknowledged in the town centre and Paul Fellows showed us the new display boards at Wellhead Gardens which include information about the local heritage and wildlife. Children and young people are encouraged to develop a sense of local identity and have been involved in street art with the Iron Child project featuring children's hopes and dreams and there are plans for them to refresh the art on the bus shelter.

Nature is well considered across many sites and activities and the judges noted evidence of sustainable gardening practices. The judges were impressed by William Pauley's potting shed with its creative use of a small space and sustainable watering system where rainwater is collected. Bourne Wood has been there since at least 1086 and uses traditional methods of coppicing to encourage smaller plants, birds, and insects, has put up bird boxes and uses native hedging to encourage wildlife. The Community Orchard has planted mostly local varieties of fruit trees planted e.g. Allington Pippin. No pesticides or herbicides are used on the orchard which includes a wildlife pond and uses recycled materials including strawberries planted in a bath. Dom Brister showed us around the "Don't Lose Hope" community garden which is gardened organically and features imaginative use of recycled and found materials. All furniture on site is made from reclaimed materials. Willoughby Academy demonstrates strong commitment to the natural environment, with bug hotels on site, areas for wildflower meadows, organic gardening and hedgerows being maintained for wildlife. The Town Council Allotments were well maintained and productive and demonstrated good environmental awareness with the use of companion planting, composting, recycling, and organic gardening. Elsea Park is making efforts to create, restore and maintain habitats for wildlife with the use of wetland areas as buffer zones, pocket conservation areas. Bourne Wood and the Community Orchards are assessing the effectiveness of their conservation measures with bug hunts, a planned moth evaluation and a review of what is on the information board.

Section C

Last year the Bourne in Bloom committee organised a wide range of events throughout the year ranging from community litter picks, planting up the planters, Picnic in the Park at The Wellhead Gardens, the Great British Spring Clean, a traffic survey and the D Day 80th anniversary. The Bourne Hall Restoration Event delivered a varied range of monthly events ranging from Comicon to a Teddy Bears picnic to poetry readings. The Community Orchard has weekly volunteering days as well as seasonal celebrations such as Blossom Day and Wassail.

Bourne is planning several exciting future events that will highlight unique features of the town. The Bourne Hall Restoration Project will be developing the town hall to provide a multi-use

space for the community and are planning a community reenactment. Bourne Heritage Centre are planning a major celebration for the 200th anniversary of Charles Worth in the Charles Worth gallery next year. A major refurbishment of the boardwalk is planned in Wellhead Park which is also planning to raise awareness of the local watercress growing heritage.

Signage and interpretation include a plaque on the street providing information about Bourne's motor racing heritage, the excellent exhibits and photographs in the Bourne Heritage Centre, the attractive and informative display board on Wellhead Gardens and the information board on the community orchard providing information about heritage apples and wildlife management.

Children are involved in the Bloom projects through, for example, litter picking, street art and opportunities for volunteering towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Opportunities for communication are provided in the Bourne Local magazine which has a distribution of 3,000.

The Bloom committee coordinate businesses, schools, volunteers, local residents and organisations which are an excellent representation of the wider community. Local major employers provide volunteers to help with projects. Bourne is notable for its significant levels of volunteer involvement, for example the Bourne Town Hall Restoration project includes 40 volunteers, the Do not Lose Hope Community Garden has 60 volunteers a week, the Community Orchard has regular teams of volunteers.

The town benefits from strong funding support from the Len Pick Foundation, and Bourne United Charities. The addition of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund will help the town continue to move forward. The "Don't Lose Hope" project generates additional funding through a community café using produce from the garden and through making and selling items such as bird boxes.

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue developing the use of perennials, pollinator friendly planting, and drought tolerant species in the planted areas. The roses in the rose bed at the cemetery still need some attention. The portfolio was very helpful, and it would be good to include some photographs of the seasonal planting, for example the flowering cherry trees, spring bulbs or the winter bedding displays. The judges look forward to seeing the areas of wildflower meadows as they develop.

Section B

Bourne is making great efforts to protect nature in the area, so it is important to continue assessing the impact of what is being done. Continue to develop and expand the use of surveys and evaluations of wildlife for example through Citizen Science Days, taking part in national days (for example the Big Butterfly Count), and running Bioblitz days. There are some lovely trees in Wellhead Park so labelling the trees, a tree trail with possible online interactive elements could be a future development to consider.

Visit to Elsea Park. Following traffic survey could plants be used in mitigation. A visit to Elsea Park would be interesting and informative for the judges to see how the environment is being managed in this area. There is a lot of potential in Bourne to use plants and greening solutions for environmental problems e.g. rain gardens, green roofs, or plants as barriers for pollution. Following the recent traffic survey is there any way plants could be used to mitigate the effects of noise and air pollution?

Section C

There may be more opportunities for the Bourne in Bloom to increase their online presence for example with a dedicated Facebook page. As local businesses are already actively involved

consider introducing a Best Shop Window competition. The judges noticed many attractive front gardens so it may be worth introducing a Best Front Garden competition.

Marks

Section A: 34

Section B: 25

Section C: 26

Total Marks: 85

Medal Awarded: Gold



TOWN CATEGORY

Edwinstowe in Bloom

SILVER GILT

Judged on 3rd July 2024
Leach

Judges: Stephen Dando and Audrey

Judges Award: To Valerie Hart and Margaret Share for their work at St Marys Churchyard, developing projects involving the young people's group including the wildflower area, bug hotel and hedgehog house in the Childrens graveyard.

Edwinstowe, a historic village in the heart of Sherwood Forest and the home of Robin Hood where Robin married Maid Marion in the medieval church of St. Marys. The judges were welcomed by Jo Aylwin and Carol Hallam in the Edwinstowe Cricket Club pavilion overlooking the forest. After a brief introduction, the judges were conducted around the town meeting many of the people involved sometimes travelling by car other times on foot culminating in refreshments in the Cricket Club pavilion. The judges were pleased to see the in bloom team had taken on board many of the judges' comments from last year.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

Edwinstowe in Bloom (EiB) acquired a towable 400litre water bowser which enables them to water the 16 hanging baskets and the flower beds managed by the EiB. Edwinstowe Parish Council also provide hanging baskets that they maintain.

The judges were given drive by viewing of various planters and wildflower areas. Walking up the high street Lottie, another EiB volunteer cares for the planters created in car tyres fronting Central Garage. Large planters provided by the parish council were bursting with colour. Fables Coffee House is particularly stunning and has been entered for a floral award. The Robin Hood and Maid Marion statue on the high street was enhanced with a delightful floral display. Planting to the front of St Marys Church Hall is maintained by members of illuminate the church youth group and looks in good condition.

Scouts Group Leader Sue Cocking explained how the scouts had created a sensory garden next to the village hall. Following a visit to the roadside bed created by the Rainbows and Brownies the tour concluded with a walk past the Sherwood Craft Centre to see the hanging baskets provided by the parish council which EiB have taken responsibility for watering

The quality of the planting was good and there was an obvious theme especially with the hanging basket displays. There was little evidence of weeds in the planting areas and all the plants appeared healthy. Attention had been given to drought resistant species where appropriate.

Section B

The judges were introduced to Graham Dronfield who described the work being undertaken by EiB to create a community garden at the Ollerton Road allotments. Volunteers involved in the community garden find it beneficial to their mental wellbeing by giving purpose to their life. Surplus produce is given to the food hub. The creation of the In Bloom community garden has inspired Phil Sharp and Sue Cotton from the allotments association to create their own community garden with top fruit in a meadow. A wildlife pond has been created at one end of the garden.

Beattie,(also known as Lindas meadow, named after Cllr Linda George, instrumental in establishing the in bloom team who sadly died earlier this year and the Edwinstowe in Bloom group have dedicated this year's entry to her memory) Beattie is a corner site adjacent to a recently developed housing site near the village centre, Izi Banton a member of EiB is establishing a perennial wildlife meadow including using a recycled art project originally created for the Tour of Britain.

The village is kept clear of litter by a litter picking patrol of 12 who collect twice a month.

Margaret Share and Valerie Hart work tirelessly in involving the young people's group creating a wildflower area, bug hotel and hedgehog house in the Childrens graveyard. Bird boxes have been fixed to a number of the mature trees in the graveyard. The streets were clean, and the street furniture appear to be in good condition. Chemical control of pests and diseases and of weeds is not undertaken, EiB practices organic management techniques

Section C

EiB worked with Academy Transformation Trust Further Education College to support a course which introduces the basic knowledge and skills to get into gardening in an informal and sociable setting within the community. Based at Edwinstowe House it included practical elements around the village and at the community allotment. The hedge was donated by Sherwood Forest trust, perennials were sponsored by Fables and the plants were grown at the community allotment. One bed was designed, plants grown, planted, and tended by students from St. Marys C of E Primary School under the direction of teacher Tanja Bee.

Many of the shops were taking part in the shop window competition organised by EiB including Goffs butchers with a front basket on a delivery bike overflowing with plants, Acorn Interiors and Village X with a teddy bear picnic

At the top of the high street is the war memorial, which is regularly used for civic events, a blue plaque by the entrance states this was the site of the former almshouses endowed by the Rev John and Ellen Bellamy in 1719 for the benefits of 4 widows.

John Peck introduced the judges to the Thoresby Colliery Memorial constructed on a piece of land adjacent to the parish council building. He informed the judges that this project had been constructed following a public consultation and was the jewel in the crown of the village costing £25,000 to construct it is now a place for reflection and contemplation for the miners who lost their lives working at the colliery.

EiB have an active FaceBook page, regular articles are published in the local magazines, and they organise local competitions.

Areas for Development

Section A

Continue with everything you are already doing with all year-round planting and adding perennials as and when appropriate. Some of the flower beds have been planted with colourful annuals but unfortunately the plants are immature and so have limited impact. You have some new build areas as well as some established ones, that would encourage more of the community to participate in those areas.

Section B

Biodiversity and green infrastructure are already very high on the agenda in your village. It will be interesting to hear of the results of environmental studies into the species present especially in Lindas field.

Section C

Your plans for providing more training for the volunteers, indeed your plans for the rest of the year and beyond are exciting and it will be interesting to see the results in future competitions. Fund raising has increased but there is still the potential to do more.

Marks

Section A: 28

Section B: 25

Section C: 26

Total Marks: 79

Medal Awarded: Silver Gilt



TOWN CATEGORY

Broughton in Bloom

SILVER

Judged on 3rd July 2024

Judges: Stephen Dando and Audrey Leach

Judges Award Broughton Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association for constructed a summer house and meeting area in a community garden to help those struggling with loneliness and create opportunities for talking. The community garden features raised beds that are cultivated by people with reduced mobility.

Introduction

The town, mentioned in the Domesday Book, is on Ermine Street and has been the centre of the agricultural industry then served the railway and now is a dormitory town for the steel industry. The bloom group have taken on board many of the points raised by the judges in the previous year and these are noted in the report. The judges were greeted by members of the in bloom team and encouraged to enjoy afternoon tea.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

This was the towns second entry into the East Midlands in Bloom competition. The judges were given a presentation led by Anne-Marie Taylor which detailed all the projects the group. The group have continued to develop their planting troughs and beds with herb planting, encouraging other groups to get involved including the toddler group planting bulbs, hanging baskets in the high street planted by the Brownies. Bulb planting took place in the church and a wildflower border. 25 floral planters are positioned around the town. The group comprise 25 volunteers and a budget of £4,000. Originally the group concentrated on planting annuals however they are increasingly using perennials which are bought from a local garden centre. During 2023 the group focused their attention on planting more drought tolerant plants, using woodchips from the church, and reducing the amount of bedding. Broughton Town Council provided a water bowser which has helped with watering. Plants are donated by residents resulting in very few plants being bought. A splendid Ecotech Optima greenhouse has been constructed on the allotment site. The intention being for the group to grow their own plants with an adjacent area used as a raised bed to grow cuttings. Phil Grundy Community and Sports Centre has good quality football pitches, recognised as some of the best in the county, which are maintained and managed by Broughton Community & Sports Association. There are plans to build a 3G Astroturf pitch additional car parking and extra grass sports pitches. The Judges tour included stopping to view the planting of colourful annuals in the retired telephone box, restored by to its former glory by members of the in bloom group. Phil Lincoln described the work at Broughton cemetery including the construction and subsequent planting of the timber

obelisks which were looking splendid alongside the raised beds. A visit to the village hall to see the wishing well built by a local builder as a gift to the town and various colourful planting beds including one maintained by the toddler group and one dedicated to providing herbs with residents being encouraged to “pick a small handful for your recipe”

Section B

Peat free compost blended with horse manure is used in the planting troughs. The group has used grants from East Midlands in Bloom and local businesses built a multi bay compost facility at the town allotments.

Bee orchids are present on Townhill Drive and the local school hosts bee hives which are managed by a member of staff. A drive by of the war memorial incorporating a sculpture by Gilbert Bayes followed by a visit to the closed graveyard to discuss the groups plans to establish a wildflower pasture, sand blasting the metal fence and constructing a big bug hotel. A botanical survey was commissioned of a wildlife area developed by the in bloom group at the corner of Town Hill Drive and Town Hill junction on land owned by North Lincolnshire Council and the resulting report presented to the judge. The town is kept litter and rubbish free due to the excellent work of the Broughton Wombles led by joint Womblers in Chief, Wayne, and Lyne Gammon

Section C

Broughton Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association have constructed raised beds in a community garden at the allotments for people with reduced mobility. A splendid summer house is available for people to meet and talk when the weather is inclement, and a picnic bench has been constructed outside for warmer days. The summer house doubles as a tool shed for people to wish to tend their raised beds. Volunteers of all ages take part in routine litter and rubbish picks including the Great British Spring Clean organised by the Blooming Wombles with North Lincolnshire Council provide the litter picking equipment and remove/dispose of the filled bags. Information boards have been installed at the war memorial and at the site of the former pinfold. the judges were shown the planting boxes sponsored by two girls at the local primary school to celebrate the work of the NHS

Areas for Development

Section A

The bloom team have concentrated on improving the environment by both placing raised beds constructed of sturdy sleepers and creating wildlife areas both of which are to be commended. The group may wish to consider extending the range of horticultural activities to include tree planting to the boundaries of the open spaces. This can have a dual function of providing colour and seasonal the interest in the landscape and wind breaks around sports pitches. As there are plans to extend the grass playing facilities at Phil Grundy sports field and it if so, consider boundary planting. Continue with the use of drought resistant plants and increase the perennial plants in the planting mix.

Section B

The judges also look forward to seeing the boundary wall and fence at the village hall repaired/repainted on a future visit. The use of information boards is encouraging. The group may wish to consider how they can include more information about the heritage of the town in a future In Bloom submission. There are a number of interesting features including the rare Saxon staircase tower abutting another tower at Broughton's St Mary's Church is a Grade I listed building, with a rare Saxon staircase tower. During discussions after the judges tour it was apparent that a local historian who could provide more information that would enhance the

groups in bloom submission. It would be beneficial to allow the judges to visit the war memorial with the sculpture created by Gilbert Bayes.

The environmental initiatives are welcomed and the discussions around whether to use herbicides or other techniques to suppress the grass and enable the wildflower meadow to be developed in the old graveyard is something for the team to grapple with.

Section C

The Face Book settings are understandable if the group has been subject to unwanted comments however the use of notices on the raised beds stating these are provided by Broughton in Bloom may help in encouraging others to join. It was not discussed, and the group may already use safety gilets with the name of Broughton in Bloom on the back to promote the work of the in bloom.

Marks

Section A: 31

Section B: 23

Total Marks: 74

Section C: 20

Medal Awarded: Silver



CATEGORY TOWN

Mountsorrel

Bronze

Judged on 3rd July

Judges: Liz Alun – Jones and Judith Warner

Judges Award: For Hannah Surtees for her vision and commitment to making Mountsorrel bloom.

Introduction

This was a first entry for Mountsorrel, a village just south of Loughborough lying between the River Soar and the rocky crags of Charnwood Forest. Today the village is mostly residential housing, but the number of historic buildings including the Butter Market are a legacy from its days as a centre of communication, with the Grand Central Railway, A6 and the Grand Union Canal all passing near the town.

Every lamppost on the High Street has an attractive hanging basket filled with purple, red and white petunias and planters in a similar colour scheme adorn railings at Castle Gardens and the War Memorial.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The judges were welcomed by Hannah and Megan in the Parish Rooms, a listed building and former school which was attractively decorated with hanging baskets and planters. Along the High Street are 30 hanging baskets and 17 planters. These are purchased from a local supplier who plants and maintains the planters. The chosen colour scheme of purple, white and red petunias and trailing nepeta and lobelia was attractive and is expected to improve through the summer. The quality of the plants was good and consistent. Peat reduced compost is used and all containers are watered regularly by the contractor. All the baskets will be replanted with bulbs and pansies in Autumn for Winter colour. The current planting scheme was selected as it is expected to flower until early Autumn.

Health and safety regulations stipulate ideal heights for the baskets, and we were informed that some lamp posts were deemed unsuitable, but it is a shame that the baskets could not be placed lower as the impact of the colourful display was significantly reduced. We visited Castle Gardens which is managed by Charnwood Borough Council. We were lucky to meet a group of very enthusiastic volunteers (Katy, Pauline, and Karen) who have recently begun clearing undergrowth and planted up borders with rudbeckia and hardy geraniums. New litter bins have been installed and the old wooden slatted bins have been transformed into planters each containing a healthy selection of plants, including herbs.

On the railings along the High Street were good displays of petunias but their impact was marred by a heavy growth of weeds underneath.

The War Memorial gates were decorated with colourful planters of petunias in the repeating colour scheme and some lavender. The small park next to the interesting replica war memorial appeared to be well managed and contained some mature trees.

The Parish Council manage the varied landscapes within the town and a group of up to twenty In Bloom volunteers meet regularly. They communicate via a WhatsApp group.

Section B

The street furniture we saw was in reasonable condition and there was little litter to be seen. A council employee keeps the streets clean and volunteer groups organise litter picking. Mountsorrel is an interesting historic town with several listed buildings, war memorial and an impressive Butter Market. Loughborough Civic Society have produced an informative leaflet and walking trail.

Just outside the town centre a steep path leads to Castle Hill. The summit is at an unexpectedly high elevation and is home to an historic monument with an unusual WW1 war memorial, a beacon, and outstanding views across the countryside. The monument is jointly managed by Historic England and the Parish Council. Access to the area has recently been improved with a new path and the area was previously run down. The advantage for future planning is that it appeared to be a haven for wildlife having been allowed to rewild. We passed by several areas which have potential including the pinfold where there is a possibility of planting a community orchard.

Section C

Mountsorrel is classed as a town, but residents think of it as a village. There is a large village green with an historic village pump. The green has been planted with daffodil bulbs by the local Scouts and is said to be a lovely display in Spring.

Home Field House is a college for young adults with learning difficulties who along with their careers are helping with the renovation of Castle Gardens and help run a community café. The town has an impressive community theatre with a shady enclosed garden. To encourage interest the Parish Council has organised a new competition for the best front garden and best planted container which will be judged later in the summer. Social media has been used to advantage to publicise this and for communicating with the In Bloom volunteers. At Christmas there was a best window display competition for the local shops

There is a large Memorial Playing Field with a cricket pitch which is maintained by a trust. This is bordered by a stream and marshland where a tree survey has been carried out by the Wildlife Trust.

Funding for improvements from local businesses has been negotiated including from Tarmac and Historic England. It would be good to involve sponsors in developing the community orchard project and credit them on signs. The local Heritage Group have been improving the Memorial Garden and are planning a local archaeological test-pit dig.

Areas for Development

Section A

This was a solid first entry but there is so much potential for improvement.

The planters on the High Street make a good display but there is more to the In Bloom competition than hanging baskets! Check whether some of the hanging baskets could be lowered to improve impact, or if more are planted consider siting them on buildings rather than lampposts so they will be more visible.

More planning of the judges' tour is needed. This is your opportunity to showcase what Mountsorrel has done. We discovered that there is plenty of interest in Mountsorrel. For instance, the Village Green, Castle Hill, the Methodist Chapel, and canal are all worthy of closer inspection.

Take photographs of any bulb planting, winners of the front garden competition and displays of spring bulbs. These can be submitted in a written portfolio or presentation to demonstrate to the judges what goes on during the year.

Next time consider entering one of the winners from your best front garden competition as a 'special floral award.' Full details of these and advice on preparing for your entry are on the website emib.org.uk

Section B

The weeds on the High Street and along the railings at Castle Gardens detracted from the good displays of petunias. Consider removing these, maybe the volunteers at Castle Gardens could take this on?

With so many interesting buildings and sites an information board on the High Street, maybe using a QR code to the existing information leaflet could be considered. We were told there is a local artist who has already done drawings of some historic buildings.

Castle Hill is an amazing opportunity for a wild area accessible from the town centre. Consider more signage or involving youth groups in a wildlife survey.

Section C

It is always good to meet volunteers involved in projects and it would be good if this can be arranged next time. The In Bloom volunteers, young adults from Home Field House could all be included in the judge's tour.

Consider taking the judges to visit allotments or the school.

Marks

Section A: 22

Section B: 13

Section C: 15

Total Marks: 50

Medal Awarded: Bronze

LARGE TOWN CATEGORY



LARGE TOWN

Market Harborough in Bloom

Award Gold

Judged on 1st July

Judges: Malcolm Fisher, Liz Fairfield

Judges Award: To Little Bowden Bowling Club for their colourful and effective planting. Their ingenious reuse of plants and discarded materials had created an elegant oasis between the railway and the road, achieved on a shoestring.

Introduction

The judges were welcomed by Barbara Tallis and Peter Eddie and at 'in bloom' Head Quarters in Welland Park. We started with an overview of the last few months and plans. On a varied tour of the town meeting volunteers and organisation's representatives, judges were pleased to see a mix of new projects and those that have moved on from last year. This quietly professional organisation continues to have a high impact on the town.

Areas of Achievement

Section A - Horticulture

The town was clean and free of litter and dog fouling. Judges noticed fewer street weeds than last year.

Union Wharf is maintained by volunteers Anne and Peter Hartley. A pleasing mix of well-chosen perennials in pots and troughs adds welcome colour and style to the area. The chilly weather meant that few of the geraniums were out as they had hoped.

Self-watering planters throughout the attractive town centre bring colour all year. They feature strongly in the newly branded cultural quarter, at Lime House and St Dionysius Church. A major project this year has replaced the large planter by the Old Grammar School. Plants were mostly in excellent condition, and weed free, although some in the Grammar School planter needed deadheading. The cool weather in June has meant much of the planting is less advanced than usual for the time of year.

Planting at the station has high impact with 13 baskets of begonias, petunias, and trailing plants in pink, purple and lime, in excellent condition, transforming the austere modern setting. 2 large new planters use refurbished luggage trolleys found rusting in a hedge. A new dry garden uses an otherwise barren area alongside a footpath. Alexa Scott from East Midlands Rail explained the challenges of safety and attention to detail as well as ownership of different areas around the station. The judges were delighted to see their 2023 award to the station adopters proudly displayed at the station. Summer planting is replaced with winter and spring bulbs for year-round colour. Staff and passengers alike are delighted with the effect, and it is to the credit of the team that they have permission to add more baskets this year.

At Little Bowden Bowling Club, John, and Michelle, along with 10-12 volunteers, have been developing and maintaining the planting around the green since 2020. Traditional bedding in tubs and baskets is complemented by a long border of shrubs and perennials, donated, divided, or scrounged locally. A large new patio is being created using reclaimed materials on the site of an old shed, providing a vital area for socialising. They make their own compost for soil improvements and are peat free in the tubs and baskets. Their enthusiasm is infectious.

J Stamps funeral directors was immaculate with bright planting, and neatly clipped hedges and lawns.

The Memorial Garden is a mix of informal borders, loose climbing roses, and a more formal area planted with Queen Elizabeth roses and nepeta. New seating was being used by people on their lunchbreaks.

In Welland Park, the formal beds along the pedestrian driveway from Welland Park Road were planted with an unusual mixture of annuals and bee friendly perennials. The colours were bright and cheerful and the plants mostly in excellent condition, if a little behind because of the weather.

The judges are aware of the challenges in the rose garden, discussed last year. The team are trying different ways to avoid rose replant problems, changing the soil physically or using 'cleansing' plants. They are also interplanting to add variety. They were not helped by flooding this winter. This centrepiece of the park has not looked its best for some while, and we look forward to seeing how it develops in future years. The box hedges were in good condition and immaculately clipped and the healthy roses looking good.

Section B - Environment

MHIB have been using peat free compost for several years and make their own compost to improve the clay soil. They have started a project to convert an area housing an old polytunnel to a larger composting area to allow them to do this on a bigger scale.

Bulbs from planters are kept and recycled, and some of the Welland Park bedding is reused where possible. The beds along the tennis courts are being converted to more sustainable perennials to good effect. Spare plants are stored at HQ or on the allotment site.

The judges were pleased to see perennials mixed with bedding plants across many of the formal planting schemes, providing a traditional look but with more opportunities for pollinators.

At Stevens Street allotments, home to 150 allotment holders, Judy Burrridge showed us a variety of plots, including one run by the WI and a small area managed by the local school. 2 of the children were able to show us their new planting. Another plot is run by an organisation supporting adults with learning difficulties. Composting, comfrey tea, and a dead hedge for uncompostable items deal with waste.

The reception entrance at St Lukes Hospital has a rockery, and wildflower and perennial beds maintained by local volunteers, adding colour to what would otherwise be a dull car park.

Patients, staff, and visitors enjoy the displays and bring in plants for the team to add to the collection. Poor and shallow soil means this is primarily a summer display, so In Bloom have provided a large wooden barrel for year-round colour.

We finished the tour with a walk along the river Welland, and were shown the wildflower planting along the banks.

Section C - Community

Ridgeway Primary Academy acted on the judges' comments from last year and have brightened up their entrance with boards displaying children's artwork. The sensory garden, new last year, has really filled out and is being heavily used by all within and beyond the curriculum. The new greenhouse will enable the garden club to raise plants from seed so the children can see the full lifecycle. Georgie introduced us to Tom and Olivia, who are still gardening, and showed us their favourite plants. A new copse is being established in the corner of the playing field and year 6 will bury a time capsule and mark it with a rambling rose next term.

Quinn's bookshop is establishing a community garden for all generations in pots in the yard outside the shop. Customers have donated pots and plants, and local schools will take it in turns

to look after it. The children are naming plants after characters from their books. Bird and bat boxes offer homes to wildlife.

65% of the bloom operations are funded through the District Council, the remainder from grants, donations, and planter sponsorship. As planters are replaced with smart new ones, the team are exploring the use of space on a prominent bus shelter in the market square to credit the sponsors. The In Bloom team themselves enjoyed raising over £1,000 with a recent coffee morning and plant sale.

Facebook was used to remind everyone of judging day and Harborough FM who took time to interview the judges and several volunteers on the day. The judges were pleased to see that Peter Elliott, Chair of Harborough District Council joined the judges, Operational Staff, and volunteers for a walk along Millennium Mile with its wildflowers and wildlife interest and stayed to enjoy refreshments in Welland Park.

Areas for Development

Section A

Some lovely residential front gardens could be seen along the driving route. Consider entering one as a 'special' next year.

The challenges in the Rose Garden in Welland Park are discussed above. The judges are pleased to see a very active long-term programme to overhaul this and look forward to learning about progress in future years.

The bed in Welland Park in the border behind the 'Covid' tree was looking a little sparse.

Section B

The water supply at St Lukes hospital is a long way from the planting. Explore whether rainwater harvesting could be carried out to enable a handier and more sustainable supply.

Poppies have set themselves in the ground disturbed in setting up the new boards and Ridgeway Primary. This could be an opportunity to continue to grow them year after year, and/or add lavender to the area for some colour.

Information boards in the town centre tell of some of the history of the area, but the judges did not get a great sense of that from the planting or the tour, a comment made last year. It has some beautiful coaching inns, for example the Three Swans, and the judges were again disappointed that there was not an entry for one, especially when they could see the lovely planting had already been done.

Planting at the war memorial has been themed for the 3 forces to commemorate D-Day, obvious when you know, but no information was available about it.

The wildflower border along the river has a QR code but the information available is only about what areas are being managed in this way. An improvement would be to set out what flowers are being grown and why, and what impact they have on the environment.

Management of this area is limited to cutting it down once a year and ensuring the seeds are shed properly. Would there be value in managing it more actively to remove, for example brambles and thistles which risk overwhelming it? Schools could be involved in monitoring the insect life attracted to the area.

Explore whether it is possible to be more methodical in reuse of plants removed from the park bedding schemes, even if this is simply an advertised give away to local people.

Section C

Explore whether the inclusive initiative at Quinn's bookshop can be used to draw more schools into gardening.

Judges look forward to seeing the new composting area next year.

Continue to encourage the involvement of local businesses to support your campaign as well as doing their own thing.

SCORES: Section A 35

Section B: 26

Section C: 27 Gold Total Score: 88



LARGE TOWN

NAME OF ENTRY: Melton in Bloom

LEVEL OF AWARD: Gold

Judged on 5th July

Judges: Malcolm Fisher, Liz Fairfield

Judges Award: To Dean Smith for his cheerfulness and hard work planting 74 flower buckets (at time of writing) for town centre businesses to take care of, to brighten up the town.

Introduction

The morning after the general election, the judges were welcomed by Sue Herlihy, Marie Walters, Diana Wood, deputy Mayor Siggy Atherton and the In Bloom team at St Mary's Parish Church. After an overview of some of the varied activities underway, we set off on a well-paced tour of key features of the entry, with plenty of time to talk to the many volunteers who popped in along the way. We were able to see how successful partnership with a wide range of organisations enables this relatively small team to have a significant impact on the town.

Areas of Achievement

Section A – Horticulture

Planting is carefully designed to be appropriate to the setting. The judges were impressed by the imaginative use of perennials, grasses, and wildflowers to complement single flowered bedding to provide a better environment for pollinators, and a pleasing modern twist on the traditional look. This was particularly effective in the varied displays in the Heritage Garden. The new rose garden in memory of Lesley Chester uses her favourite colours.

In the town centre 76 baskets, 16 railing troughs and several 3-tier planters major on classic bedding and trailing plants. A scheme for planted buckets enables shops to 'own' a planter, care for it, and bring it indoors at night for security. Take up is good, 74 this year, up from 50 last year. Plants are bright, simple, and robust and provide a unified look along the street. The colour schemes this year is that of the Olympic rings. Where individual businesses plant their own areas, they are encouraged to follow the same colour scheme. The Bell Centre is home to an impressive set of large planters with mature and immaculate pelargoniums, lobelia, and petunias.

The Sensory Garden in the country park, newly rebuilt and renovated with Coronation funding, is well laid out and less formal, with herbs, lavenders, grasses, and roses attracting wildlife including lizards. Plants are well chosen for this open sunny spot overlooking the country park and should fill out nicely in coming years. The Baby Memorial Garden, renovated even more recently, is a peaceful, sunny gravel garden. The roses were just going over and the area is a work in progress for replanting.

Plants were good quality, pest, and disease free, and well maintained, some a little behind due to the recent poor weather.

From the Kings Highway we could admire a large number of healthy mature trees in the park.

Section B - Environment

Planting themes throughout the town reflect its recent and not so recent history. The Heritage Garden includes sculptures to celebrate the Defence Animal Training Regiment based at Melton. Private Coop, Sergeant Whyte, and Military Working Dog Fergus were on hand to tell us more about their work. A topiary lamb recalls the wool trade on which the town was built, a fox and

cubs mark the historical importance of the hunt. A 1/3 scale model barge floats on a bed of lobelia, on the site of the original canal basin and a train chuff through fields of perennials. A willow spitfire celebrates the town's purchase of one during WW2. Each bed has a sign with its title on, and a system of QR codes is in preparation to enable people to learn more. Sustainability is at the heart of the planting schemes here, using plants suitable for each site, which need minimal water and are well protected with mulch. Pollinator friendly plants abound, and the growing medium is peat free. Plants are sourced locally. Bulbs feature heavily to ensure winter and spring colour. No weedkiller is used, and fertilisers are seaweed and manure. MIB member keeps a photographic record of wildlife week by week. Advice from Naturescape has informed the wildflower planting. The town participates in the Great Big Green Week. The medieval garden features some street art and planting from medieval times, documented on a sign next to it. Friends of the Country Park carry out clearance work, manage a community orchard and clear Himalayan Balsam, with the welcome involvement of families and younger people. A large living willow sculpture of a spider welcomes visitors. Across the town 1500 native species trees have been planted recently with advice from the Woodland trust. The town was clean and free of litter and dog fouling.

Section C - Community

MIB gently coordinate local organisations. NFU Mutual, Melton Building Society and Biffa volunteers boost major project work, and the Lions have set up a friendship bench in the Bell Centre, built by people with social problems and planted with colourful pelargoniums. The gardening club manage the churchyard and wildflower bed. The Local Business Improvement District Coordinator is a major financial and practical supporter and spent the day with us. Work with the Town Estate and Melton Borough Council is a true partnership in which In Bloom have influence and are able to select the council funded plants themselves. Edd de Coverly, Chief Executive, met us after the judging to show his support, despite having been up all night as returning officer.

A mini 'In Bloom' Schools competition, sets criteria and requires a portfolio. Older children act as ambassadors to coach younger ones. 4 schools took part this year. We were sadly unable to meet the winners as they were away on a school trip. A new project to create a 'white' wedding' garden adjacent to the Register Office involves 15 children from a school in an underprivileged part of town.

Businesses participate in a 'hidden' and 'open' gem competition for their frontages and courtyards.

Radio 103 The Eye interviewed the judges and took photographs, and the visit has appeared on the well-used Facebook page. The chair of MIB has a monthly column in the local paper.

Areas for Development

Section A

The mature rose bushes alongside Kings Walk have been badly pruned over the years and are an ugly shape. It is hoped that MIB can influence the new council gardener to have them renovated and reshaped.

Some of the town centre planters have a fragmented design with the hanging baskets above and they lacked vigour, resulting in less impact.

Bucket planters across town were in good condition, sadly the worst ones we saw were right outside the church door as we arrived.

Section B

Impressive efforts to embed sustainable planting across the town need to be augmented by practical ways to minimise the use of tap water. For example, the sensory garden in the Country Park is handy for the café building, which would be a rich source of harvested rainwater.

Section C

Make use of physical signs and the QR code scheme to explain the value of mixed planting and the wildlife attracted to it.

Given your extensive schools engagement, consider entering a school into the EMIB Schools competition, and use the residential garden competition to find an entry for that category as well.

SCORES: Section A 33

Section B: 25

Section C: 27

Total Score: 85



Large Towns

Name of entry: Belper in Bloom

Judged on July 1, 2024

Award: Gold

Judges Award: To Adrian Rochford for his efforts to promote wildflower areas in the Local Nature Reserve and identifying further opportunities to encourage biodiversity in Belper. Particularly his focus on local planting and raising his own seeds and plants at home.

Introduction: The judges were met at St John's Chapel at the Heritage Centre in Belper by Ann, Adrian and John and others from the Belper in Bloom group. Ann gave an introductory presentation, which was both clear and informative setting out the targets for the group for the next year. Ann also explained the trade-offs that the group faced in meeting some of these targets. The judges were then given a full tour, mainly on foot in rather drizzly conditions.

Section A Horticulture: A major feature in Belper is a large selection of very good colourful hanging baskets (probably in excess of 150 and additional 30 odd half baskets) which are put together by the council and sold to traders in the town. These provide a colourful and consistent display throughout the town. There are a number of large well planted planters also maintained by the council and positioned strategically across town. Congratulations to the maintenance team for their continued hard work. There is no doubt about it, the quality of plant displays is of a very good standard, and they are all well maintained. The plants appear healthy and free of pests and diseases. It was felt that floral displays would look even better as they matured over the next few weeks. There are a number of display beds within the town including the Memorial Gardens and Field Lane junction which are planted with beautiful displays. The use of double flowering begonias is particularly effective and gives Belper a real wow factor. As in previous years, these were particularly good , E.g. Memorial Park and Field Lane Corner.

Belper also possesses a number of areas maintained by private individuals, volunteers and organisations which are also of merit. The Ada Belfield Centre, which is a local care home, has a number of raised beds which are looked after by the local branch of the Rotary club. It was particularly refreshing to see the choice of planting here included a number of perennials including thymes rosemary and astilbes. Here there were also gardens at the back of the building which the residents use frequently. These have been attractively planted with a wide range of shrubs and perennials. Of particular note are the Annabelle hydrangeas. The judges were pleased to see a considerable improvement in the quality of planting here compared to last year.

The station adopters oversee an area of good mixed planting including Crocosmia, Evening Primrose, Hypericum and Teasles which are all set off by a large mosaic welcoming visitors to

Belper. No watering facilities are available here and despite this difficulty the plants appear to be thriving. These are the beginnings of a small wildflower planting, which hopefully will be developed further. It was good to note that information about the project was available for station visitors on this project. Also of note were the Meadow Court assisted-living flats which had a number of well planted areas together with tubs and hanging baskets giving an attractive overall impression thus enhancing the resident's lifestyle. The local Garden Club looks after the interesting plantings at the Triangle and Calders Corner, and it was good to see the recent U3A involvement in the Rain Garden at Strutts Centre. The judges thoroughly enjoyed their visit there. The Rain Garden is an amazing initiative and with the recent weather conditions being ideal, the plants were looking particularly healthy this year.

Section B Environment: Belper is a beautiful town and the Council staff responsible for keeping the streets, open spaces and waste bins clean and tidy are to be commended. With the help of volunteers, children and businesses carrying out regular litter picks etc Belper is free of litter and general detritus. Their parks and open spaces are well maintained. The treatment and maintenance of street furniture is very important to Belper as it is part of their on going plans to ensure residents and visitors have an attractive and safe environment to live in. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure the old Deer Park has been transformed into a wildflower haven by Adrian Rochford and some volunteers. Adrian showed us the extensive plantings that have been made recently and although it appears that the quality and variety this year is not as good as hoped there is every expectation that this will improve in future years. Adrian's enthusiasm for this aspect of wildflower gardening is considerable and his knowledge is excellent, and this contributes considerably to a valuable environmental asset for the town. There are now other wildlife friendly areas being developed throughout Belper, including at the Belper Central Methodist Church and as previously mentioned at the station. Planters and hanging baskets currently use a Peat free growing medium which is highly commendable. There are plans to increase the use of Peat free growing mediums across Belper over the coming years. The desire to grow their own plants in Belper could be a good way forward however this maybe a step too far as finding a suitable location will not be easy. As with other 'in bloom' entries watering the large number of floral displays is a huge challenge, but Belper's Bloom Group are constantly looking at ways as to how this can be achieved. The Rain Garden is a good initiative and with the recent weather it was looking healthy and there are plans to further supplement the planting in this area. Belper is renowned for its strong heritage connections which is obvious through the architecture e.g. buildings, mills etc Being a World Heritage site is key to Belper's ongoing development and future sustainability. Throughout the town, there are several information boards explaining the history and heritage of Belper. Evidence of Art in the Park / landscape can be clearly seen as you walk / drive through Belper eg Flying Geese sculpture, Mr. Potato Head and not forgetting the wonderful mural of the Kingfisher on the side elevation on one of the buildings. The Poetry Trail is a wonderful initiative with contributions from both local and established poets.

Section C Community: Belper has a keen sense of community with many groups working together or alone to run several activities which benefit large sections of the community. The Bloom group appear to be very proactive in engaging support from a large cross-section of organisations. A selection of these groups were introduced to the judges during the tour and it was interesting to hear about the varying range of activities that they are involved with.

Some taking place in the town throughout the year, include litter picking expeditions, Belper goes Green and open gardens. On a different theme it was particularly noted that 125 young people from Herbert Strutt, Milford, St. John's C of E, and St. Elizabeth's Catholic VA Primary

Schools worked with DVMWHS Co- ordination Team in Belper in Bloom Workshops, not forgetting the children who were also working on Alton Manor Open Spaces.

There is an active Facebook page which appears to be kept well up to date.

Areas for development

Section A Horticulture: Although the judges saw examples of wildflower areas which are being developed, a number of the floral displays could be approached with a greater consideration towards biodiversity in mind. The judges noted from Belper's Facebook page that there are Council plans to review the planting schemes across Belper by 2026 to include a wider range of plants. The judges look forward to seeing how the review develops Belper's planting style in the future and how it will influence the way residents and visitors enjoy the changing landscape.

Section B Environment: It is interesting to see that the 'bloom group' are actively looking at ways and appropriate locations where their biodiversity agenda can be implemented. The judges are aware that there is a need to strike a balance across Belper's horticultural programme ensuring that the 'wow' factor is not lost. It is good to hear the plans to phase out chemical and pesticide use over a period of time is well underway. Judges were delighted to hear that thoughts around the different methods of water harvesting techniques are being considered and they look forward to seeing how some of these challenges are being met. Whilst the street furniture is being well maintained, consideration should be given to replacing some as in certain areas they are beginning to look rather tired and worn. The Rain Garden initiative is quite a project. Perhaps this initiative can be expanded or repeated across other areas.

Section C Community: Whilst the contribution across the year made by school children and young people to the Belper in Bloom entry is well documented in the portfolio, where at all possible the judges do like to have the opportunity to speak to some representatives on the day. Consider ways as to how this might be achieved for next year's entry. It is noted that for some time now you run have an open gardens competition. It might be worth considering entering one or two of the 'special' Floral Awards e.g. Best Front Garden or Best Pub etc. next year particularly as the judges noticed a number of quality gardens and pubs during the guided tour. It is always a difficult balance trying to show the judges all the good work carried out by volunteer groups, businesses and professional organisations within the allotted time. At the end of the tour, during some light refreshments, consider offering the judges the opportunity to meet just one or two of the organisations / displays that could further enhance your entry.

Scores A 34 B 24 C 27 Total 85

Award Gold



LARGE TOWN

Historic Newark in Bloom

Award: Silver Gilt

Judged on 1st July

Judges: Malcolm Fisher, Liz Fairfield

Judges Award: To Rupert Vinnicombe for a vibrant and diverse allotment community at Barnby Road Allotments

Introduction

The judges were welcomed by Jenni Oliver and Jonathan George at Rumbles Café where we met the staff had an overview of Newark's in Bloom activities over coffee and cake, before embarking on a varied tour of the town and its amenities.

Areas of Achievement

Section A - Horticulture

Sconce Park, primarily an outdoor space for the community, also has some striking floral features. Bright and well-coordinated beds at the entrance celebrate 60 years of In Bloom with gold themed planting in a '60', backed with perennials for longer term colour. Formal planters outside Rumbles Café feature a colourful if not altogether harmonious mix of plants.

The Market Square planters follow a stylish gold and purple theme this year, but some were rather behind for the time of year, reducing their impact. Plants were healthy and pest free and tubs and hanging baskets had been well maintained.

The popular 'Clown' bed in Newark Castle grounds was brightly planted with geraniums and marigolds and in immaculate condition.

Perennials are being introduced, and most annuals were single flowered, providing better access for pollinators.

Winter and spring bulbs are used widely in permanent beds and in tubs and planters.

Section B - Environment

The town was clean and free of litter and dog fouling.

Newark has gone fully peat free, and following advice from the RHS, the town centre planter design this year is beginning the transition to a sustainable framework of perennials and grasses complemented with annuals, to reduce the number of plants replaced at the end of each season. Planter placement for pollination and drought resistance is also being considered and council staff will receive training to ensure continuity. The Council has passed a 'Motion for the Ocean' to draw attention to the impact we all have on the seas, regardless of how far away from it we live. This year's overhead design in the Market Square is of daisies, butterflies, and bees to celebrate the environment.

Much use is made of perennials and grasses in the formal Sconce Park planting, and to good effect, to inspire people to take ideas home. Hedge cutting is avoided between March and September and much of the grass is left long, with mown paths for interest.

The Sconce itself is a highly historic monument and will benefit from the new signage being rolled out.

The restored orchard in Sconce Park features a range of fruit trees and a new mixed hedge. A kestrel has already started using the newly cleared space for hunting and a spoil pile is attracting wildlife including foxes.

The judges enjoyed the opportunity to walk along the river and enjoy the view of the castle from the Swan and Salmon pub. Subject to permissions it would be lovely to see the weeds along here cleared up, the larger shrubs growing in the canal walls must pose a threat to the structure.

A 'Book Bench' project has placed 12 benches around the town, all on different themes, painted by students from the local college, our first was passed en route to the castle grounds.

Significant funding has been secured for a major restoration of the castle gatehouse with much improved access and interpretation. The grounds feature mature trees, including a splendid tulip tree, shrubs, and more formal planting. A large-scale exercise has just removed the ivy from the outside of the castle walls, exposing the lovely brickwork. The grounds are well used for year-round activities including weekly summer band concerts and a fun day.

The loose wild style planting in the Queen Elizabeth Memorial ('Library') gardens is colourful and attractive, bringing in pollinators and softening the appearance of the rather stark Library building next door. A pond, new this year, is beginning to attract more wildlife. A mixed hedge and new trees add longevity. Friends of the Library Garden maintain the area, which they fought to save from developers.

Section C - Community

A bed at the entrance to Sconce Park has been stripped and planted by the local community using donated plants. Repetition of form and colour makes for a harmonious look with good impact.

4 prominent beds outside Rumbles café are managed by 2 schools, the Scouts and the Park Run team. Students from Brackenhurst College work in the park as part of their training.

Simon Hill showed us Sconce Park itself which offers a wide range of activities across its 37 acres with a wheelchair accessible outdoor gym, trim trails, a weekly adult and junior Park Run, orienteering course and a newly extended playground. A 6 monthly user group gives people a stake in the park and encourages people not to 'turn a blind eye' to antisocial behaviour. An information board identifies the wildflowers in the meadow.

A new memorial rose garden is being established and an autumn fruit day is planned.

The former railway station area and disused line at Hawton Holt has been established as a safe outdoor space for youth groups and social prescribing, offering a forest school, quiet area, mature orchard, beehive, a vegetable patch tended by some local schools, and a polytunnel for more tender plants. Rainwater harvesting on the polytunnel makes them self-sufficient in water and work is due to start this summer on a new building and composting toilet using money from the Social Prosperity Fund.

Corporate groups seeking team build activities have been welcomed in to help manage and develop the area.

Newark College gardening club has made a noticeable impact on the college grounds in the 6 months it has been running, with its meagre £200 budget, topped up by In Bloom. The woodland walk has been cleared and a wildflower area started. Mel Luft has been hugely creative in engaging students, and using elements of the curriculum, for example the copper plant supports from the plumbing course. Students are encouraged to choose plants from Newark market and to design the space. Activities planned for next term include making lavender bags and foraged wreaths to sell for funds.

At Barnby Road allotments, Rupert showed us the plots managed by local people including a Syrian refugee, Eastern European migrants, and young families. Membership of Newark Allotments and Garden Society entitles users to local discounts and gives them a voice with the council for improvements needed. With 83 people in 65 plots, the site was well used and busting with colour and produce. The interim drink stop, and allotment tour was most welcome. Nadia

told us about the toad patrol she mounts every year to ensure the safe migration of the (dwindling) number of toads.

The daisy appeal to support the child bereavement trust was well publicised with daisy chains in prominent places around the town.

Sharon Morley supports In Bloom with features in the Newark Advertiser

Diane Ledger, Mayor of Newark, met the judges at the Queen Elizabeth Memorial gardens and chatted cheerfully with us and the volunteers. We very much appreciated the use of her car and driver for the tour.

Areas for Development

Section A

With the exception of the Clown bed, the Castle grounds need some attention. Numerous large sycamore and yew seedlings are in evidence, some shrubs are choked with thistle and ivy, and a few roses have been poorly pruned and were thus not in flower. The pretty fuchsia round the holly tree had happily been spared the worst of the pruning.

Section B

Newark is proud of its Civil War history, with a trail for families to follow. The slightly tired interpretation signs around the town were being refreshed last year and judges look forward to seeing this completed.

The judges applaud the initiative for sustainable planting taken by Newark Council, and look forward to seeing this, and the plan for more town centre trees, develop over future years. Judges will be interested to see how this can be extended to hanging baskets. We understand that this is more of a challenge as new baskets are sold to businesses each year, bringing in welcome revenue.

We wonder if there is scope at the Queen Elizabeth Memorial Garden to extend rainwater harvesting on this environmentally friendly site. The small water butt on the shipping container must empty quickly, and a top up from the council is not very sustainable. This site could set an example locally by chaining more butts together to save water in wet spells, or harvest water from nearby roofs.

Section C

The tour felt somewhat rushed, with little time to talk to some of the people who had given up their time to come out and meet us. We had to sweep past volunteers at Hawton Holt. The portfolio could have been enhanced by more information about year-round activities.

The judges appreciated the inclusion of a residential garden this year. They were pleased to hear that the team have begun an engagement with Barnby Road Academy and would love to see activities from schoolchildren included in a future tour.

SCORES: Section A 33

Section B: 28 Section C: 22

Total Score: 83

SILVER GILT



LARGE TOWN

Name of Entry **Boston in Bloom**

Level of Award **Silver Gilt**

Judged on 8th July

Judges Malcolm Fisher and Liz Fairfield

Judges Award. To Willoughby Road Allotments for the skilful and creative use of funding to combine an active community hub along with the more traditional allotments activities.

Introduction: The judges were met at Willoughby Road Allotments by Allison Fairman, Maddy Eyre and members of the Boston in Bloom team.

Allison gave a short presentation outlining the work the bloom team had carried over the last year emphasising that their efforts were spread over the calendar year. Recent achievements included the new spring bulb planting, the addition of more perennial planting and an increase in the number of partners offering support and funding. Of particular note was the initiative with the police to improve local areas in order to effect and lessen antisocial behaviour in Boston.

Areas of Achievement

Section A Horticulture

The bloom group and the Council together have produced an impactful display of planted tubs and baskets throughout the town.

160 hanging baskets are planted up: half by the local council and half by North Sea Camp a local prison. These are effectively planted with a selection of colourful bedding plants mainly petunias in a pleasing blend of colours. There was some variation in quality evident which could be due to their position and the colder season. Many large planters were evident in the town. It was good to see the increasing use of perennial planting particularly those managed by the Bloom group. Plants were healthy but had recently been planted and will improve over the next few months.

In the Park it was good to see the Art Deco Garden with a varied selection of perennial planting including *Veronicastrum*, *Eryngium* and *Agapanthus*. There were also some effective bird sculptures here. Again, plants were healthy and well maintained by the volunteers. Also in the Park is the Buoy Garden which has a mixture of shrub, perennial and wildflower planting. Some weed growth evident here. There were also some raised beds which pre-school children are given access to. It was good to see that the paths in the park had been re-laid following damage from the fair. A donation of 12 x 15Kg sacks of bulbs were planted in the park again with help from offenders from North Sea Camp. Some of these bulbs were also given to local schools. Is this an opportunity for further involvement with schools? There is a small Rose Garden in the Park which is stocked by a range of colourful varieties. Although the plants are quite vigorous there is some blackspot present, and the bushes are a little leggy with some old wood which would benefit from a rejuvenating prune. There are some planters by the memorial garden which are in a little shade and so have not reached their full potential. More effective planting would enhance this area somewhat.

The judges visited Fydell House, a 1709 mansion now open to the public. The back garden was very well kept and maintained by volunteers. This included some well pruned box topiary and a range of planting including some good Dahlias. Of particular note was an excellent example of a Mulberry Tree.

Pilgrims Patch had just been taken over by the group and clearing the area had begun. This seems an interesting and major project for the future and the group is to be commended for taking on this responsibility. There are great opportunities for some shade lovers to be included here. Work to renovate the raised beds adjacent to this had made great improvements.

Section B Environment.

There are some examples around the town explaining Boston's history, however with such landmarks such as the Stump and historical events such as the Pilgrims, it was felt more could be achieved here to demonstrate more of Boston's heritage.

There are some fine new stainless-steel benches in the park but much of the street furniture in the town would benefit from refurbishment when funding allows. Stylish and well-designed examples of metallic sculptures abound within the town and also in the allotments. The group 'Transported Art' utilise the skills of local people to produce many of these. The inclusion of the pollinator beds near the police building is a positive way to consider biodiversity in the planting schemes. There was a good range of plants here including geranium, veronica, marjoram, mallow, and borage. This together with the steady move to more pollinator friendly tub planting with perennials is welcomed. The north bed of the Stump had a wildlife friendly area now enhanced with a fernery. Some monitoring of wildlife populations has begun here. There is an area of wildflowers and grasses on the edge of town which is maintained by volunteers. These are all self-seeded and their diversity is recorded. There are also a number of attractive metal sculptures here which enhanced the area.

Sustainable gardening practices are noticeable on the allotments we visited: in particular the distribution of IBCs to plot holders, many of whom had harnessed water collection devices from their sheds or greenhouses. Peat free medium or council produced recycled compost is used in the planters. All plants are sourced locally. Manure is available and used as soil conditioner on the allotments, but inorganic fertilisers are used by the Council to feed the tube and baskets.

We were shown the Custom House Quay, but it was felt that improvement could be made here with some judicious weeding.

Section C Community

The Boston in Bloom group operate throughout the year and volunteers take on a range of projects during all seasons including planting bulbs and wildflowers, clearing the wildflower meadow and seed swaps in the library. The allotments are a great example of involving the community in bloom activities. With approximately a third of its area taken over by community led projects including a popular café which serves also as a meeting point, they attract a range of visitors including staff and patients from the nearby hospital. Paths in the allotments were also accessible to all. The allotment holders also contribute 3 boxes of fresh produce each week to a local food bank. Although the judges were not taken to any schools it was pleasing to see the involvement of pre-school children at a nursery run by the Salvation Army in planting and maintaining some planters.

The Group have a Facebook page, and this appears to be updated regularly. There was no involvement with press or other local media during the judging tour, however.

There has been some increase in the number of funding supporters in the last year. Of particular importance is the funding received from the police to develop areas and create a sense of belonging which hopefully will help to deter some of the anti-social behaviour which is a problem in Boston

Areas for Development

Section A Horticulture.

Consider ways in which more planting can be changed to a more sustainable and biodiverse content. This is particularly relevant to the baskets and tubs supplied by the council.

The Rose Garden would benefit from some remedial pruning. The Memorial Garden would benefit from more impactful planting. Continue the work just begun on Pilgrims Patch and add some new planting.

Section B Environment

Continue to develop and increase where possible the areas devoted to wild and native flowers. Is it possible to create additional wildlife habitats in the area?

The water harvesting activities on the allotments is commendable. Could you find similar ways to reduce mains water usage for tub and basket plants. It may not be possible to harvest sufficient water for all containers but harvesting some water would help.

Could you develop a recycling policy for used plastics such as pots and trays.

Section C Community

Try to increase contacts with local media outlets to further involve the community in Bloom activities.
Could you try to develop further contacts with schools in order to increase the interest of children.
Are there ways to roll out your Police funding/ASB initiative across other areas.

Scores A 31 B 23 C25 Total 79 Award : Silver Gilt



Large Town

Gainsborough in Bloom

Judged on 12th of July 2024

Judges Malcolm Fisher and Liz Fairfield

Award **Silver**

Judges award:

To Darren for his enthusiasm and knowledge of wildflower meadows and planting, and for passing on those skills to the volunteer groups who assist him.

Introduction

The judges were met by John, Vaughan, Anna, Julie, and Jill together with representatives from both district and town councils at Gainsborough Old Hall.

Vaughan gave a presentation and showed the judges a copy of their portfolio. Vaughan quickly outlined the basic activities that the group have been carrying out and explained the main targets of the group. Of particular interest was the Green Trail which is a bio-diversity corridor across and through Gainsborough. It was pleasing to see the support of local government that the Gainsborough in Bloom team received.

Section A Horticulture

The judges were shown several planted areas and of particular interest were the gardens around the Old Hall. Here English heritage have provided gardening expertise in order to ensure the planting is period correct. Although the hall was built in the mediaeval period, there are links to Henry the Eighth and so the planting palette has been extended up to this period. Recent activity has included the reduction of the perimeter box hedging and some new planting which includes Inula, verbascum, leucanthemum and achillea.

The beds at the side of the hall included some old Rosa Gallica. Impact was good and it was pleasing to see the use of such old varieties and the accompanying increase in biodiversity that this has brought. The Rose beds by the Paris Church need some attention and the beds nearby planted with Lobelia and begonia semperflorens were tidy but still immature.

There were three raised beds nicely planted with petunias and geraniums opposite the Methodist Church and these were complete with sponsorship boards.

The planters maintained by the Bloom group were looking good if a little immature for the time of year. The judges were pleased to be taken around Marshall's Yard, a local shopping centre, who had invested in a number of colourful displays. The planting here is mainly perennial supplemented by some annuals. Around the site local traders manage their own displays where appropriate. There is also a colourful display of 36 hanging baskets. The overall effect is attractive, and maintenance is good. Marshall's Yard has an appreciation of the need to manage their displays environmentally and follow sound practices here.

We were shown around the premises of one of the group's sponsors Cliff Bradley who had a number of flowerbeds of mixed planting. Of note were the spectacular large Koi carp.

We also visited Hickman Hill Hotel which has a nicely designed garden with some good box hedging and a mixture of planting. It was disappointing to note there were three dead Bay Trees in the garden. Is this a possibility for a future entry in the best Pub/Hotel category?

The beds at Richmond Park had been planted with a union jack and RAF logo design in honour of D.Day. However, these were disappointing as they were badly in need of deadheading although they had been weeded prior to our arrival.

Section B Environment

A major future development will be the construction of the Green Trail across the town and the judges look forward to seeing the results of this development in the future. It is pleasing that the group is taking a pragmatic approach to this development: tackling some easier achievements early while waiting for permissions for later trickier work. Gainsborough has an interesting history, and it is obvious that there is pride in this within the Bloom group and in the town. The Old Hall is of particular interest and is well maintained. Most of the areas of the town we were shown are tidy although there are some areas where improvement could be made. There is an amount of weed growth around pavements and other areas that we understand is treated with weedkiller regularly. The maintenance of street furniture is fair but there were again areas where improvement could be made. It was good to see both Theaker Nature reserve and Pitt Hills Woods which are excellent areas of wildflower meadows which encourage a degree of biodiversity. This is monitored by the Bloom group. There are over 70 varieties of wildflower at Theaker Reserve and the wildlife populations are measured and recorded, particularly the presence of moths [a burnett moth had recently been recorded] and butterflies. Wildlife including Foxes, Muntjac and Roe Deer were also noted in Pitt Hill Woods. The judges were impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm of Darren who is charged with managing the site and actively shares his knowledge with the volunteers who assist him including training in hedge laying. There is an understanding within the group of the need to move to more sustainable styles of planting and this is noticeable in some of the areas that we visited, particularly Marshall's Yard. There is also an acceptance of the need to move to peat free planting and again at Marshall's Yard it was good to see the use of organic fertilisers such as blood fish and bone. There is still some use by both council and private contractors of the weedkiller glyphosate. We are not aware of any plans to phase this out although this is currently restricted to spraying hard landscaping.

We did not see evidence of attempts to minimise water usage, and it was not clear what processes are in place to recycle plastic pots, etcetera.

Section C Community

There is some evidence of forward planning, particularly the hoped for green corridor.

The Bloom group seems to be active throughout the year and their portfolio identified a number of tasks that they carried out including planting up 17 tubs/ planters.

Gainsborough litter pickers have cleaned up the Thorndyke conservation site. The judges were pleased to see the attendance of the chair of West Lindsey District Council and the Mayor of Gainsborough. Relationships here are obviously good and it would be good to see this backed up by an increase in funding for the Bloom group, which works hard to make a difference in difficult circumstances. It would have been good to see the local allotments and hopefully this can be included in future years tours. It was a pleasure to meet the Hastings group which is a special needs support group with some facilities including a poly tunnel at Richmond Park. It was good to meet participants from this group and see their horticultural activities and the pleasure they derive from them.

The judges were not informed of direct involvement with schools and this should be considered for the future.

The judges, however, were pleased to see a more focused and pragmatic approach to their projects taken this year.

Areas for development

Section A Horticulture

Try to include a wider and more diverse number of areas to demonstrate the blooms group's horticultural activities. It was a pity that the town centre and some allotments were not included in the tour particularly as an allotments officer has recently been appointed. It would be good to see a move to more diverse/perennial planting styles in some areas. Maintenance could be better in certain areas particularly the Rose beds which we were shown and the bedding at Richmond Park which needed deadheading.

Section B Environment

Progress on the Green Trail will be eagerly awaited.

Try to minimise the use of chemical treatments where feasible and look at ways to minimise the use of mains water. Are some forms of water harvesting possible?

We heard little about re-use or recycling schemes for plastics etc.

Is it possible to consider an incremental renewal programme for street furniture to refresh them for future years?

Section C Community

Although Gainsborough has a rich heritage little was seen in the way of signage in order to inform both residents and visitors of this.

Would it be possible to forge links with schools or colleges to bring younger people into the bloom activities.

Could you broaden the scope of the group to include representation from allotment societies and gardening societies for example

Scores a 27. B 19. C 18 total 64. Award Silver.



CATEGORY

Loughborough

GOLD

Judged on 10th July 2024

Judges: Joyce Slater & John

Constable

Judges Award: To Mrs. Pat Cook for Mountfield Lodge Cottage and the area adjacent to the green belt entrance.

We were welcomed the Loughborough in Bloom (LiB) at Mountfield allotments by Pat Cook, Chair of Loughborough in Bloom, Sarah Cross of Charnwood Borough Council (CBC), Nicola Clarke of idverde and members of the Bloom Group. The verbal presentation introduced the tour we were to embark on and how the various partnerships interacted to build the Loughborough entry 2024.

Areas of Achievement

Horticulture

Throughout our tour we were shown pleasing combinations of annuals, perennials and more permanent planting combined where appropriate and chosen for their suitability for the particular location. Plants were of consistent good quality and very well cared for and were thriving in their particular position. The colourful hanging basket trees had an impact. Effective choices had been made whether it consisted of perennials - in the bed in the centre of the Forest Road Green Belt for example or a combination of high impact colourful annuals (petunias, begonias, marigolds etc.) with cordyline mixed in to provide height, structure, and contrast at the entrance to the Belt. - in that case ideally suited so that passing traffic receives a strong message as it rushes on. Efforts are made to soften the hard landscaping in the town centre with permanent flowering containers and hanging baskets and some movable containers featuring a jasmine "wall" allowing larger Market and Fair events to take place.

Elsewhere the standards of maintenance in the formal university garden, the town centre containers and Queen's Park were very high. An annual colour scheme of red, pink, purple and yellow was used throughout including the 30 barrier boxes alongside roadways.

Seasonal attractions were illustrated in the LiB calendar - from natural situations of spring blue bells and snowdrops in Thorpe Acre Green spinney and early summer buttercups in the Stonebow Washlands to the hand plantings of daffodils in Forest Road Green Belt and Queen's Park. The beautiful autumn colours in the Green Belt and the autumnal November scene on Thorpe Acre Green. The judges met Kaz Setchell at the University and were shown around the carefully maintained formal lawns and gardens with the help of 20 gardeners - who also have multiple sports fields to maintain. The tour ended after judges had viewed the impeccable

planting in Queen's Park where the bog garden, band stand planting and the beds illustrating the 3 stages of grief were highlights.

Environment

We were taken to a range of sites ranging from the unspoilt Stonebow Washlands which provides habitats for a range of wildflowers - such as bee orchids - together with butterflies and diverse small mammals. Bats, swifts, and willow tit are seen, recorded, and encouraged by provision of a range of additional suitable habitats. The more formal container planting in the town centre used to soften the hard landscaping and the more traditional Queens Park – are all planted to create opportunities for pollinating insects but in less natural habitats. There is minimal use of chemicals throughout, and the use of peat free compost is of wider environmental benefit, whilst water recycling was an ongoing challenge. Containers with internal reservoirs were used to minimise watering regularity. The town centre was clean and litter free. Relaxed mowing trials are being undertaken on 16 sites over the next 3 years - judges were shown a representative sample and noted the information signs which had been erected on the sites. Some mowing around and through the sites to create pathways will be maintained and areas will not be allowed to become overgrown. The problems caused by the winter flooding in Queen's Park were highlighted and illustrated with photographs taken in January 2024 in the park and also the Forest Road Green belt - crocus suffered badly but daffodils seemed more resilient. Composting undertaken at the University was donated to local community groups. Judges were introduced to the Loughborough Landscaping and Gardening Society and Martha Wörsching who coordinates the Incredible Edible project from the site together with a number of student volunteers who assist with the maintenance of 7 community areas around the town. Stonebow Washlands was explained by Ross Bray (RSPB) with the help of Friend's groups. Bat, swift and willow tit populations were encouraged with the erection of nesting boxes. The area adjoins the Blackbrook which also flooded this winter. The emergence of orchids this year was special. Our tour was finished at the Charnwood Museum where several local industries were highlighted including framework knitting, the last remaining bell foundry in England, aircraft manufacture, Ladybird Books which originated here as well as many local families and a bygone way of life. The bell foundry link was maintained throughout the town through painted wooden bells on planters and displays.

Community

The LiB group is formally constituted and is connected to an impressive number of community groups and partners including the BID "Love Loughborough" and have 35 IYN groups entered into the completion in 2024. Participation Group Chair Mike Jones explained that monthly meetings of the Community Participation Group which helps disseminate information from such as the RHS, RSPB and local Wildlife Trusts to approximately 40 local community groups. idverde sponsor the town's hanging basket competition (judged by photographs) and another business partner Serco offers recycling initiatives with food recycling planned to be introduced in 2025. Charnwood Borough Council has a target date of 2030 to be carbon neutral and is gradually replacing motorised vehicles with electric alternatives. A gardener's fair is held monthly every first Sunday from April to September in the town centre and is illustrated in the portfolio. The presentation venue was surrounded by swathes of Day Lillies and Red Bistorta alongside a multi section container containing colourful perennial planting backed up by a white buddleia. The judging tour starting point of the John Storer community allotments was a perfect way to illustrate the community involvement of LiB projects but also its environmental commitment and was explained by Lee Ward. Multiple information points were on view and plots were tended by volunteers and the John Storer Community. The volunteers at the Green Belt are helped by students who join them every Wednesday during term time and are also

involved with Mountfield Lodge Primary School. Whilst Thorpe Acre Green is an area of community activity adjoining the busy Knightthorpe Road featuring a colourful wildflower strip (with species identification list) at the edge of the spinney and a raised bed of marigolds as well as more permanent roses, lavender and various evergreens around the village sign. It was good to hear about the Green Gym volunteers who work in the nature reserves and public spaces on horticultural and environmental projects combined with exercise in a social way. Work is due to start in the park opposite the beacon (and baskets) around the Hope Bell commemorating those lost to Covid and there is a useful information board adjoining the site explaining what will be happening.

Areas for Development

Horticulture

Some minor damage has been caused to the Bridge End beds, formal bedding near the museum, where pigeons are being fed by the public. It is difficult to know a solution other than to replant or replace with permanent species. It was disappointing that a “green wall” would not be possible above the shops in the market square, but circumstances will not permit. The border in front of the public toilets in Queen’s Park is currently in need of refurbishment, which the judges understood was planned.

The “Songster bed” close to the carillon could be easily missed due to it being surrounded by a wildflower mix whilst some other adjacent areas are dominated by striking formal planting.

Environment

Some monitoring of water samples from the Wood Brook has been undertaken - as with other recording we were told about. It would be interesting in future to understand how the results have influenced future actions. How and where more composting and water harvesting is being undertaken would be beneficial. The greening of the dual carriageway verges with wildflowers may be worth trialing to make the routes into the centre more attractive.

Community

The involvement of younger people is generally very good especially at the Allotments but could be even better if the involvement of schools and youth groups could be encouraged.

Marks

Horticulture: 37

Environment: 27

Community: 28

Total Marks: 92

Medal Awarded: GOLD



SMALL CITY

OADBY AND WIGSTON

LEVEL OF AWARD: GOLD

Judged on 3rd July 2024

Judges: Joyce Slater & John

Constable

Judges Award: For Elliott Hall and the wide range of activities it offers

Introduction

The Oadby and Wigston entry is coordinated by the Pride of the Borough (PotB) team that works alongside Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (OWBC) to make their annual entry into this competition. This partnership works demonstrably well and could easily be used as a blueprint to other similar conurbations or large towns to promote integration and community harmony. In doing so, the other competitive yardsticks of horticulture and the environment are widely incorporated. We were met and guided through our tour by Simon Lucas and David Carter, respectively Chairperson and Secretary of PotB.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The increased use of permanent planting in baskets and planters not only provided eye catching interest throughout the tour but has reduced overall input of time and materials in their maintenance. The Peace Memorial Park formal D Day 80 year commemorative planting was impressive, marred only very slightly by the surrounds in need of some minor attention. It contrasted with the more random cottage garden style that has been tastefully maintained by Chris Huscroft in the Framework Knitters "Victorian Garden" which featured various roses, variegated privet, daisies, foxgloves, clematis, primroses and much more. There was also a range of outdoor vegetables and fruit. At Elliott Hall we met one of the founders Carl Walter together with Neil, one of the main volunteers - himself registered blind - who had helped clear and reinstate an adjacent neighbour's garden into a community garden which now features outdoor vegetables grown in raised beds (formed from recycled railway sleepers) and a range of glasshouse crops. Produce is given away or used in soups in the winter. At Aylestone Lane allotments we met Chairperson Nigel Herbert and Bob James who helped maintain the allotment's own garden. It was good to see they supported new allotmenters with a starter pack. Sited alongside the 160 other fully occupied allotments we were shown the community allotment by one of the 12 (every Tuesday) volunteers Christine Hurst, featuring a range of outdoor vegetables produce from which is shared amongst volunteers.

At the 67 acre Brocks Hill country park, now home to OWBC, we were shown around by the Park Ranger Eleanor Pratt and learnt that the wildflower mixes in the meadow and butterfly numbers and this year been recorded. The wide range of apple, plum, pear, cherry, mulberry, walnut and hazel trees feature many noncommercial varieties originating from Leicestershire and the East Midlands

Wickham Road Green was developed during lockdown and has resulted in the existing triangle of grass ringed with poplars now featuring cultivated flower beds containing shrubs such as buddleia, hebes, lavender and a range of evergreens. A significant bulb planting programme on the Green was outlined by Irene Sibley whilst Julie Richards explained similar work at the South Wigston Community Garden (SWCG) along with her enthusiastic work promoting the sunflower project - the portfolio illustrated the fruits of this unseen work.

The planters and peaceful garden to the rear of the Oadby Baptist Church were healthy and well maintained - volunteer Nigel Swan showed us productive crops of peas, potatoes, garlic, rhubarb, lettuce, and many more edible species whilst sweet peas and poppies were slightly easier on the eye. At Aigburth Care Home we met Marilyn Bowles, one of 5 volunteer gardeners that help maintain the gardens alongside the homes with one particularly welcoming seating area near the entrance featuring lavenders, roses, hollyhocks, salvia, and geranium. Finally, the botanical highlight, the University of Leicester Botanic Garden (UoLBC) when we were guided around on a brief tour by one of the gardeners Rachel Benskin. The garden was formed from the back gardens of 4 large adjoining properties that were erected in the early 20th Century and now attracts over 50 thousand visitors including 10 thousand school children.

Section B

Organic practices are in use when possible - for example at the Framework Knitters Garden a recent attack of box tree caterpillar was controlled using an environmentally friendly technique. The garden adjoining Elliott Hall was an unkempt area full of rubbish which has been transformed into a productive area incorporating a general composting area incorporating food compost from nearby HMP Fosse Way and using recycled water. At South Wigston station, since early 2024, Adopters had spent their time clearing land adjacent to the old railway station to create a nature reserve and we were told established protected areas for rare grasses and butterflies. The frequency of wildlife visits has increased - from fox cubs to muntjac and a wider range of bird species. The Shed has manufactured bird and bat boxes, a bug hotel and bird tables which the group have installed. At Brocks Hill, Stuart Marbrook (OWBC) explained that collaborative working with the community is practiced as often as possible - a litter "Wombles" group helps regularly with the council removing full rubbish bags and the probation service regularly provides volunteers to help in the park. There are over 540 litter bins around the borough which are regularly emptied and maintained. The council anti-litter campaign he outlined was well evidenced - we saw very little evidence of rubbish around the borough on our tour. The relationship between OWBC and many volunteer groups was regularly mentioned and it is obvious the council has a very enlightened way of making full use of such an enthusiastic and cost-effective workforce.

We met Mandy Penfold who is involved with the Plastic Free Oadby group which had been accreditation for their work.

Section C

At the Framework knitters garden plants are produced for sale at various times of the year by up to 12 volunteers who join Chris on a Tuesday afternoon throughout the year. The Elliott Hall Youth and Community Centre was run by 20+ volunteers and provides an important venue for many groups of all ages and the community garden project aims to support mental health and wellbeing across the community. The station adopters at South Wigston have forged links with The Shed group and HMP Fosse Way provides volunteers who have helped on site and made planters and benches from recycled wood. A new children's playground is being created at Brocks Hill country Park to add to the attraction of various wooden carvings. Entrust-Ed, a charity that works with young people to help develop their employability and skills, is working alongside the volunteers at SWCG to create a wildflower maze. At the Baptist chapel (known as A place to Grow) up to 30 people meet in an "all languages" social group on Wednesday mornings, outside by the garden if the climate permits or indoors. The social prescribing team supports these activities. Homemade soups are made and shared often using garden produced ingredients. At the Parade in Oadby town centre we met Raheema Caratella (OWBC) who, as town centre manager liaises with shop owners and community leaders to handle any business queries and distributes shop front improvement grants - from what we saw all the retail premises were

occupied. The PotB timed Saturday work mornings are an excellent idea so that potential volunteers know when and where they can join in if only on a few occasions - the programme also emphasises that a wide area of the borough is involved throughout the year. Another excellent idea is the PotB Membership/Loyalty Card which encourages local consumers to purchase locally - over 40 local retailers have signed up for the scheme.

Areas for Development

Section A

The excellent portfolio could be enhanced by labelling of the “throughout the year” photos on page 17 and included more of the results bulb project 2023-24. Otherwise, it is colourful, informative and well laid out. The Peace Memorial Garden was not finished and unfortunately the fountains were not working during our visit.

Section B

We did see occasional graffiti, but it was on buildings awaiting demolition/renovation and so very difficult to control or access to remedy. There was evidence of street weeds but any we saw had been treated.

The reduced use of annuals in the baskets and planters has helped as has mulching.

Section C

Whilst we acknowledge the difficulty on a school day, if it is not possible for judges to meet any younger participants it would help if their involvement could be more widely demonstrated in the portfolio. The Wombles in Litter Education has significant contact with schools and youth groups - “over 13,500 children in over 60 schools and youth groups” - that and the Plastic Free Oadby campaign supported by OWBC might be an ideal message to involve children’s involvement. Finding a way to illustrate youngsters’ involvement in these would be beneficial - via a wider children’s sunflower growing competition? There is a Scouts Gardener badge which could be a start for some involvement or encourage younger involvement in the “3rd Saturday work mornings” by offering a soft drink alongside tea/coffee and biscuits?

Marks

Section A : 34

Section B : 26

Section C: 27

Total Marks: 87

Medal Awarded: GOLD



SMALL CITY

Grimsby in Bloom

Silver

Judged on 2nd July 2024

Judges: Joyce Slater and John Constable

Judges Award:

The Mayor of Grimsby, Steve Beasant for his efforts to support the Grimsby in Bloom Team as well as his longstanding dedication to Buffalo Bill's Pocket Park.

Introduction

Grimsby in Bloom are an active and hardworking group. They have a colourful and welcoming area around the pavilion café where the judges met many members of the group. The tour of Grimsby, on a dull day, also showed how they are laying the foundations for a wide range of exciting and challenging projects in the town centre as part of the Grimsby levelling up project. Their planned community garden has the potential to be a fantastic asset to the community and [we hope] it will be exciting to see it when it comes to fruition.

Areas of Achievement

Section A

The planting around the pavilion was very good and made the space welcoming for the range of community groups and individuals who attended projects and / or the café. It was good to see edibles planted as well as flowers and herbs. The planters hung up the walls were particularly effective. The new large planters with roses and perennial planting made the approach to the Pavilion very attractive. Roadside and lamp post baskets were planted up with geraniums for easy maintenance and they looked good. Elsewhere there was a move toward perennial planting. The crown estate portacabin had a lovely green wall however it is not a permanent feature. The extensive college beds were colourful and certainly made an impact from the road. They are maintained by the Council who planted 7000 geranium, petunia and marigold plants. Winter bedding is planted in autumn to provide year round interest. The adjacent sustainable permanent beds were well established and looked good.

The Yarborough Hotel's planters and hanging baskets looked very colourful and full. They are maintained by contractors and looked good. New raised beds edged an outdoor seating area. Hanging baskets and planters were all the way around the Hotel and at the back made the approach from the railway station welcoming. The gardens at St. Andrews Hospice were very well cared for by clients, their families and volunteers and were varied and very attractive. There was a memory garden, a memory tree lit at night, a play garden for children and a wellbeing garden. The different garden areas all had meaning. It was good to see the extensive crematorium grounds were very well maintained and a credit to a small team. The trees, beds, memorial gardens, and lawns were immaculate. Weelsby WI allotment showed how well cared for edibles could look attractive and useful. Their plot is a credit to them.

Little Coates Primary School are developing a garden in the school grounds and are growing vegetables and fruit. There is great potential for the planned nature area at the bottom of the site which will provide additional opportunities for pupils to widen their knowledge of the environment. They should be very proud of what they have done so far and should enter the school's competition next year.

Section B

There are many links to Grimsby's fishing heritage, from the Ross Tiger Trawler tour by ex-fishermen, the Garth Lane bridge shape, and the festival of the sea. The street art reflects local history and is striking. The Grimsby Comrades look after Freshney nature reserve alongside the chalk stream and much can be made of this rare environment. There is a nature hub at the Pavilion café providing a range of activities for young people and it was good that home educated students were involved. Longitude Wood was mentioned in the visit and it was good to hear that Grimsby in Bloom had donated 3 benches to it. The visit to the Ainsley Park wetland was very interesting and Sian Niblo from the council's ecology team explained about the blow wells and the decision to revert the park and former cemetery to a wetland habitat given the flooding. With a rare White Letter Hairstreak butterfly already spotted (requiring the dying elm tree to be retained) it has the potential to be a great environmental feature for wetland plants, birds, mammals, invertebrates, insects, and amphibians. It needs more collaborative support and community engagement to maximise its potential. Recycling at the Gilbey Road Recycling Centre is well established, and their compost is used by the Bloom group as mulch. The Greening the marshes project has enabled the planting of 416 trees including some at Little Coates Primary School. The judges met James Elliott the canoe river cleaner and enjoyed hearing how he personally engaged people in nature leading walks and teaching them about caring for the environment to benefit wildlife as well as keeping the river clean by litter picking from his canoe.

Section C

The repair café draws residents to the Grimsby in Bloom Pavilion café and provides activities for home educated young people, young carers as well as people looking for support with their mental health. It provided the bench for the Peaks Lane Fire Station community garden. Plant sales and the sale of repaired tools all contribute to the Bloom group. There are social activities throughout the year for example – Halloween, Environment Day, D Day. The planned new community garden will make a space for more opportunities. The group has accessed a range of funding support, and it is good that the group now has Alan Burley, who is good at writing funding bids as this will make a huge difference to the success of the community garden and the group.

Areas for Development Section A

The area around the heritage centre and the walk toward the town centre had very hard landscaping and would benefit from some planting to make it more attractive. The redevelopment of the town centre is ongoing, and it is good that Grimsby in Bloom will be involved in the planting to soften the hard landscaping. The bare earth bed in front of the Freshney place shopping centre was tidy but would benefit from greening up. The Abbeygate shopping centre hanging basket contract will be completed by Grimsby in Bloom in August. It is quite late in the season, and it will be interesting to see their impact next year. The judges saw little use of wildflower meadows to soften hard landscapes and that may be a future consideration in areas with poor soil.

Section B

Vandalism was mentioned several times and there was graffiti and dog fouling seen on the tour. The Horizon Youth Zone (to create activities for young people) may be somewhere that could contribute to Grimsby in Bloom and making Grimsby look better. The rewetting of Ainsley Street Park is a fantastic opportunity to raise environmental awareness. It lacked comprehensive baseline surveys as inevitably the flora and fauna will change as the rewetting develops. It would benefit from interpretation boards and greater community engagement to raise awareness of

the biodiversity it offers. Community litter picks through the year are however insufficient for a town the size of Grimsby and litter was seen on the tour. James Elliott's activities are very laudable but on his own he can only do so much. There are bird boxes in the park for example but no monitoring. There is scope for community engagement in this respect and there are several Wildlife Trusts and Unions that may be able to contribute to monitoring and projects. The Broadway Rainwater Garden flood alleviation project was described on the visit but it is not yet complete. It should be a feature of a future visit given its innovative approach to flood management.

Section C

The tour had a frustrating start given the person we were meant to meet at Projekt Renewable failed to turn up, the Crown Estate portacabin was closed and the statue you wanted us to see had moved. The bloom group might want to plan next year's tour differently. The Bloom group is going to be very involved with some of the levelling up funding projects planned in Grimsby. The Abbeygate shopping centre planting, the town centre planters etc. will require a lot of work. This will have taken a lot of time and resources in the group to organise. The volunteers are committed to making the town a better place, notwithstanding that a bowser, vehicle, and some paid staff are offered. Inevitably this support is good for capital items, but ongoing revenue support will be needed to maintain this level of activity. It was disappointing therefore that the council (who have sought them as partners for their projects) did not show the same level of commitment to the group for the judging visit for example the planters and hanging baskets outside the Council offices were not going to be in place until the Thursday, 2 days after the judges' visit. Grimsby is a multicultural city and it would be good to see how diverse community groups could be a part of the Bloom group's work. Given the range of activities the group is and will be involved in, they will need to more actively promote what they are doing to ensure that the bloom group attracts support and informs the community. They can offer horticultural experience given that such training is not readily available locally. The planned community garden on the old bowling green is a fantastic opportunity and will make a lot of difference. Aside from the paid support offered, the Grimsby in bloom group will need to attract more volunteers to enable them to deliver their ambitions. The community garden should be a feature of any future visits.

Marks Section A : 30 Section B : 20 Section C: 19 Total Marks : 69 Awarded: Silver



SMALL CITY

Scunthorpe

BRONZE

Judged on 4th July 2024

Judges: Joyce Slater & John Constable

Judges Award:

For Karl Dalzell and his team for the construction and transformation of the Somervell Community Allotment.

Introduction

The judges were shown around Scunthorpe by Karl Dalzell who stepped in for Carl Beacock at very short notice. He did an excellent job. After visiting the town centre (which is undergoing major redevelopment), the tour also took in the King Charles Coronation Garden, Kingsway Gardens, the planting around the museum on Oswald Road, the Station beds as well as the very impressive Central Park and Kingsway Gardens. The Somervell Community Allotment site was a highlight.

The judges had received an informative portfolio for Scunthorpe prior to the visit. They were disappointed not to meet Carl Beacock as he would have been able to add detail to the themes contained in it. Karl was very proud of his town and the work that had been done to make the green spaces better for the community. It would have been helpful to him if he had been briefed on the requirements of the RHS standard, which the judges were able to share with him at the end of the visit.

Areas of Achievement

Section A - Horticulture

The planting around Church Square and the new buildings in the town centre are sustainable and in keeping with the architecture. The alliums were particularly striking. The judges saw sustainable planting widely used and the King Charles Coronation Garden was particularly well planted with an attractive mix of perennials and year round foliage interest. It had previously been an eyesore, and the planting had improved the appearance for both pedestrians and drivers at the junction. The gardens are well mulched for ease of maintenance. Barrier baskets were seen on the visit, and they were full and colourful. N

The judges were taken to see the Station Beds, which has improved the appearance of the area around the station to give a better first impression to visitors. These are now establishing well with perennial plants very appropriate to the location. The jewel in the crown is the 255 acre Central Park, a well-used park where the planting and grounds maintenance is very good and the mini gardens within the park all have their own character, for example the Halo Baby Rainbow Memorial Gardens. The charity set up by Mr. & Mrs. Clifford has its own volunteer days to maintain the Memorial Garden planting which is colourful all year round. The Carbon Garden has been created and planted by the John Leggott College within the park and is looking good as well as being meaningful. The small, raised bed in memory of a former park employee was built and planted up by his colleagues and is a thoughtful touch. Both the very mature trees and newer memorial specimen trees were well managed.

The judges also visited Kingsway Gardens. Perennial planting was favoured here after the theft of 1000 bedding plants, and it seems to have resolved the problem. The Lions also maintain a garden within the park. Spring bulb planting was done by both volunteers and parks staff and

over 8000 spring bulbs were planted. Plants from the parks are recycled to other community groups.

Pockets of wildflower meadow planting were seen behind the museum and in Kingsway Gardens and the extensive verge planting at Mortal Ash Road was not seen this year by the judges as it is due for some reseeding.

In the portfolio the judges were told about 12 new planters at roadside locations around the town centre.

It also explained that the Crematorium is growing its own plants in its efforts to become self-sustainable and this is part of the future plans of the Council, in that they aim to grow more of their own plants for easy replacement. The tree nursery in Somervell Community Allotments reflects this approach. There will however be economic impact of this locally as currently many plants are sourced from local nurseries.

Section B

There is pride in the town and a desire for it to look better and more attractive. The considerable investment in the town centre and the potential refurbishment of the Central Park play area and café reflect this and whilst street furniture was looking tired at the time of the visit, the judges were told that this will change as the refurbishment progresses. It was good to hear that existing benches will be refurbished and reused in other areas, as has been done around the Halo Baby Rainbow Memorial Garden. There are development plans in place for many areas of green spaces, for example the relatively new orchard area in Central Park will have signage that will include recipes to promote healthy eating. The judges noted that accessibility was a priority in the parks and the paths were wide and smooth. The signage and interpretation boards in the parks were good and the judges liked the photographic signs showing the park in the past and how it had changed. In Kingsway Gardens it was good to see that the Mosque had provided a sculpture saying Love for all hatred for none. The historical link in that park to the Samaritans was an important feature.

The portfolio also described the containers rejuvenated with floral art.

Wildflower planting has been a feature in Scunthorpe for several years. Old declining vegetable beds at the back of the museum have been replaced with wildflower beds and they were looking good. The portfolio advised that there were pollination areas added to parks, urban streets, highway verges and visitor locations and the judges would have appreciated more information about this.

There are several wildlife reserves around Scunthorpe and the judges were driven past a brownfield site, Ashby Ville, which is a nature reserve. They were taken to a small nature reserve at the back of Central Park, where they also saw composting bins nearby. There are 5 composting stations across Scunthorpe.

The judge saw some of the programme to replace wooden boundary fences (that required maintenance) with laurel. Some 2100 carbon sequestering evergreens have been planted to date and those seen along the road and the Central Park car park soften the landscape.

The judges saw sculpture in the town centre and in the parks and felt more could be made of the local heritage.

Community groups and Friends of the Parks were mentioned in the portfolio and on the visit the judges would have appreciated meeting some of them to better understand what they do.

Section C

Greening the High Street and the Levelling Up funded improvements to the town centre are ongoing and there are clearly ambitious plans for both the town centre and wider community areas. The judges would have liked to have heard more about the future plans. Interpretation boards were seen in the parks, and more are planned to integrate with other Council priorities such as healthy eating and being active. The portfolio told of the 10K race where the prizes were meadow seeds, a composter, and evergreens. The Carbon Garden in Central Park was created by the post 16 pupils with additional needs of John Leggott College. The judges were not told much about engagement with other schools or young people's groups and engaging them with the green environmental agenda is important. Somervell allotment community garden was impressive. Unused allotments were taken over by Karl and his team and areas were created for a tree nursery, general planting in beds and around a hub. The paths and raised beds were all accessible to people in wheelchairs. The rise and fall potting benches were inspired and made by Quibell Fabricators, a local firm, and they and Karl should be very proud of them. The community gardens were used by several groups and on the day of the visit were used by a group supporting those trying to get into employment. A range of herbs and edibles were being grown successfully. It was good to see rainwater harvesting in place. In Kingsway Gardens "Talk to me" benches were seen, and it would be good to see them in all parks. In the portfolio there are pictures of volunteers in the parks and the judges would have liked to know more about their activities and meet them.

Areas for Development

Section A

There was evidence of weeds in several beds and the judges recommended that they are checked prior to a judging visit and mulched more heavily. There is a lot for the parks teams and volunteers to do to ensure the quality of planting. The Council has taken over the responsibility for Normanby Park and that will pose both challenges and opportunities which may feature in any future visit. Horticultural apprenticeships could help grow capacity for such extensive green areas and to contribute to their objectives in relation to employment and skills. During the visit reference was made to other teams in the council, such as the street cleaning and arboriculture who are separate units. It was not made clear how these departments interconnected.

Section B

Sadly, the new planting in the Allium beds and several others was marred by the littering seen during the visit. Graffiti was also seen on the tour. Both seemed to be tolerated and a multiagency approach to address this may ensure their new refurbishments are not degraded. Scunthorpe may wish to explore the greater use of QR codes to provide more information to the public. The history of Scunthorpe as an industrial garden town was implicit in the portfolio and the visit would have been better if these had been made explicit in a presentation and indeed for the wider community. Wildflower bedding in Kingsway Park may require an additional seed mix for next year. There was little evidence of environmental monitoring surveys of nature reserves, parks, and green spaces. This information is vital to informing environmental development plans for an area and is often done in collaboration with local communities, volunteers and conservation and environmental groups. In future visits it would be good to hear about them and how the data is used.

The use of Laurel to create new boundaries will create a maintenance requirement as they grow. Planters in the town centre are watered from bowsers and there was no rainwater captured off the new buildings we saw. Whilst more sustainable planting minimises the need for watering, nevertheless water capture and storage should be an integral part of an area's environmental development plan.

The Bloom entry is very Council led and the involvement of community groups was not a feature of the tour. Given that Scunthorpe is a multicultural city it would have been good to meet some of its minority community groups.

Section C

Community engagement and involvement is an important part of Britain in Bloom and community groups representative of the local community should be a feature of any future visit. The judges were disappointed not to meet them this year.

Being Council led there was mention of the Levelling up fund and it would have been good to hear more about the different funding bids for the future. The judges were told about the imminent plans for the town centre refurbishment and would have liked to hear more about future plans. The judges saw some sponsorship of road islands but would have liked to learn more about engagement with the wider business community.

The judges did not meet any of the community litter picker volunteers. Their actions are really important and make a difference but seem insufficient to meet the level of littering seen on the visit.

Marks

Section A: 2024 = 26

Section B: 2024 = 16

Section C: 2024 = 15

TOTAL MARKS 57

Medal Awarded: Bronze



SCHOOLS

Heathfield Primary and Nursery School
Scotland Road
Old Basford
Nottingham
NG5 1EU
AND
Kersall Drive
Bulwell
Nottingham
NG6 9EU

Dear Tayla and Tracey,

Judith and I both enjoyed our visit to your school and meeting you and the children. We were warmly welcomed to both sites which were so very different but such a pleasure to be shown around.

Firstly, thank you to Leo, Gabby, Delilah, Sam, and Martin who showed us the Scotland Road site. It was also a pleasure meeting Suki, who is involved with the newly formed Gardening Club and other gardening activities including the Eco Club, and Lucie, who maintains the gardens on both sites as well as sharing her knowledge with the children.

At the Kersall Road site, thank you to Freya, Teddy, Steven and Doyinsola who showed us around their various gardens and enjoyed picking the radish and finding super strawberries!

Their enthusiasm and enjoyment of growing and using the outdoor space is a credit to you and your staff.

KERSALL ROAD SITE

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn'tApply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.			X		
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.		X			
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.		X			
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.			X		
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.			X		
Principles of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.	X				
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.		X			
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.	X				

SECTION 2 Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered			X		
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgeably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved		X			
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign			X		
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach	X				
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.			X		
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community	X				

SECTION 3 Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Effective composting and water collection.		X			
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.		X			
Examples of features for wildlife			X		
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.	X				
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils		X			
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.	X				
SECTION 4 Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.			X		
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care			X		
Quality of food grown is evident.		X			
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising.		X			
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year		X			
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)			X		
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.	X				

Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year		X			
Holiday maintenance plans in place.		X			
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events		X			
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden		X			
Links to sponsorship and advice.					

SCOTLAND ROAD SITE

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.			X		
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.		X			
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.	X				
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.			X		
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.			X		
Principles of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.	X				
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.		X			
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.	X				

SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered		X			
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgeably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved	X				
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign			X		
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach	X				
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.	X				
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community	X				

SECTION 3	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't
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Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife					Apply
Effective composting and water collection.	X				
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.		X			
Examples of features for wildlife	X				
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.	X				
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils	X				
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.	X				
SECTION 4	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living					
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food		X			
Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.					
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil		X			
Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants)					
Watering with care					
Quality of food grown is evident.	X				
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising.		X			
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year		X			
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)		X			
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.	X				
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year		X			
Holiday maintenance plans in place.		X			
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events		X			
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden		X			
Links to sponsorship and advice.					

MARKS AWARDED

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL MARKS
15	16	12	15	12	70

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : SILVER

Judge's Discretionary Award:

To Tayla and Tracey for being the lead members of staff encouraging outdoor learning. Their commitment in encouraging the children to enjoy all that gardening can offer including growing vegetables to show

food production. They support the Gardening Club which works in conjunction with the Eco Team is thriving. Both Tayla and Tracey have great ideas for the future. They are a real asset to the school.

Judge's Overall Comments:

It was good to see the growing activities over both sites and it was a pleasure to meet the staff and children and see your horticultural achievements.

The Scotland Road site should be congratulated on the interesting planting against the high fencing helping to reduce the noise and soften the fence. There is a good choice of shrubs and trees. Perhaps climbers such as clematis or honeysuckle would give colour and height to this area. The tubs of flowers brighten the various areas on the site. The Edible Playground is a good idea and contains several raised beds planted with fruit and vegetables. There are many planters around the site and all accessible to the pupils and softens the hard landscaping. Herbs would grow well in the seating area and add scent when they brush past them.

The Kersall Road site should also be congratulated on such a great area for the pupils to learn in with its outside classroom and surrounding raised beds with vegetables. The bug hotel was made by the children who enjoy bug hunting. A log pile has started to be put together which should add to the varieties of bugs, and consideration being given to a water feature, even if it's small it can be beneficial to bugs. Many of the newly planted fruit trees were covered in fruit this year. It was interesting to see the lentils growing in one raised bed and a good variety of herbs which the children obviously liked to touch and smell. The wildflowers were starting to become established. Consider some plug plant of yellow rattle which is good to get established and controls the grass.

On both site it would be good to see more variety in vegetables grown such as sweetcorn, beetroot, leeks and courgettes. Companion planting could be considered which would some give colour to the raised beds. Autumn raspberries don't mind a bit of shade and they would be producing berries in September. Lavender cuttings could be taken easily and then shared with both schools. It maybe worth considering sharing the herb seedlings grown on Kersall Road site with Scotland Road site.

Some schools form relationships with their local garden centre (or similar) which can be beneficial.

There is a great team on both sites and the pupils were so enthusiastic. It was a pleasure to witness. We wish you every success on your horticultural journey.

We at EMIB wish you all well at Heathfield Primary and Nursery School for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole school community.

JUDGES: JUDITH WARNER and JUDITH BOSTON

DATE: 21ST JUNE 2024



King Edwin Primary and Nursery School
Fourth Avenue
Edwinstowe
Mansfield
NG21 9NS

Dear Alison and Ginette,

Thank you for inviting me to your school and it was a pleasure to meet you both. It was a delightful visit and along with Amelia, Olivia and Layla I was impressed with everyone's positivity, enthusiasm and ongoing ideas. It was good to hear that you had support from your Senior management and the school community as a whole for your ongoing endeavours -all who share in the vision !

It was good to see and hear about all the growing and environmental activities and how the ethos is embedded across all year groups. It extended from the work of Oscar, Ivy and the Team in Reception through to the role of Eco Reps throughout school and environmental projects on local and national scale that raise awareness for all children in school.

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.			x		
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.			x		
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.		x			
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.			x		
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.		x			
Principals of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.		x			
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.		x			
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.		x			

SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered			x		
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved		x			

Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign	x				
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach				x	
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.			x		
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community		x			
SECTION 3	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
<u>Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife</u>					
Effective composting and water collection.	x				
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.			x		
Examples of features for wildlife		x			
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.		x			
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils		x			
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.		x			
SECTION 4	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
<u>Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living</u>					
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.		x			
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care			x		
Quality of food grown is evident.		x			
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .		x			
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year		x			
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)		x			
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.		x			
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year		x			
Holiday maintenance plans in place.		x			
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events			x		
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.			x		

MARKS AWARDED

<u>SECTION 1</u>	<u>SECTION 2</u>	<u>SECTION 3</u>	<u>SECTION 4</u>	<u>SECTION 5</u>	<u>TOTAL MARKS</u>
13	15	12	13	13	<u>66</u>

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : SILVER**Judge's Discretionary Award:**

In recognition of the team approach both Alison and Ginette have as the work with the children to instil a passion for gardening and a growing awareness of the environmental awareness needed to look after our planet. Through their gardening work and Forest School led learning the children's enthusiasm to care and look after their school's environment and the needs of the wildlife with in it is super! Thankyou for sharing a snapshot of that enthusiasm today with the Judge and your future plans of next steps on the journey with the children!

Judge's Overall Comments:**Areas of achievement:**

It was clear from the judges visit today how you have built on the good start you made when the previous judge visited the school last year. You continue to actively develop the growing, gardening, wildlife and environmental activities with the children through clubs and curriculum work. You are now making more progress in helping pupils learn about growing too and understanding where their food comes from. You continue to make excellent use of your Forest School (rotations of groups participate in curriculum time and there is a wide range of Bushcraft skills being developed.) Area also used for those children who need support for various barriers to learning. The new willow tunnel is maturing well and the children are excited by its presence in the Forest School Area. As an active learning zone what a great resources that is well used by all!

As previously reported your project with Feel Good Gardens CIC locally has continued to be beneficial. Working with Edwinstowe in Bloom (Carol) and the wider community has further enabled engagement within school for all in Edwinstow to be involved. The community projects such as planting the Oak trees in Sherwood forest and trees in your own grounds was great to hear about and paves the way to future collaborative growing projects helped by locals with their expertise. Your Eco reps for each class, regular assemblies and up to date noticeboards ensures all the school community knows what is going on! Your fundraising efforts have been well supported and your wok with the local Bloom group was noted by the judge. The children were clearly excited by the gardening design competition in which they are involved 'No Adult Garden' inspired by the RHS , it will be great to hear about the outcomes next year. It was also interesting to see the display and hear about from Layla the Save our seas plastic campaign – the bottle top mural was delight!

The Vegipod has been a super success and the children involved in the visit spoke enthusiastically and were a credit to themselves and you for the breadth of growing knowledge about the crops and plants . The Vegipod has enabled you to sow and grow a wider range of edibles and the other veg beds are developing well in the orchard. The planters in the Reception outdoor area are coming alongwell and the pupils are using the crops in a wide variety of ways with Mrs Hart's help in their learning time. The pumpkin and cabbage plants were thriving in your raised bed near the orchard along with the sweetcorn, beetroot, celery, cucumber, strawberries (already some eaten and enjoyed by the children) doing well in the Vegipod. Holiday watering was also covered in our conversations today. The fruit stall idea and stand was really interesting and the judge was encouraged by your ideas to sell and develop children's engagement with fresh produce (and hopefully raise some green funds along the way) over the coming months. It was good to hear how you had taken on some of last year's suggestions from our school judge particularly around future rain water harvesting and the variety of crops you have chosen to grow this year. Your garden club is an opportunity for the growing to be pupil led and enable them build

on their understanding about crop rotation. You may want to consider companion planting alongside these plans. A growing diary/ scrapbook / portfolio kept by the children over the seasons may help with this and is a good way to record what goes and is seen beyond when our judge's come along in June.

Keep working hard with your grounds maintenance team the orchard trees are doing well, maturing and producing cherries, pears and apples and in that protected space if a wildflower meadow could be encourage with small mown pathways the number of visiting insects would increase overtime without doubt. The children proudly showed off the developing fruit and it was great to hear their ideas about having a bench or two to sit in the orchard to rest on.

Your forest school area is a real strength and a special space shared by staff and children. Such tranquil spot but also such a fun place for den building, fire building cooking , hide and seek and so much more- delightful and an important part of the school's curriculum. You could develop some further bug hotels etc and the idea of a pond /water feature would certainly add to any wildlife visitor's experiences as well as the children's. Leaving the grass longer adds aesthetically to the space but also encourages the biodiversity too. It was good to hear how bird boxes are encouraging the birdlife as documented in the RSPB Big Bird Watch in which you took part this year. Noticing wildlife in the woodland is fundamental to developing the mini-beast watching and monitoring you spoke of in the curriculum lessons.

Areas of development:

Your plans include developing further with each class their ability to grow and care more in their garden raised beds (already key science and DT areas were being explored in them by some year groups), you are planning a living wall idea and the news that you intend to raise funds through selling fruit and produce were exciting to hear about. Noted by the judge was your mention of the edge planting of wildflowers. You may want to explore creating a wildflower (mini) meadow near your orchard (one of the children mentioned it today) as they suit poor dry soil and open sunny locations. Again, they are excellent for attracting wildlife.

You have plans to have a new gardening shed with water butt and gutter set up to catch more water near the orchard great news! New class planters are ready to be developed with links to curriculum areas identified across all year groups – look forward to seeing more in those next year with all classes sharing the maintenance to help.

Sadly the attempt at a water feature did not quite work out in the Forest school area and so it was good to hear you plan to develop this as a project in the next year- perhaps rather than pond with liner as you have tried think about a recycled sink turned into a water feature can make a big difference to attracting wildlife.

You also have a range of other great ideas for future projects as previously mentioned- living wall/ frame. Also you have some super permanent brick established beds that perhaps if you have an Autumn parents and child open morning to garden you could get pruned and tidied and then the children may wish to plant some colourful perennials/ spring bulbs (perhaps have an Autumn plant swap at school) to develop the colour in the lovely courtyard area where children clearly enjoy time spent in good weather for reading or lunchtime eating. Another idea for all classes to be involved in across school could be a scarecrow design and make to add some personalisation to their independent class raised beds. The school are signed up for the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and hope to access more of its ideas and resources in the future along with lesson plans.

We at EMIB wish you all well at Edwinstow Primary for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole school community.

JUDGE (S): Emma Schofield

DATE: 20th June 2024



BEST ORNAMENTAL GARDEN

Gill Williamson
 Newton Solney Preschool
 Trent Lane
 Newton Solney
 South Derbyshire.
 DE15 0SF

Dear Gill,
 Many thanks for showing me the charming garden and forest school area around the Newton Solney and for explaining all about your growing activities this year. It has been a challenging year for all gardeners with the wet, cold and slug predation and you and your garden have done well given the conditions. Felicity and Ivy did an excellent job at explaining about their mini-gardens and about plants growing in the raised beds. They are to be congratulated.

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.			x		
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.			x		
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.					x
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.					x
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.			x		
Principals of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.		x			
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.			x		
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.		x			

SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered			x		

Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved			x		
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign					X
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach			x		
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.			x		
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community					x
SECTION 3	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife					
Effective composting and water collection.		x			
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.		x			
Examples of features for wildlife			x		
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.		x			
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils		x			
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.		x			
SECTION 4	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living					
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.			x		
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care			x		
Quality of food grown is evident.		x			
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .		x			
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year		x			
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (Maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)			x		
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.	x				
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year	x				
Holiday maintenance plans in place.		x			
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events		x			

Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.			x		
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MARKS AWARDED

<u>SECTION 1</u>	<u>SECTION 2</u>	<u>SECTION 3</u>	<u>SECTION 4</u>	<u>SECTION 5</u>	<u>TOTAL MARKS</u>
12	13	11	12	13	<u>61</u>

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : SILVER

Judge's Discretionary Award:

To: Gill Williamson for her innovative and practical approach to capturing rainwater run-off from the building's sedum roof in a wheeled garden caddy pending approval for a permanent water butt. The wheeled garden caddy, full of rainwater, can be taken to wherever in the garden it is needed.

Judge's Overall Comments:

The garden was accurately described by Gill as "small and perfectly formed". It is just right in terms of scale and content for the 2 – 5 year old preschool children who use it. Scoring reflects age appropriateness of activity.

The cold wet weather has limited it's use so far this year. There are 4 large, raised beds that have different uses. The safe fishpond provides interest and frogs, and frogspawn have been observed. The plans for new marginal planting will encourage wildlife as well as minimising any risk of the fish being fed incorrectly. The herb garden bed is also planted up with a range edibles and some miniature fruit trees. The emphasis on "snack food" edible raw is very pertinent for the pre-school age group. Planting for pollinators bed also includes a miniature buddleia to attract butterflies. I like that you are choosing miniature varieties of perennials, fruit trees and vegetables in keeping with the size of the pupils. The 25 mini gardens are delightful. Almost all the 28 pupils have been involved and they clearly have a great sense of pride in them. Taking care of their mini garden reinforces the message that we must take care of people and things in a very age appropriate way. Pupils could identify plants in their own mini gardens, and it was good to see a mix of flowers, fruit and vegetables growing. Alpine strawberries were doing well.

Peas, cress and mixed leaves were also sown by the pupils and despite slug predation are starting to grow. All of these can be eaten as taster food, building the link between plant and plate.

The bug / mini beast area is very effective, and the log pile will be a constant source of interest. Cutting bamboo canes from the bamboo clump will create supports in the future for Jack and the beanstalk beans. I was pleased to see bird boxes and bird feeders easily visible by pupils even if the pigeons benefit most. You may want to explore different sorts of bird food and feeders to attract birds. It may be an option to grow your own food for birds e.g. sunflowers for their seeds. The sandpit and tree house also overlook the forest school area and trim trail which is a shared space with the primary school. It is maintained by the primary school and parents blitz it to keep it under control. The frustration of having a new wildflower meadow repeatedly mown by contractors has led to a change of plan, with pupils sowing spring bulbs in autumn that flower before the mowing regime starts. I feel that will be more successful and you may want to also grow bulbs in pots indoors. The level of support is good, ranging from fundraising events like the Ladies evening that raise much needed cash, from the donation of the rotary composter by the bloom group and plants and turf discounted by the local garden centre.

Gill's own efforts and that of her husband clearly ensure the garden is enjoyed as an outdoor play space and learning environment and I congratulate them on their commitment to the pupil's enjoyment of an outdoor space.

Judges report for the Ornamental Award:

The preschool has 4 raised beds in which a range of ornamentals, herbs and edibles are grown. New plants in beds are chosen to attract pollinators. I particularly liked the fact that dwarf / miniature varieties of plants are grown as they are more suitable for the 28 pupils aged 2 – 5. The miniature buddleia is

thriving as are the dwarf fruit trees. Colourful bedding had been planted however slugs had been very active. The new rock garden is developing and will look great with more alpine plants. The pupils had sown wildflower seeds to create a wildflower meadow. Unfortunately, it was mown down by the mowing contractors despite instructions to the contrary so the plans for next year include more bulb planting in that area which will fit with the mowing contract better.

For the pre-school age group, outside activities were hampered by the cold and wet winter and spring this year. To work around that, each pupil was given the chance to create a mini garden in a seed tray and 25 trays were on display. It was an inspiring idea. Perfectly suited to the age group they were truly a reflection of each pupil's interests and abilities. Some mini gardens were completed jointly by siblings. Many were growing edibles and herbs as well as flowering plants. All were stunning and reflected the pupil's interests – from football to alpine strawberries. They certainly had the desired effect of teaching pupils to care for things and respect other pupil's work. The plants were thriving and well cared for alongside a range of dinosaurs, mini toys and found items like seashells.

It looked fabulous and the preschool staff, pupils and parents should be very proud of their mini gardens set in amongst permanent and attractive planting.

We at EMIB wish you all well at Newton Solney Preschool the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole pre-school community.

JUDGE (S): Joyce Slater

DATE: 18.06.2024



The Market Bosworth School,
Station Road,
Market Bosworth
CV13 0JT

Dear Anisa,

Thank you so much for taking the time to show me around the lovely, tranquil garden, just off the busy school corridor and across from the year 7 's playground. It was a delight to meet some of the students who use the garden and to talk to them about the benefits of the garden and their plans to develop it further. The new gazebo, table and benches will be a real asset to the area and the raised beds had a variety of vegetables on display.

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.	x				
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.		x			
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.	x				
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.		x			
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.					x
Principles of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.	x				
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.		x			
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.		x			
SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered	x				
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved			x		

Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign	x				
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach					x
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.		x			
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community		x			
SECTION 3	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife					
Effective composting and water collection.	x				
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.	x				
Examples of features for wildlife		x			
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.		x			
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils	x				
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.	x				
SECTION 4	Develo- ping	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living					
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.		x			
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care		x			
Quality of food grown is evident.		x			
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .	x				
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year	x				
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)		x			
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.			x		
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year	x				
Holiday maintenance plans in place.	x				
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events		x			
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.	x				

MARKS AWARDED

<u>SECTION 1</u>	<u>SECTION 2</u>	<u>SECTION 3</u>	<u>SECTION 4</u>	<u>SECTION 5</u>	<u>TOTAL MARKS</u>
13	10	10	12	12	<u>57</u>

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : Bronze**Judge's Overall Comments:**

It was a pleasure to meet the students and staff at Market Bosworth School, in particular Mrs Fairbrother and Mrs Barnett. Their enthusiasm for the garden and their hard work is to be commended. There are many challenges within a busy school day to find time to use the garden with the students and for them to experience the benefits of being outdoors in such a lovely space.

Year 7 students have curriculum time in the garden and other students can use the area.

The new raised beds, funded by Bosworth in Bloom are a real asset and the new gazebo, funded by the school will provide welcome shade in a sunny spot. This had been recently varnished and there are plans for hanging baskets which would add colour and interest.

Planting consisted of shrubs and climbing hydrangeas- they looked healthy and water was available via a water butt in the space. The greenhouse contained some healthy-looking tomatoes and was placed in a sunny spot. The raised beds had a variety of vegetables including carrots, onions and sweetcorn. These were starting to grow- conditions have been challenging this year.

There were bird feeders to attract birds into the area and a number of bird boxes. The students would like to add a webcam into one of the boxes to observe any activity. There was a healthy miniature pond in the paved area. A suggestion would be to add a few stones into the pond, so that wildlife such as frogs could climb in and out. Students had made multicoloured bird feeders and bug houses, ready to go out into the garden. There had been a number of challenges through the year- the composting area had been infested with rodents and had to be removed. The wild flower area was not viable.

However, the school has a number of plans to develop the garden further including a store for the tools to keep them safe, planting against the back wall and the students were keen to canvass the staff for ideas and support via Google Forms. The student voice was strong and they had many good ideas including a possible water feature. It would be lovely to see some colour in the space and growing easy flowers from seed would add instant colour- seeds such as marigold, love in a mist, candytuft, cornflowers, nasturtiums are all easy to grow. The RHS provides free seeds for schools and other websites are keen to support schools. It might also be worth trying the local garden centres for seeds or small plants. There was space on the paved area to grow fruit bushes or potatoes in trugs or growbags and the students were keen to try this.

The herbs had been taken out as they had become large and unwieldy but the students were keen to plant some more, such as lavender and rosemary, to provide some sensory experience in the garden.

There are a number of shady areas and the students seemed keen to try to plant ferns to soften the hard landscaping. It might be worth contacting Bosworth in Bloom for further and regular support and perhaps talk to Bosworth Gardening Club to see if they could help to develop the garden further.

Mrs. Fairbrother was also keen to get houseplants into every classroom and was growing tradescantia cuttings to distribute to staff.

You have a lovely space for the students and I wish you well with all of your ideas for further development.

We at EMIB wish you all well at The Market Bosworth School for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole school community.

JUDGE (S): Judith Boston

DATE: 20th July 2024



Child First Nursery
 FAO: Sara Jones
 Moulton Lodge
 Moulton Way North
 Moulton Northampton
 NN3 7RW

Dear Sara,

Thank you for inviting me to visit and for showing me around on the 11th of July.

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.		x□			
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.		x□			
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.				x□	
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.					x□
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.			x□		
Principals of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.					x□
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.				x□	
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.					x□
SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered			x□		
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgeably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved					x□
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign					x□
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach				x□	
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time				x□	

clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.					
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community					x□
SECTION 3 Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Effective composting and water collection.			x□		
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.			x□		
Examples of features for wildlife		x□			
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.	x□				
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils					x□
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.					x□
SECTION 4 Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.			x□		
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care		x□			
Quality of food grown is evident.	x□				
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .		x□			
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year			x□		
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)			x□		
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.					x□
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year					x□
Holiday maintenance plans in place.				x□	
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events		x□			
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.				x□	

MARKS AWARDED

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL MARKS
11	8	12	11	11	<u>53</u>

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : BRONZE

Judge's Overall Comments:

The Child First Nursery is located in an old building that was once a hunting lodge. As a result, the grounds are quite extensive and are mainly woodland. The open ground around the building is a mixture of open garden and hard standing with borders and raised beds. The children range in age from babes in arms to those just about to go to primary school.

At the entrance to the nursery was a table with plants for sale to the parents, a list of activities carried out and a box with small paper bags in containing seed bombs. The income derived from the sale of the plants goes towards the purchase of seeds and compost to maintain the gardens. The seed bombs were being given away to encourage the parents, and children, to grown wild flowers for the pollinating insects.

The first garden was an area of hard standing that had a dug border and raised beds in. It was explained that an adult digs up the ground to loosen it and the older children then come along and break the lumps down so they can plant in it. Bearing in mind the age even of the oldest children, this seemed to me to be a very sensible system. In this area was also a pond. Unlike most schools where the pond is surrounded by a 3ft fence, here the pond has crates in and a metal mesh cover. This means that the children are able to walk over the top of the pond and look directly down into it, without any danger of falling in or hurting themselves. This is I think an approach many schools could well safely adopt, to the benefit of the children.

The plants in this area were not of the best quality, which was not too surprising as it was bounded on one side by the house and on the other by a stone wall with trees beyond. The other factor here is that the children probably planted far too many seeds and the majority have grown. In this situation the staff, probably just Sara Jones, is unable to adequately look after them all due to time so some have suffered.(Most were very leggy). My advice here would be to restrict the number of seeds given out to the children. Maybe the small yogurt pots the children are given, or have for lunch are kept and washed out. Sufficient seeds can then be put into them for each child or two or three children to plant, restricting the number of resulting plants, which can be better looked after. I know, give a child a packet of seeds and they all get sown!

At the back of the house was an open garden, and here the plants were much better, due in the main to this being open to sunlight. The school had made contact with a local grower of large, (enormous?) vegetables and he had given them some seed which they had set, grown on and planted out. It will be interesting to see how they fair, compared with the original grower.

This nursery does not close for school holidays so does not have the problem of how to care for the plants during the holidays. Very fortunate.

When walking round the grounds I noticed drawing attached to canes by grown plants. I was told that these were drawing of what the children thought that vegetable would look like. Some interesting pictures. I was also shown playing cards that had pictures of vegetables on. These are used at lunchtimes to get the children identifying the different vegetables on their plates. What a great idea!

In the woodland area is a polytunnel that serves a dual purpose. According to the label hanging in the doorway, it is the indoor Forest School, and it clearly used for this with seating areas for classes. It is also used as a workshop for the children to set and grow their seeds. Adjacent to this is an outdoor area for the Forest School. There is currently no Forest School leader but Sara Jones is waiting to undertake the necessary training to take on this task so that best use can be made of the facilities and grounds. It will be interesting to see the impact and hear all about the children's ongoing outdoor adventures!

I was not aware of any water collection on site for watering the plants grown and this is something that could be looked at. I was asked, but I don't know how to collect water off a polytunnel. Maybe approaching a manufacturer (First Tunnels?) would provide an answer. The school has a compost area where the waste from the kitchen is put. I have not seen them before, but the older children collect the

waste from the kitchen in small two wheeled wheelbarrows and take it to the compost bin. A wider range of material going into the compost, grass cuttings, soft top growth from the underbrush in the woodland, straw, if you can get it, leaves, torn up cardboard and egg boxes will provide a better end result. It also needs to be kept moist as it is hard up against the wall and under trees on the other side. This is an area that could be made better, maybe by approaching the County Council to see if they have a Master Composter scheme, or similar, and obtaining the services of someone who could come in and advise them on how to improve their composting. (It is the Waste Management Dept. that deal with this in Leicestershire). I did give some advice but someone locally would be able to provide a better service. Have you considered a Hot bin?

If it is possible, maybe a diary/ photo scrapbook/ portfolio could be kept of what is going on in the garden throughout the year. This will not only provide a record for yourselves but also is something to show the judge who comes next year. This should not just be a record kept by an adult but should include pictures, and if possible, text from the children. It will show you how things are improving over time and maybe where things went wrong to be able to make changes. Now is a good time to start.

Overall, this is a school garden that has a lot of potential. It certainly has the grounds and an enthusiastic member of staff leading in the garden. Well done!

I wish you well in you gardening activities.

We at EMIB wish you all well at Child First Nursery for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole pre- school community.

JUDGE : Malcolm Brown

DATE: 26 June 2024



Greenfields Special School for Communication
 FAO Rebecca Thomas
 Prentice Court
 Goldings
 Northampton
 NN3 8XS

Dear Rebecca,

Thank you very much for showing us all round on 11 June 2024. I hope the other two visitors got something out of the visit. It was a shame that OFSTED were carrying out their inspection that day, which probably curtailed what we were able to do and see. Bearing in mind the constraints that your landlord has placed on to the school in regard to using the ground on the site, the following shows where I consider you are doing well and where you are looking to achieve more. As Greenfields is a first time entry the judge has a role to give advice against a set of criteria to help with improvements in gardening and growing. Some of the criteria may not be applicable and certainly for your own growing challenges this is the case. Ongoing we reflect as a team on our findings year on year.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.	×□				
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.		×□			
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.					×□
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.					×□
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.		×□			
Principals of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.					×□
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.		×□			
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.					×□
SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered	×□				
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgeably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved					×□
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign					×□
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach	×□				

Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week the garden has a sustainable future.	x□				
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community					x□

SECTION 3

Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife

	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn'tApply
Effective composting and water collection.					x□
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.					x□
Examples of features for wildlife					x□
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.					x□
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils					x□
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.					x□

SECTION 4

Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living

	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn' Apply
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.	x□				
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care					x□
Quality of food grown is evident.	x□				
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .					x□
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year					x□

SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance

	Developing	Good	VeryGood	Excellent	Doesn'tApply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)		x□			
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.					x□
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year					x□
Holiday maintenance plans in place.	x□				
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events					x□
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.					x□

MARKS AWARDED

<u>SECTION 1</u>	<u>SECTION 2</u>	<u>SECTION 3</u>	<u>SECTION 4</u>	<u>SECTION 5</u>	<u>TOTAL MARKS</u>
—					

6	4	Not applicable	3	7	<u>20</u>
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SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : Certificate of Achievement

Judge's Overall Comments:

Greenfields as a school site has major constraints placed on it by its landlord as to what it can and cannot do within the confines of the site. The fact that you are not allowed to cultivate the ground within the site severely limits what can be achieved. What open ground I did see on the day of the visit, especially surrounding the building, sadly gave very little to enhance the appearance of the area. There were a few sparse plants but mainly the soil is covered with wood chip. I understand that the grounds staff, in the past, have removed anything that is planted in this area which must be very dispiriting for both the staff and pupils. As a consequence, all planting has to be in raised beds, which again has a knock-on effect by limiting the space outside the classrooms on that side of the building.

The site as a whole has quite a large area of open ground consisting of a grassed area, a fenced area of specialist play equipment and a fenced woodland area (Forest school). This area is outside the fenced area around the building which is regrettably too close to the building to allow much gardening, even in raised beds, to be carried out. In March this year all the pupils planted a broad bean seed and I was delighted to see that a large number of them had been planted out into triangular raised beds on the west side of the school. These were in beautiful condition and as far as I could see were free of blackfly. I wish mine were as clean. On the opposite side of the road, against the security fence, were a few pots of herbs. These were not of the same quality, but I suspect this was due to the size of the containers they were in and therefore, maybe, lack of nutrients. The other growing area was round on the opposite side of the school in a very narrow area sandwiched between the building and the high boundary wall. The large planter here looked very good, containing some vegetable seedlings, beetroot, peas and butternut squash, a row of marigolds and one of nasturtiums, as did the smaller planter with nasturtiums. The Butternut squashes will certainly outgrow the container and spread out onto the ground against the wall. I just hope the ground staff are mindful of them over the summer. It was unfortunate that on the day of judging the OFSTED inspectors were in and I was unable to see any more of the school, this may have helped in assessing against areas of the criteria. I appreciate that some of the pupils are severely limited in what they are physically able to do, but if there is the opportunity to be able to put in more deep beds for the more able children to work with, that will surely enhance what is unfortunately, by its design, a very confined and sterile area immediately around the school. If the landlord will permit, maybe raised beds could be placed around the edge of the grassed area onto a surface (something wheelchair friendly) that would not restrict access to the mowers and this would help develop this area for pupil use. An idea I picked up from another school that entered the competition this year was "mini gardens". These were "gardens" that were made in standard sized seed trays (15" x 9") or even ½ trays (7" x 9"). Each child planted their "mini garden" and looked after it, watering and weeding. This may be something you might like to explore. The gardens can be put onto a bench or table and make a nice display, as each one would be different. I did not see, or was not aware of, any feeding stations or bird boxes to attract wild life into the school surrounds. I don't know even if this is something that is feasible but it might be something more to engage the pupils with the outside and nature. If birds can be attracted into the area then there is always the option of participating in the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch in January each year.

Greenfields has the potential to develop its gardening activities, and therefore the appearance of the site, which to my mind has to be to the benefit of the school and the landlord, if their landlord can be persuaded to allow them to do so.

I wish you well in your endeavours.

We at EMIB wish you all well at Greenfields Special School for Communication for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole school community.

JUDGE: Malcolm Brown

DATE: 28 June 2024



BEST FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GARDEN

BEST OVERALL SENIOR SCHOOL

The Cambridge Park Academy 6th Form
419 Cromwell Road
Grimsby DN37 9JR

Dear Max Foster, Kim Walton and students Christian, Logan, Stefan, Stuart, Archie and Lilly

Thank you for welcoming me to your school on Monday 17th June. It was a pleasure to find out about the many fantastic ways you are learning about the natural environment through your gardening activities, your care for wildlife and your involvement with your local community.

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.			*		
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.			*		
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.			*		
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.				*	
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.				*	
Principals of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.				*	
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.				*	
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.		*			
SECTION 2	Develo- ping	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
<u>Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum</u>					
Classes held outdoors across age ranges imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching a wide range of curriculum subjects covered				*	
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved	*				
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign				*	

Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach			*		
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time clubs each week The garden has a sustainable future.				*	
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community			*		
SECTION 3 Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Effective composting and water collection.				*	
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.				*	
Examples of features for wildlife				*	
The presence of homes and habitats for a range of wildlife.				*	
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils			*		
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.		*			
SECTION 4 Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.			*		
Pupils practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care				*	
Quality of food grown is evident.			*		
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .				*	
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year			*		

SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)			*		
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.			*		
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year				*	
Holiday maintenance plans in place.				*	
Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events				*	
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.				*	

MARKS AWARDED

<u>SECTION 1</u>	<u>SECTION 2</u>	<u>SECTION 3</u>	<u>SECTION 4</u>	<u>SECTION 5</u>	<u>TOTAL MARKS</u>
16	16	19	18	18	<u>87</u>

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : Gold**Judge's Overall Comments:****Areas of Achievement:**

I was very impressed by everything I saw during my visit, all underpinned by the school's focus on gardening for enjoyment and enrichment, encouraging independence for adult living.

I admired your commitment to improving bio diversity and the care you take for the environment throughout all your gardening activities. You grow a variety of vegetables, fruit and flowers using organic methods, you make plant feed from nettles and tomato leaves, make your own compost, use horse manure and straw from the local stables, mulch from Grimsby Council and collect rainwater in water butts.

You showed me raised beds constructed by the students, containing a variety of healthy looking vegetables, including onions, garlic, squash, pumpkins and potatoes. I also saw a thriving raised bed of herbs, newly planted fruit trees and a bed of strawberries. The fruit trees were donated to the school by The Woodland Trust and are just one example of the excellent links you have with environmental organisations, including the RSPB and the Wildlife Trust.

The produce grown in the garden is used in the school kitchen, prepared by the students as part of their food technology curriculum. On the day I visited, rhubarb crumble was on the menu- yummy!

You provide habitats for the wildlife in your school grounds, all designed and made by the students. These include bug hotels, bird feeders, a pond and a bog garden. This year, you have planted hedging along the front fence, to attract even more wildlife to the school grounds. You make regular observations of wildlife and you took part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch in January.

All these aspects of your environment are an integral part of the school's Eco - Horticulture Curriculum and it was very interesting to see the portfolio of photographs of students working on projects linked to learning objectives and outcomes. All practical tasks have health and safety guidelines which are shared with the students carrying them out.

I congratulate you on your valuable links with the local community. It was lovely to meet members of Great Coates in Bloom and to hear about your weekly visits to the village hall to take part in gardening activities with them. This link also involves you selling your homemade (school made!) jams and chutneys at the Church fete and you plant up and sell hanging baskets to raise money to help finance your garden projects. You give excess produce from the school garden to the community cafe in the village.

Areas for Development

It was lovely to meet the students but I would have liked them to tell me more about their gardening experiences. I acknowledging the challenges faced by them, but if possible it would be good to plan an opportunity for them to share their gardening knowledge and understanding with the judge by responding to some open questions and maybe demonstrate an aspect of their gardening skills.

We at EMIB wish you all well at The Cambridge Park Academy 6th Form for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole school community.

JUDGE: Mrs Becky Mayfield

DATE: 17th June 2024



BEST WILDLIFE GARDEN

BEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bleasby Church of England Primary School
Station Road,
Bleasby
Nottingham
NG14 7GD

Dear Angela,

Thank you for inviting me to Bleasby Church of England Primary School. It was a delightful visit and you, Zoe, Laura, Mrs Cast and all the pupils made sure I saw and heard about everything you had done through the year as well as your amazing plans for the wildlife area going forward. Evan, Ottie, Daya, Emily, Tilly and Tommy did an excellent job and were a credit to the school. It was so good to see a school where growing and environmental activities were so embedded in the curriculum across all the year groups. This was exemplified at the end of the visit. Daya invited me to see the morning's literacy work relating to the book "The Last Garden and then talked about other work done in class. A special thank you to him and his teacher for sharing his and his classes work.

The following shows where I consider you are doing really well and where you are looking to achieve more.

SECTION 1	Develo- ping	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardening Activities, Skills and Knowledge					
All pupils are involved in the gardening and practical skills are built on for the pupils/ they understand the benefits of gardening.				x	
Activities that develop skills and knowledge are evident.				x	
Pupils plan and carry out all year round gardening /growing activities.				x	
Gardening club(s) /Eco teams with regular meetings.				x	
Raised beds/ pots/ hanging baskets or plots evident around the school grounds.				x	
Principals of rotation /timing and growing cycles/ seasonal planning is evident.			x		
Range of crops, annuals, perennials evident.				x	
Basic plant recognition/ knowledge / basic gardening terms are known and understood.				x	

SECTION 2	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Gardens Contribution to Education and the Curriculum					

Classes held outdoors across age ranges Imaginative use of gardening in curriculum and teaching A wide range of curriculum subjects covered				x	
Pupils talk enthusiastically / knowledgably about value of gardening/ plants/ projects/ activities in which they have been involved				x	
Pupils are participating in the RHS Schools Campaign				x	
Grounds are developed for use in Forest Schools / active outdoor learning / Bushcraft curriculum approach				x	
Pupils are outdoors using the grounds and/or garden regularly in curriculum time Clubs each week The garden has a sustainable future.				x	
Pupils pass on gardening skills to others in school or the local community				x	
SECTION 3 <u>Value in sustaining the environment and wildlife</u>	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Effective composting and water collection.			x		
Planting to encourage wildlife into the school grounds.			x		
Examples of features for wildlife			x		
Presence of homes and habitats for range of wildlife.				x	
Evidence of wildlife observation by pupils			x		
Pupil knowledge of wildlife is evident and its part in gardening is developed.			x		
SECTION 4 <u>Growing Fruit and Vegetables and Healthy Living</u>	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Pupil involvement and knowledge of growing food Evidence of a range of fruit, vegetables and herbs grown.				x	
Pupils' practical skills to prepare the soil Plant appropriately (seeds/seedling/ plants) Watering with care				x	
Quality of food grown is evident.			x		
Making use of food produced through curriculum or wider use/ sales/ fundraising .				x	
Seasonal planning to harvest produce throughout the school year				x	
SECTION 5 Design, Management and Maintenance	Developing	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Doesn't Apply
Overall impression (maintenance, hard landscape features, plant quality.)			x		
Pupil involved in garden layout / displays / accessibility/ health and safety/ awareness of hazards in a garden.				x	
Care and maintenance by pupils ongoing throughout school year				x	
Holiday maintenance plans in place.			x		

Garden is shared or skills learnt with local community to help with projects or gardening needs/ or through open days/sales /events			x		
Money raised to buy seeds, plants and equipment for the garden Links to sponsorship and advice.				x	

MARKS AWARDED

SECTION 1	SECTION 2	SECTION 3	SECTION 4	SECTION 5	TOTAL MARKS
19	18	16	17	17	<u>87</u>

SCHOOL GARDEN AWARD : GOLD

Judge's Discretionary Award:

To Angela Dunning and her fellow volunteers for creating such a coherent growing plan to integrate garden and growing activities to the curriculum and to meet each teachers needs. It was flexible and clearly supported classroom activities. The plans were an exemplar in this respect.

Judge's Overall Comments:

You are an active school with so much to see and it is very clear that growing, gardening, wildlife and environmental activities are important to and integrated with the curriculum. The school is very fortunate to have extensive grounds. I was impressed that the "garden and grow" noticeboard was the first thing I saw on arrival and the pupil's design for the new wildlife area was well supported by the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. Everything was pupil led, and I particularly like the flower choice bar chart on display in a classroom.

The polyculture growing areas are good and the pupils really understand the value of companion planting. Enthusiastic compost makers grasped the importance of looking after the soil and with nettle soup the school growing group create their own fertiliser. Reduce, Reuse and recycle are well understood. The daisy chaining of water butts optimised water capture and storage and there was evidence of mulching. The recent school art week made good use of the wildlife area across the curriculum and the Forest School sign made with found materials was effective.

Planting 100 saplings to create a fruiting hedge at the boundary of the wildlife area is a great achievement and it complements the considerable orchard tree planting that is thriving. A wide range of flowers, vegetables and herbs are grown. Many are grown from seed, saved and from a seed swap alongside donated plants (Over 50 packs) from local DIY stores. The Leek line was an imaginative use of a huge number of donated leek plants and I am sure the new kitchen staff will be able to make good use of the produce alongside vegetables grown near the kitchens.

You have an excellent relationship with the local community, including the Bleasby Grasshoppers (community volunteers), the local pond expert, Lowdham Horticultural show and the local ploughing match. Getting donated varieties of Rhubarb from the national collection at Clumber Park was very enterprising and the rhubarb beds work well. I particularly liked the multigenerational activities with the pupils and residents of the local care home making Easter bonnets using the schools home grown spring bulb flowers. It was good to see the Friends Association supporting the growing activities, funding new child sized gloves and tools. Alongside plant sales to raise funds the garden and grow group are well supported.

The school is a bee friendly school and much of the planting reflects this. The large bug hotel has a very successful green roof and is well maintained and explored. There are many different sorts

of bird boxes in trees and the pupils understand the needs of different birds. The school took part in the RSPB big garden bird watch. The new wildlife area is developing well and the paths are marking a wide range of habitat zones. The planned amphibian mats created a lot of discussion on the visit. The new pond, when complete, will make a huge difference to the area, as will the installation of the log seats being donated by a local resident. The use of a web cam was clearly a success.

Continued monitoring of the impact of the wild life area changes will be a valuable resource to the school. The wildflower sowing has had limited success and a different seed mix may work better. The school may want to consider growing wild flowers from seed for the wildlife area and there is a local specialist nursery at Langar who may be able to advise.

The planting of native bluebells will work well under the canopy and these are to be donated by a local resident.

The school is very fortunate to have such a lovely greenhouse and it is clearly well used raising seedlings. The school may want to use that space in the summer for tender exotic edibles.

The new kitchen staff are clearly keen to use school grown produce going forward and this may encourage a more extensive year round edibles growing plan.

The pupils told me about their bird feeder activities using cones, seeds and fats. With the new wildlife area there is scope for greater diversity of bird feeding stations and more creative designs. The pupils may wish to grow crops purely to feed birds and wildlife.

I congratulate Bleasby for a wide range of growing and environmental activities year round that clearly and actively engage the pupils.

We at EMIB wish you all well at Bleasby Church of England Primary for the coming year and do hope you will invite us back as part of the School Competition in 2025. We look forward to seeing how you progress on your green fingered journey with the whole school community.

JUDGE (S): Joyce Slater

DATE: 11 June 2024



Frank Constable MBE Best Front Garden

WINNER 4 TRAINGATE KIRTON IN LINDSEY



EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM FLORAL AWARDS

Marking Sheet

Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden



Best Pub or Hotel Garden



Best Business/Commercial Premises



Please click on box to select as

appropriate.

Address of Property:	4 Traingate Street, Kirton in Lindsey	Post Code:
		DN21 4NT
Owners' name:	Tony and Jean Bartlett	
Name of "In Bloom" entry (mandatory)*:	Kirton in Lindsey	Date:3 July 2024

Criteria	Description	Marks	Marks Awarded
1. Attractiveness of planting e.g. Colour schemes; design to function; use of scent; duration of attractiveness across seasons; innovation	This front garden has bright, bold, and attractive planting. The use of dianthus as an edging plant provides scent. The design is set in gravel as the only option (earth would simply wash away), The design also incorporates two sets of steps, one named 'The Wedding Steps' sweeping upwards with easy access and handrail. Across the season planting includes bulbs in winter with spring flowers being replaced by later season varieties set between perennials such as Day Lilies and dianthus. It has been described as a 'labour of love'	30	28
2. Design e.g. suitability to location; balance; proportion; focal points / focal picture; light and shade; use of texture; unity	The garden is well designed and planted despite the difficult slope. The Hydrangeas at the top make an excellent focal point with alstroemeria beneath them providing a good link in the design between shrubs, perennials, and annuals below. The choice of plants is very suitable for a site with little shade, attention being given to varying the shapes and colour to maximise and maintain interest. It is a very impactful garden setting a high standard which	30	28

	other gardens in the street seems to have been uplifted by in different ways. The wall material was changed in places to enhance the backdrop. A wide range of pots near to house continue the colour right to the front door were stood two very elegant and original planters.		
3. Quality of Care and Maintenance <i>e.g. edged up lawns; minimal weeds; mulching; health of plants; lack of pests and diseases</i>	The considerable maintenance is shared by both owners. A few weeds were to be seen in what an almost immaculate garden was. Beautifully neat edges to the lawn on the roadside were maintained. Weekly feeding of all pots with Tomorite ensures that the plants are healthy, and no disease was evident.	30	28
4. Sustainability <i>e.g. minimising peat use; composting; mulching; minimising use of pesticides</i>	Pests such as snails are removed by hand. The stones help retain the moisture in the beds and reduce snail invasion. Mulching using horse manure is carried out with each new planting, so the gravel must be temporarily removed each time, but the underlying soil is improved. As often as plants are propagated, and seeds collected by the owners and when possible tender plants are brought in and over wintered under cover. The irrigation system is from mains water – there was no evidence of water butts or other means of saving rainwater. This is a garden that has consistently won the local front garden competition in Kirton in Lindsey as highlighted in the Bloom Portfolio and evidenced on the wall plaques at the property.	10	7
TOTAL MARKS			91
AWARD (Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver, Bronze, or Certificate of Achievement)			Gold

**BEST PUB/HOTEL SPONSORED BY THE ART
DEPARTMENT NOTTINGHAM**



WINNER JAFFLES MARKET BOSWORTH



**EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM FLORAL AWARDS
Marking Sheet**

Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden

Best Pub or Hotel Garden

Best Business/Commercial Premises

Please click on box to select as appropriate.

Address of Property:	Jaffles@No3Cafe/Bar 3 Main St, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire	Post Code: CV13 0JN
Owners' name:	Mac Puttnam	
Name of "In Bloom" entry (mandatory)*:	Market Bosworth	Date: 12th July 2024

Criteria	Description	Marks	Marks Awarded
1. Attractiveness of planting e.g. Colour schemes; design to function; use of scent; duration of attractiveness across seasons; innovation	To one side of the relatively narrow (6m) outdoor seating area were an assortment of permanent climbers, a Fig, Wisteria and Climbing Hydrangea amongst others. Tables were decorated mainly with Petunias. Red, Orange and White trailing Begonias in wall mounted containers predominated alongside. There were some begonias and evergreens planted in the ground adjacent to the wall. At the top end of the cobbled yard, the seating area widened out into a more spacious, less cosy area, decorated with 2 Standard Olive trees and variegated climbing Myrtle. Mac ensures that the 'spring' display is equally as good as the summer one. eg Snowdrops and Bluebells.	30	26
2. Design e.g. suitability to location; balance;	Considering the copious amount of foliage growing on both sides of the quite narrow seating	30	

proportion; focal points / focal picture; light and shade; use of texture; unity	area, it was surprisingly light and welcoming. The climbers could have dominated the area but they just suited the site perfectly. The seating areas nestled into their growth very pleasantly. The paving and cobbles matched the surroundings and was being well maintained.		26
3. Quality of Care and Maintenance e.g. edged up lawns; minimal weeds; mulching; health of plants; lack of pests and diseases	Due to the nature of the entry, mostly hard landscaping underfoot, The area was being well maintained with no weeds or detritus. There was no grass to maintain and there wasn't any need for mulching. All the plants appeared to be healthy and well maintained with no evidence of pest and disease.	30	26
4. Sustainability e.g. minimising peat use; composting; mulching; minimising use of pesticides	Mac stated that Peat Free Compost was used in all the planting and pesticides were not used at all, particularly as customers are seated in amongst the floral displays.	10	6
TOTAL MARKS			84
AWARD (Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver, Bronze or Certificate of Achievement)			Silver Gilt

**BEST BUSINESS/RETAIL SUPPORTED BY THE ART DEPARTMENT
(TAD) NOTTINGHAM**



Best Retail/Commercial

Winner HANNAH FIELDS LITTLEOVER



EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM SPECIAL FLORAL AWARDS

Frank Constable MBE Award for Best Residential Garden

☐

Best Pub or Hotel Garden

☐

Best Business/Commercial Premises

☒

Please click on box to select as

appropriate.

Address of Property:	Hannah Fields, 33 Normanton Lane, Littleover, Derby	Post Code:	DE23 6GP
Owners' name:	Angela Griffin (Proprietor/Nominee)		
Name of "In Bloom" entry (mandatory)*:	Littleover in Bloom	Date:	9 th July 2024

Criteria	Description	Marks	Marks Awarded
1. Attractiveness of planting e.g. Colour schemes; design to function; use of scent; duration of attractiveness across seasons; innovation	This is a site designed entirely for its function, so attractiveness links to its natural meadow, orchard, woodland, poly-tunnels and outdoor cropping areas. It is in full use throughout the year for a wide range of user groups, employs staff and uses the skills of volunteers to achieve remarkable results. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, this is beautiful!	30	25
2. Design e.g. suitability to location; balance; proportion; focal points / focal picture; light and shade; use of texture; unity	As with the comments above, these characteristics have to be evaluated against the site function; it is not a business designed to be drawing in visitors with no interest in what goes on there, it is for those who want to learn skills, gain experience, meet and socialise, buy or eat healthy local produce etc. For these aspects it's design is superb.	30	27
3. Quality of Care and Maintenance	Pest and disease is managed through care for the environment, and some level of damage is	30	27

e.g. edged up lawns; minimal weeds; mulching; health of plants; lack of pests and diseases	tolerated to avoid the use of pesticides. Crops seen, both in outdoor beds and in the poly-tunnels, are excellent, with a wide range of fruit and vegetables growing well and being sold via a local box scheme throughout the year. Weeds are present but without causing crop harm. Paths are mown through the orchard and are fit for purpose.		
4. Sustainability e.g. minimising peat use; composting; mulching; minimising use of pesticides	Almost everything on site is made on-site or recycled; high-quality composting was seen, all produce is organic, seeds are saved. No peat is used. Remarkable.	10	9
TOTAL MARKS		100	88
AWARD (Gold, Silver Gilt, Silver, Bronze or Certificate of Achievement)			Gold

DISCRETIONARY AWARDS

HORTICULTURE EXCELLENCE WITHIN PARKS

WINNER CENTRAL PARK SCUNTHORPE



EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM AWARD FOR LEAST LITTERED

WINNER OADBY & WIGSTON



BEST NEW PERMANENT LANDSCAPE

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WINNER THE COMMUNITY GARDEN CHELLASTON



SUPPORTED

EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM BEST WILDFLOWER/CONSERVATION AREA

WINNER THE SPRINGS TRUSTHORPE



EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM COMMITTEE AWARD

WINNERS KAY JENKINSON LITTLEOVER

ANNETTE RICHARDSON BARROW UPON SOAR



EAST MIDLANDS IN BLOOM BEST VILLAGE/TOWN ENTRANCE

WINNER HULLAND WARD



DOUG STACEY YOUNG PERSON AWARD

WINNER EMILY DIGBY KIRTON IN LINDSEY