

# Judges Notes for Summer 2022



## Category C1a: - Small Village

### Esholt

### Gold & Category Winner

#### Overall Impression

Esholt is a lovely small village set in a rural area. The team are enthusiastic and extremely environmentally aware. The village has a high number of visitors as for many years it used to be the set for Emmerdale. All the properties are listed. The residents have only a small space at the front of their property, but each one was planted appropriately, mainly with perennial plants that had a few annuals added to give colour.

The team look after a number of planters that are well maintained and are placed around the village. The plants are composted at the end of the season and will be replaced with spring bulbs. Peat free compost is being used. The whole village was weed and litter free. The grassed area at the side of the road has been planted with spring bulbs and will be a welcome sight in the early part of the year.

At the back of the cricket field there is a nature reserve which is now home to three beehives. The two allotment areas are fabulous, one allotment area has two beehives incorporated in the plots.

The planting around the church was well established and well maintained. It was good to see the uncut area around the bench to encourage insects.

Esholt in Bloom are a team of committed volunteers who are working hard and are extremely environmentally aware. It was a pleasure to meet them and see their lovely village and natural areas which blend so well together.

#### Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider adding some permanent planting to your planters such as lavenders, sage, hardy geraniums or even some mint.
- Continue to keep pushing Bradford Council so that you can put in place the memorial seat and consider planting wildflowers in the area to attract further pollinators.
- Continue to encourage residents to be environmentally aware.
- It would be helpful to future judges that you consider documenting your activities and where your funds are raised from.

### Firbeck Village

### Silver

#### Overall Impression

Firbeck is a lovely place to live or visit. There are many lovely gardens in the village which are obviously cherished and cared for. The planters which are tended for the village by two local residents are a credit to them and were full of colourful planting.

It was impressive to hear of residents undertaking mowing of communal areas. The seed and plant exchange is a good idea and involving the local red phone box was special. It was good to hear of the involvement of so many local people and of the communication with other local

villages.

It is pleasing that residents are making efforts to support wildlife by insect friendly planting. It is good that composting and water harvesting are being carried out in the village. Areas of the church grounds being left unmown will benefit wildlife.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The idea for sculptures linked to the village heritage, together with seating is a good idea.
- The plans for updating the village hall garden are very exciting.
- Consider working with the local pub, encouraging them to develop planting in baskets and containers further to support the village effort.
- Consider planting around the entrance to the church.
- Perhaps it might be possible to develop the planting in containers by the Village Hall further and perhaps include more temporary colour in the bed in the car park while waiting for completion of the future plans.

## **Great & Little Preston in Bloom**

## **Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

Great & Little Preston are rural villages near Garforth, situated about 9 miles south east of Leeds. We were shown round by Steve and Andy and we were impressed by what we saw. The small group of Great Preston & Little Preston in Bloom are not afraid of hard work, as demonstrated by the Woodland Walk footpaths from the Village Hall which they have created and are maintaining with barrow loads of bark chippings. The footpaths provide excellent links to other parts of the villages, including St Aidan's RSPB site, and the Wildflower Meadow. They are well used by the local community. The small arboretum at the start of the walks is a lovely area to sit and funding is in place to plant a tree for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee to add to the Diamond Jubilee oak tree. The woodland is well managed and the In Bloom group have ensured excellent signposts to guide those who go down to the woods. The improvements to the access to the Wildflower Meadow from the woodland is to be applauded. The Wildflower Meadow is excellent and exactly what a perennial wildflower meadow should be. A jewel in your entry. We congratulate all concerned in managing and maintaining the meadow. Throughout our visit we saw many colourful floral displays and were pleased to see that there is a more diverse plan of permanent, sustainable planting, such as grasses and lavender. The inclusion of lavender for example is a haven for bees. Although the group is small they have enlisted the help of local residents to take 'ownership' of the tubs and who water as necessary. The improvements at Preston Corner with appropriate planting and the history boards are impressive as are the two corner borders at Whitehouse Drive. Thank you Geoff for looking after these two borders. The new bed at the entrance to Great Preston is a great improvement as is the work on the hedgerow on Whitehouse Lane. Throughout our visit we saw evidence of great pride in the villages with residents maintaining their gardens with floral displays. The Bowers Row Chapel Memorial Gardens are excellent. We were sorry to hear of the loss of two long standing founder members of the In Bloom group, Bob and Jim. The memorial wheelbarrow display and the trees planted in their memories are very appropriate tributes to them. The wildflower bed opposite and the bed at the Social Club stand out as well. Plans to create a new boggy plant area at the Parish Field pond will create further interest. Once again thank you to all concerned and we look forward to seeing your ambitious plans take shape in future years.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Setting up a What's App In Bloom group to help communications.
- Hold plant sales, working with the allotment group and school, to raise interest in the work of In Bloom, and some fund raising.
- Join forces with local groups, engage them in new and ongoing projects.
- We would advise that the Jubilee tree should be an oak which could involve the community and children in the planting event and ensure it is put on the Queen's Green Canopy website.
- The Wildflower Meadow is an excellent asset - your priority is to keep spreading the yellow rattle to enhance and keep improving.
- Create a bee corridor with more lavender used in tubs and beds and residents' gardens throughout Great & Little Preston.
- A photo book of your all year round activity would be useful for the judges - in addition to your portfolio. Consider producing a calendar, perhaps in association with the local school and garden centre.

## **Category C1b: - Village**

### **Spofforth in Bloom**

### **Gold & Category Winner**

#### **Overall Impression**

Every element of the areas for assessment have been considered and implemented to the highest standards. There is impressive evidence of a community who work together to achieve the excellence displayed throughout the village creating a true wow factor underpinned by the selection and maintenance of planting, consideration of the environment and local identity, and on-going community involvement and inclusion.

#### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- It is recommended that the large Horse Chestnut is measured and logged with the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI) and the Tree Registry, as it is showing signs of decline. There could be a project within the community or the school children to collect the conkers and grow them to replant around the village.
- An allotment site could be considered.

### **Grassington in Bloom**

### **Gold**

#### **Overall Impression**

Grassington is set in the Yorkshire Dales National Park which gives the village a lovely backdrop. However, by being in the National Park it also has its challenges as they work very closely with the park and wildflower trust. From this has come the creation of the 'bee corridor'. The wildflower meadow planted by the team and the school is thriving and was awash with various insects and bees.

The further challenge is the large number of visitors and walkers who visit throughout the year. A number of their planters have seen plants damaged by rucksacks placed on top of

them or people sitting on the edge of them. However, the team acknowledge that the visitors are good for the Grassington economy therefore it is something they have to deal with as and when necessary.

The team also have to work with the weather conditions which being so high up in the Yorkshire Dales can have challenges all of its own.

The new miners bouse cart at the entrance to the car park is a lovely permanent addition and shows the connection and heritage the village has to the lead mine. Also the stone trough is a really good addition and has replaced a wooden planter. This now blends in well with the stone wall behind it.

There are a number of well-maintained barrel planters in the main square, all using the red, white and blue colour scheme for the Queens Jubilee. It was really good to see that businesses and residents had followed this lead. All the planters are sponsored as are the benches in the main square. This helps with funds for Grassington in Bloom. The maintenance of the planters is by the individuals nearby rather than the team having to regularly go out and look after them.

It was lovely to walk around the back of the village square and see all the natural areas and the lovely cottages. The whole area was totally litter, weed and graffiti free, not an easy task with so many visitors. The owners of the holiday lets also help by keeping their property frontages clean tidy and planted in keeping with the surrounding area.

The team are helping to develop a garden with the local school so that there is a quiet area for them to use.

There are a large number of volunteers working with Grassington in Bloom. Not all are able to come out and help with the planting but they help in other ways such as newsletters etc.

The team have a number of projects planned and have received donations from businesses along with further sponsorship. They also have fund raising events which are proving popular and well supported.

It was really good to go back to Grassington and see the improvements they had made since my last visit. .

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Consider using a few more hardy perennials in your planters like the lavenders you have introduced into some already to supplement and provide a backdrop for your annual plants. Perhaps the low growing rosemary which may be a bit more robust in the areas that rucksacks are placed.
- It may be worth considering alpines in the planters going back in with the new bench near the car park – again once established they will not need too much maintenance.
- Continue with your wildflower planting and encouraging residents and businesses to do so where appropriate.

## **Category C1c: - Large Village**

**Hutton Cranswick in Bloom**

**Gold & Category  
Winner**

**Overall Impression**

Gina and Heather from the organising committee escorted the three judges around the Hutton Cranswick in Bloom route. The Methodist church recognised that several wooden planters were getting tired and have replaced them with wooden barrels planted up with flowering plants. The Chair, Gina Simpson, explained that the numbers of volunteers was 15, which were mainly elderly had reduced in numbers. The good news is that a couple (few) new younger volunteers had come on board for village in Bloom and refurbished two metal benches and provided two new planters near to the village pond for all to use and enjoy which should be commended. The village green is a delightful place and much used by residents, enhanced by future seating, the millennium sundial, war memorial with its cottage garden perennial planting and the village sign with Welcome to Hutton Cranswick leaflets which highlight the main sites of the village and highlight the work of the In Bloom group. In Church Street the boundary wall is decorated with planting of herbaceous perennials, this bed contains many plants donated by residents and is beautifully maintained by Sue. Householders overlooking the church have adopted their section of grass verge and one example planted Lavenders on the edge.

Howl Lane Street sign is landscaped with evergreens such as variegated varieties of Euonymus which is very effective.

Art and history are important to this village and one resident, Richard has converted the former red telephone box into a 'museum' showing a display of archives photographs of the village taken by Norman Smith.

A farmer had donated four cattle watering troughs which are planted up with Gazania's and Cosmos which brightened up a stretch of grass verge.

At Centenary wood in the notice board there is a sign welcoming judges, which is a good way of communicating with visitors that the area was being judged, the work of Sonia and the group in maintaining and improving this old, former council parish tip is impressive. They maintain a natural wooded area and have been active planting bluebells and other wildflowers to enhance its diversity. Wildlife is catered for by numerous bird feeders, bird boxes and bug houses.

The committee had agreed to spend more money raised at several fund-raising events, on permanent plantings, using mixed herbaceous perennials instead of summer flowering bedding plants. This is an example of more sustainable planting. This must be commended as they have overcome reduced volunteering.

The frontage of a new housing development is decorated with wildflowers. The effect is amazing for a very low cost.

The local play group had been given packets of vegetable and flower seeds and the children were nurturing a three-tier planter made from a pallet adapted. Displays of Marigolds and Mesembryanthemums were stunning. There were several young apple trees bearing fruit. The nursery supervisor, Elaine, and her staff should be commended for getting preschool children involved in growing plants at a young age.

The judges were shown a recently planted up flower bed, Arthur's Seat, which had young plants in it which shows that the village in Bloom committee is developing new sites all the time with permanent sustainable plantings in both Hutton and Cranswick.

The displays at the railway station are impressive, a combination of history and plants, even more so as there is no water available on site. This area has the WOW factor for all those using the station. Two volunteers, Stephen, and Pamela had adopted planting on Hutton Cranswick railway station and despite a setback of part of the flower bed collapsing down an embankment they built a 'wattle' retaining wall to hold back the soil and have strengthened the border with more planting of perennials. This is to be commended.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The work to increase floral entrances to the village has been effective - perhaps consideration could be made to some improvements to the Way of the Roses national cycle route display, including some perennials such as lavender to enhance the roses.

- Consider the creation of bee corridors throughout the village - increasing the use of lavender and other bee haven plants in tubs and containers and enlisting residents to plant a lavender in their gardens as part of this. This project could also involve the village school children and also encourage their parents at home too.

## Roberttown In Bloom

## Gold

### Overall Impression

Where to start with this first time entry. The group was formed late 2019/early 2020 just as we were heading into COVID situation. They used the time well to galvanise the team and start to make improvements to the green spaces around them. The 12-14 active volunteers have come such a way in just two years it's hard to believe some of the achievements.

Areas to note – The Jubilee gardens, had become overgrown and neglected, one of the group members set about the challenge of taming the area, improving the overgrown planting and recreating this central village meeting area into the fabulous space it is today.

Good use of interpretation boards giving information -A Thousand Years in Roberttown - village heritage, the WWI Memorial, there's the "Little Free Library" area. "Buggingham Palace" bug hotel, created by the Rainbows gives an ideal home for pollinators, situated on a low wall giving access to all, consideration being given to anyone who is in a wheelchair to see and interact with it. The group have considered the diversity of the community in a number of locations, and are constantly thinking of inclusion in their planning.

The eclectic use of different objects used as colourful planters dotted around the village give a quirky feel to the space, up-cycling items heading to landfill, and a real talking point – to note the coffin cart outside the old funeral home, the child's pram and rocking horse near the school, and the treasure chest outside the "Treasure Centre" vintage shop, bicycle outside the Bridal shop. The colourful tyre planters outside the Pre school. All planters this year are coordinated in the Jubilee colours. Great idea outside the butchers, using the planter there to grow herbs, and information on what herbs to use with what meats.

The Plant Swop station is located in the heart of the village and proving very popular.

Good to note the group are thinking about areas of the village for sustainable planting, and the new area on Bullace Tree Lane, a tough very dry and overgrown strip left by a local developer, has been taken in hand and improved providing a welcoming display outside the Church entrance.

All members of this strong community look to be involved in some way with the In Bloom campaign. The WI are yarn bombing spectacular knitted designs across the village; the sunflower project with children across the village and the planting on Commonsides; the Rainbows, cubs, scouts (loved the "scarecrows" on the bench); the children at the local Primary school, where out to meet us on the day and show us how they are getting involved, and eager to tell us about the history of the mining site the school was built on, we were blown away by their knowledge and enthusiasm. The school should be really proud of this space.

Business' are fully supportive, and there are many growing displays across the area, the planters having that knock on effect on the New Inn, Geordie Pride Lodge, to name a few. Local residents too are out doing their bit, planters and baskets outside many homes; Steve's wall top and mini front garden, was a pleasure to stop and see on the main road, Sophies work down at the Cricket club, and the quirky use of cricket related items in this planted area, Chris's work at Bar House, and the addition of the "welcome" stone and more planting to come, and residential gardens across the area were well maintained and colourful.

Open spaces, such as the Church Yard, Common Side, were well maintained, the lovely area set aside as Beau's Corner "Perfect Princess Carriage" created to let her know all her

friends and the wider villagers were thinking of her. The new Stumpery providing more habitats for wildlife and plans to improve access for wheelchairs again to make it more inclusive.

Streets were free from litter and little sign of graffiti thanks to another local's efforts.

All the groups work, and events are promoted on social media, and regular newsletters to keep those residents without IT access, up to date with what's happening. Fund raising events numerous, sponsorship of planters and donations all adding to this entry.

Composting of green waste is happening and help watering being encouraged by the group of local residents.

Louise and team have made huge inroads to the In Bloom ethos, in such a short space of time, the area is a credit to everyone, and their enthusiasm is infectious.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Fabulous to meet the children at Roberttown J & I, and have a glimpse of their school grounds, wildlife areas, the "Spiritual Space", this is definitely a potential entry in its own right in the near future.
- The Council plans to improve the main recreation ground in the near future, this will enhance the public open space offer, within the entry.
- Plans to replace the street furniture at Commonsides again will improve this space, and the plans for the Memorial Garden just tiny steps to improve the space.
- Near the Stumpery, it was mentioned that a roost of bats has been spotted. One suggestion to consider could be to find out what species of bats are roosting, potentially working with the school to create a bat walk or educational talk. It's very good to have a roost in the area and the school's grounds and spiritual space will most likely be attracting moths and insects for them to eat. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust would help with this.
- Future planting at Bullace Tree Lane, as it's a very dry and shaded area, consider right plant, right place for the conditions, rather than struggle with watering going forward.
- The group have a number of ideas on their future plans list, and the addition of the edibles space, and improvements to the woodland walkway will be a plus to the entry.
- It's great to hear that the group are looking to form as a committee with a constitution. This will allow the group to open a bank account and access a whole new avenue of funding opportunities.

## **Scholes in Bloom**

## **Silver Gilt**

### **Overall Impression**

We really enjoyed our visit to Scholes and seeing the work the "In Bloom" group have been doing there since they started in 2003. So many projects they are too numerous to mention but certainly their efforts are filling the area with colour and bloom.

Despite the many difficulties caused by the pandemic the depleted group has managed to generally maintain a very good standard but would welcome new members from all age groups who want to help in the community.

It was lovely to hear that the group is supported by so many sponsors particularly for the many hanging baskets, planters and beds which they are looking after. A very big thank you to Roger and his crew for keeping up with the watering, not an easy task in the hot dry weather.

Thanks also to the number of residents who support by keeping their own area tidy and weed free adding to the impression of a loved village.

The result of the primary school competition to design a flower bed was so good to see and the enthusiasm of the pupils we met who were busy weeding and tidying. They are all to be encouraged to get involved with other areas and further develop their interest in

wildlife and flora.

Throughout Scholes there was colourful bedding and new areas of planting where awkward sites were being enhanced such as the “Japanese” garden and additional wildflower areas being developed.

The green spaces were well maintained litter and graffiti free, and overall cleanliness is very good. Verges have been enhanced with bulb planting and the interpretation boards are so important to add to the local knowledge and involvement.

It is evident that there is a lot of pride in your community and the whole team and their sponsors deserve to be congratulated for making such a positive contribution to Scholes and its residents - well done.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Although some sustainable planting has been introduced the further reduction of seasonal bedding to sustainable would be beneficial both environmentally and to reduce ongoing labour demands.
- Is there a possibility of reducing grass cutting on Lodge field by introducing more meadow which could have pathways or a maze mowed through it.
- Consider strengthening links with the sports field and possibly placing posters near the outdoor Gym equipment to attract and inform potential support for the group.
- The fence by The Buffers needs repair or replacement.
- Could younger groups be approached to develop a trail leaflet or suggest further interpretation boards and utilise their social media skills to develop new enthusiasm.
- If planters round the bowling green need replacing, consider that any replacements would benefit from a water reservoir.
- Seating at the Memorial Tree Road island needs attention.

## **Category C2: - Urban Community**

### **Beeston in Bloom**

### **Gold**

#### **Overall Impression**

The Beeston in Bloom group is a friendly, welcoming bunch who work tirelessly to improve and uplift the area. This is clearly evident from what the group have achieved in their 25 years together – a fantastic milestone to reach!

The group have no limits when it comes to working with others. Local residents, organisations and businesses chip in, allowing planters and hanging baskets to be sponsored and well-maintained as a result, which provide pops of colour to the streets of Beeston. Diversity is no issue with this group as all are welcomed. School children worked together to transform recycled plastic bottles into a beautiful poppy display, and the Chinese elders and Mormons get involved to help wherever possible.

The group also take the time to work with the local church, and they listen to the community's needs. This is particularly important as it boosts community spirit and gives a voice to residents. One example of the group's inclusivity is the urn planter that the group organised to be placed outside the care home for a resident who missed their garden. Not only did this make a resident happy, but it would have significantly improved their mental health and experience at the care home. The urn is a beautiful addition to the care home's front garden. As well as the urn planter, care home residents can look out and see a beautifully painted 'Take a Seat' bench and utility box, done by a local artist. A bright



sunflower adorns the bench as a reminder to those passing that no matter what life brings, the sun will always rise.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 800 sunflower grow packs were distributed out to residents to grow at home so that every garden could have a sunflower as part of the Take a Seat initiative. This was a great idea to bring joy in times of worry.

The sunflower utility box is one of many along the streets of Beeston, all of which are painted by local artists to celebrate heritage and events and complement the colourful planters scattered along the streets. Not only are these a pleasure to look at, but they have proven to deter graffiti. Mining, jam, and women's rights are prominent themes painted on the boxes, and a suffragette bench with an information board further educates visitors and residents alike. On the other side to this, a Leeds United FC bench, funded by the club, overlooks the road leading down to the stadium and provides the perfect place for a rest before heading off to the watch the game. They are also able to sit and enjoy food sold by the church to passing fans, which is a unique fundraising idea for the church's upkeep.

It is clear that a lot of thought has gone into selecting themes around the area, the placement of planters and benches, and the selection of plants used. This is especially evident at the Cardinal Triangle which was a highlight of the day and a pleasure to visit. A plain grass verge has been converted into a beautifully planted area with perennial plants suited to dryer and windier conditions, a wood chip path which separates themed sections and prevents weeds, and a large rock feature in the middle. As vehicles slow down at the speed camera by the side of the planter, they are able to admire the work that has gone into this bed. Any plants that outgrow this bed, and any seeds harvested, are sold on to raise funds for the group or replanted in other areas around Beeston so nothing is wasted. Within the park, in the Millennium Garden, there are four more planters which have been well thought out, with mainly perennials and themed coloured flowers planted in each. On the back wall, a history board to show 25 years of the group's progress is proudly displayed, and an archway donated by Aviva and two bright wildlife themed benches form the entrance way to the garden.

The Love Lock Tree to the back of the café building is a lovely feature and was snapped up by the group free of charge from the Council. This artwork blends in beautifully with the trees in the park.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The judges would have loved to visit the churchyard at the back of the church and the cemetery to see the planted areas and bug hotels. The front of the church was beautifully planted and makes the street view attractive and colourful.  
As the group work well with schools and young people, the judges thought it would be great to meet some of the young people as they have had such an involvement, particularly with the poppy display which was a real highlight of the day.
- At the Millennium Garden, the colourful benches were a great addition to the entrance. More of these benches, and improvements to street furniture such as plain benches and bins, would really enhance the area and complement the painted utility boxes and benches around Beeston.
- The local heritage is absolutely fantastic and is clearly well-celebrated with multiple history boards, benches and themes selected based on the history of Beeston. A suggestion could be to make a big thing about the history of Beeston by possible holding a Heritage Open Days event to really show off Beeston's heritage. This would be a good thing to consider if in need of some event ideas going forward, as Heritage Open Days happen every September.

## **Bramhope in Bloom**

**Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

A very warm welcome from two of the members of Bramhope in Bloom was given to the judge on arrival at this lovely Yorkshire village.

In the summer sunshine the jubilee planting theme shone throughout the village starting with the Fox & Hounds public house with a lovely display of hanging baskets and hayracks supplied by the group.

Across the road is the ancient Cross with the surrounding shops and solicitors displaying barrels, troughs and baskets all planted with 'Jubilee' themed bedding along with signs of sustainable planting in appropriate places. It was nice to hear that all the volunteers could choose the type of bedding for their own areas – a nice touch!

The war memorial on Breary Lane is obviously well tended to by the group and a local resident. A credit to the team and the village. The parade of shops carries on the theme of sustainable planting supplemented by bedding in spring and summer along with underplanting of bulbs. Again all the businesses were supportive of the groups 'In Bloom' entry.

The dementia bed was a lovely place to visit, and am sure that it brings a sense of calm and tranquility to all who visit it. It is encouraging to see the group has strong ties with the school and the Duke of Edinburgh candidates.

Congratulations to the group, there is obviously a lot of pride in the community by all who live there. A big well done to you all – and carry on the good work!

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The judge encourages you to push forward with your request to Leeds City Council to enable the planting of wild flowers in front of the stone trough just off Creskeld Crescent. This would make a lovely addition.
- The local public house is currently installing planters to the rear of the property where customers can sit and enjoy the refreshments. Perhaps the Rawdon in Bloom group could advise them of a suitable and 'sustainable' planting scheme. Following on from what the group have achieved throughout the rest of the village.
- Regarding the trial of the recycled plastic barrels. The judge believed that the ones chosen for the trial were a good choice, appropriate for the area and would recommend the group to look at replacing the older barrels in the forthcoming years.
- Continue to develop the dementia bed, this will be an asset to the village.

## **Calverley in Bloom**

**Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

The hard work from this group of volunteers throughout the village has ensured that the village is a lovely place to live and work .

The visit to the Primary school and the judging of the Calverley in Bloom posters by three of the talented artists was lovely, both judges felt it a privilege to see young artists 'blooming'. The use of recycled planters and the planting of Bamboo within the school grounds was a nice addition The working partnership between the school and the 'Calverley in Bloom' (CIB) volunteers whereby the school prints all the 'In Bloom' posters for residents and local businesses windows was encouraging.

It appears as though the majority of small businesses throughout the village support the volunteers by displaying beautiful baskets and tubs at the front of their premises, from Mick's Café, the local Post Office, the Hairdressers and Newsagents to name a few.

Mention must also be made to the sheltered housing where all the gardens are maintained to a lovely standard by the residents and support is provided by the CIB group.

A walk through Victoria Park and it was evident that this was a loved and well used area of the village. The Methodist Church again were supportive of the CIB group with evidence of year round interest on the appealing to the eye entrance.

The visit to the Nursery on Carr Road was inspiring, with the manager admitting that she was still learning as a gardener, but it was evident that she was well on her way to create a nurturing and very colourful environment for the very young children in her charge.

The rail baskets on the very busy Carr Road all had the jubilee colours leading us to the beautiful Saxon Church with its lovely perennial borders, bird boxes, log piles and fruit trees planted alongside the meandering paths which were cut out through the long grass.

Calverley Gate and Town Wells were also visited with Bat and Bird boxes in place at the latter. A lovely visit.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- In past years it has been noted that a visit has been made to the Allotments, we realise that not all of the village can be visited in the time allowed, but perhaps a brief chat and understanding of any co-ordinated work undertaken would be beneficial for the judges.
- Consideration to undertake a couple of days to work with the local school children. Perhaps Victoria Park could have a specific flower bed 'assigned' to the school, with the help of the CIB group.

## **Rawdon in Bloom**

## **Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

It is evident from meeting the core members of the RIB group that they are very passionate about their village, and their passion and obvious enthusiasm shows in the results that their hard work around the village has produced. It is obvious that the group are constantly working to improve the overall look of the area, and the newly created Layton rockery as you enter from Horsforth into the village is a very pleasant sight. Their ethos of self-sufficiency and recycling are to be commended. With over 85% of the bedding plants seen around the village being grown by RIB members. The recycling of wood from the village, and skills provided from local residents to create signs and planters made an impressive addition to Rawdon.

Trinity Church, the Garden of Remembrance, the lovely Crowtree planters along with the very well kept Victory Garden Allotments were very pleasant stops on our tour. The ninety nine white iceberg roses planted at the Littlemoor memorial stone and gardens was a place of peace and reflection for the local villagers.

A number of the local businesses were seen to be supporting RIB with the very lovely planters outside their properties.

All in all – a lovely village to visit.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Because of the building work being carried out at the local Primary school the judges did not get a chance to see the work carried out at 'The Hive'. It would have been nice to have seen evidence of bird houses, bug hotels possibly being placed in this area.

## **Starbeck in Bloom**

## **Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

The overall impression that the judges took away from Starbeck was one of a community working together and supporting each other. Thank you to everyone who met us along the route to share their special areas with us and to everyone who came to the library to lend their support. A truly impressive turnout. What was also impressive were the efforts to maintain communication with the community throughout Covid and the quiet works of people working as individuals or in small groups to continue looking after sites and to keep the momentum going. The planting showed a good section both of annual planting in the colour schemes to celebrate the Jubilee and in the perennial planting which was appropriate to the various sites and showed the potential for year round interest. Of particular note were the war memorial which had been refurbished during the pandemic with repainted railings, a commemorative bench and beautifully polished memorial plaques, the beck alongside the sheltered housing which gave a good balance of native planting on one side and maintenance of the channel and grass bank on the other and the edible beds at the side of the Methodist Church. In Prospect Park we enjoyed our visit to the Nuttery and the nature corner. The signage in this area was excellent and the wooden carvings added extra interest. We were impressed by the forward planning, involvement of St Johns Badgers, co-opting of dog walkers into litter pickers and that the group had the flexibility and confidence to change plans when the initial plan for a story telling area did not work out. The whole entry is well planned and supported with evident year round activity to sustain the strength of this. Well done!

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Continue to review and revise areas that have not developed as anticipated, this flexibility is a great asset. It would be good to see the proposed revitalisation of the School Gardening Club.
- Complete the redesign and replanting of Pierre's bed.
- Continue to develop ways in which social media can be used to aid communication.

## **Thornton in Bloom**

## **Gold & Category Winner**

### **Overall Impression**

The village of Thornton is located on a south facing valley side on the rural outskirts of Bradford and is steeped in history. Its heritage lies within the weaving industry which is notable by the workers cottages densely packed into the landscape, along with the famous S-shaped Thornton viaduct, which now forms part of the Great Northern Railway Trail.

These themes are reflected throughout the village in the form of landmarks and information boards but are also captured through social media and through the actions of all the groups and individuals involved.

Most notably Thornton is the birthplace of the famous Bronte family including Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne, and this is celebrated by the blue plaque erected on the front of 74 Market Street, as well as the Bronte Bell Chapel Heritage Site which is maintained to an exceptional standard by Steve and his team of volunteers. The entrance is welcoming with a few tastefully chosen flowers.

Moving through the village, the overall impression is 'WOW'. It is noticeable that the densely packed streets have an oasis of well-maintained and well-selected plants ranging from the sustainable planting scheme at South Square Art Gallery to the Methodist Chapel Garden on Market Street.

There are numerous colourful front gardens scattered throughout the whole village, but a special mention must go to Jo and Neil at Havelock Square with their impressive display of annuals and beautifully hand painted pots and containers. These are all lovingly cared for and entered into the front garden competition.

One of the jewels in the crown for the village is the Sapgate Community Garden, which is a great example of a former piece of unkept scrub land which has been transformed into an amazing productive community asset enjoyed by the whole village. The opportunity for schools, young people, and families to get involved in growing and maintaining the garden gives them a sense of pride, but also provides a useful resource to learn, socialise and entertain. It is a haven for wildlife with good fruit and vegetables for community use.

The Garden Path also known as Jenny's Snicket deserves a special mention. The path links Sapgate Community Garden to the westside of the village and is a great example of 'guerrilla' planting which has transformed what was once a neglected area, into a bright inviting border of summer colour which provides a haven for wildlife.

Community involvement is evident throughout the village and the Top Royd Allotments Association is a great example of community self-management. Robin and Linda along with other tenants have created a wonderful opportunity for local people to explore fruit and vegetable growing on the communal starter plots, as well as providing a growing space for established gardeners such as Dee, who has been gardening for over 30 years, and has a wonderful art wall which greets visitors to her plot.

The natural environment features heavily in this entry, with bird boxes, hedgehog highways and bug hotels around every corner. The South Square nature garden and colourful wildflower meadows at Sapgate are great examples of encouraging biodiversity into the urban landscape, and the use of composted waste and mulch helps to preserve the much-needed natural resources that are at risk from climate change.

The In-Bloom group are incredibly active and resourceful, generating community interest and fundraising with a range of activities. Their work extends beyond the array of posts on their social media pages, as volunteering is at the heart of everything the group does. The £20 voucher scheme is an innovative idea to generate new interest from groups wishing to get involved, and the annual plant/vegetable swap along with commercial sponsorship helps to keep the group resilient. Good Information boards including 'the heritage' are well placed throughout the village which is spotlessly clean due to the monthly litter picks. There is a full programme of events throughout the year which includes the popular Open Gardens.

Co-operation is clearly demonstrated by the group working with the council and a wide range of other organisations. Well-done to all the team for their hard work and commitment, and a big thank you from the judges to Bev and Steve for being our guides for the visit.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The judges would like to have met some of the school children and young people that have been involved in Sapgate Gardens and the Rail Trail, but appreciated that due to

the exceptional weather conditions and the school holidays, this was not possible on this occasion. Maybe a consideration for future years?

- The judges noted that there are problems with watering at the Railway Heritage Site on Thornton Road, so going forward, it may be worth considering planting drought tolerant species in areas that are hard to water.

## Category C3b: - Town

### Elloughton Cum Brough

**Gold**

#### Overall Impression

The enthusiastic In Bloom group had planned a well-balanced judging route covering the centres of Elloughton and Brough to meet all the criteria of the judging sheets. We were able to meet a number of the group's members on the tour as well as visit the newest of the 4 schools within the township. The scale of new housing and increases in the local population will cause future challenges for the group.

The range of fund-raising events will offer opportunities to engage with the new residents of the town and hopefully increase In Bloom membership. It was good to see the links with local schools, Wold and Riverbank Society, local businesses and the local councils. The planting and historic theming of the local centres together with the repainting of the two bus shelters in the Jubilee and bee and go green theme gave a strong environmental message.

The wildflower area and giant beehive "kind to bee's" display is one of a number of quality floral features around the town.

#### Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was great to see a number of floral beds around the town and the number of historical themed features. The group have worked hard to update, renew and improve the quality of the displays and have future year plans for an on-going renewal of sustainable planting.
- The work carried out in the woodland and nature reserve by the WARCS has made a significant improvement to the woodland and wildlife habitat of the area. The new meadow extension and re-routing of the path network will help to protect the meadow and wild flowers.
- The refreshing of the bus shelter Murals with a go green, bee and Queens Jubilee themes make a unique feature for the local area and raise the profile of all involved.
- It was good to see examples of innovation and watering on Loxley Way and the replacement of low fencing with perennial planting and low growing shrubs.
- The purchase of Water butts given to local business has helped to ensure displays have been sustained during the very dry warm conditions.
- Improvements to the War Memorial and planters had been carried out and the repainting of the Roman Statue silver set within the shrub planting in front of the shopping centre added to the overall effect.
- There is a need to restore the crossroads historic sign which will further lift the quality of the area.

- The visit to the new Hunsley Primary school on Bluebird Way and the development of the harbour sensory project with the in-Bloom group has progressed well and will provide a great teaching resource for the future.
- The range of fund raising carried out by the group is impressive to fund future projects.

## ShIPLEY in Bloom

## Silver

### Overall Impression

The formation of Shipley Town Council has been notable in having to overcome Covid with only zoom meetings and many interruptions to administrative life causing delays and additional problems. The team has however implemented an extensive program of bloom activities linked to a lot of major developments in the town. An excellent start has been made thanks largely thanks to Jenna and Joe so very well done to them.

Some of the allotments have become very overgrown and a start has been made to bring them back into use. One has been cleared to be used as a community allotment with a new shed built by the "Men's Shed" using re-cycled wood. An existing garden is in the process of being restored to be used by Homeless Outreach Partnership and another existing garden is being restored to allow outdoor use for library users.

Much has been done working with others to improve the look of the town centre. The police station has had hanging baskets sponsored, planters installed that are looked after by Chris. The small colourful garden areas created by Enid and Sid in the town centre area to be commended.

Other areas to note where good developments have been achieved are the Reading Tree with its' recycled wooden circular seat and the Baptist Church Gardens. A considerable number of water collection points were seen and good to hear of the gardening club The Veg on the Edge group have created five areas around Saltaire on former sites of buildings that formed part of the Model Village..

### Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- We are seeking to provide comments that will help build on the foundations you have put in place. If we can be of help do not hesitate to contact us.
- In respect of judging some additional planning may help to present the best and ensure that the three mini elements of the marking sheet are covered. In this case could the nature area have been presented in the form of photographs with the explanation that time would not allow you to take the judges there.
- Make sure that the route covers the best of each element that is marked. This can be difficult as you need also to include all those involved, possibly at the end with photographs of what has been done.
- The extensive bedding areas at Northcliffe Park have not performed too well partly due to the weather conditions. But they are extensive areas and consideration has to be given as to how to improve the impact it would have.
- Some progress has been made in the popular well used central shopping area but as it is due for refurbishment, there is scope for something special as it is completed keeping in mind the environment and the heritage including the 1062 clock tower. Jenna has spent so much time working in the area she is now known as "The in Bloom Lady" (and given lots of chocolate).
- Publicity for the group is good with "In Bloom" signs everywhere. Pavement and kerbside weeds are a problem, whilst some of this may be resolved when areas are repaved it is really an issue for Bradford MBC the impact on the area affects water drainage and gives a picture of being uncared for.
- Please do congratulate the whole team. You are off to a very good start and we are sure working through Bloom will assist and gain support from the wider community.

## Todmorden in Bloom

## Gold & Category Winners

### Overall Impression

On arrival at Todmorden Station the judge was met by some Todmorden in Bloom members and Richard Isaac from Northern Railways, a long row of stunning hanging baskets, a decorated station trolley and some magnificent artwork by students of Calderdale College. In the waiting room was a well laid out photographic display commemorating the Queens Platinum Jubilee. At the entrance parts of the recycled Tatton Park Flower Show bed from 2021 was planted in raised beds, sponsored by Northern Railways making the station entrance one of the best in the area.

The judging group was then taken to town centre and Pat Moss Garden with its newly laid resin paths. The group take a great deal of care with this area but sadly parts of it were badly vandalised. Nevertheless the bloomers pulled out all the stops and replanted the damaged area at the last minute insisting they would not be beaten by vandals.

Center Vale Park was looking magnificent with roses and perennial planting, neatly mown grass and well designed bedding areas. The Lob Mill site was planted with fruit bushes and trees and a specially designed perennial border at the front which along with bulbs flowers for most of the year.

There were many other areas in the area which were very well looked after, planted and watered by local people and companies which when put together with Todmorden in Bloom sites and hanging baskets make the town displays some of the best town displays in Yorkshire..

### Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The parcel collection unit at the entrance of the railway station takes away some of the glory of the plant displays, consideration could be given to re-siting it if possible.
- It would make a huge difference to Center Vale Park if the conservatory could be refurbished and opened as a community hub and growing area.
- Also the once magnificent shelters in the park have lost their attraction and funding should be sourced to repaint and repair them, perhaps not refitting the glass.
- Vandalism seems to be a major problem in the town and park which is a great shame the group are proactive in re-planting gardens and the authorities and neighbours help out. If some of the schools were involved in growing some of the plants in the conservatory they may be put off vandalising them so much.
- All the people taking part in In Bloom work very hard for the town and should be highly commended.

## Category C3c: - Large Town

### Keighley in Bloom

### Silver Gilt

### Overall Impression



Keighley is situated in lovely countryside with some wonderful places to visit in the town, which is enhanced by Keighley in Bloom. There is an excellent Shopping Centre, which not only has good shopping facilities it also provides a great deal of community support, with many events taking place many of which are fund raising. The Dementia Friendly Centre is an excellent example of what can be done to help this group of people. Great steps are continually being taken to reduce the carbon footprint and improve the environment. St Mary's School was a delight to visit. It is fortunate to have such good grounds which are well maintained and productive, producing items used in the school kitchen. Noel works with all the classes in this large school so all children have the opportunity to gain horticultural experience at an early age. East Riddlesden Hall, a National Trust property with good grounds and facilities for children, including the woodland play area. Good to hear future plans for a silent space. The history and the heritage are well illustrated here. The private gardens were good, some with consideration for wildlife. The garden competition and the flower show both demonstrate the interest in horticulture which needs to be commended.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- It was unfortunate that the judging date had to be brought forward and some areas had insufficient time to prepare. It would have been good to be able to meet more of the team. It is always hard to find new volunteers, but we suggest more use of social media, links with community organisations in this multicultural society. Support from businesses and publicity are always beneficial and should be increased. Raising the profile of the group can often be achieved by having a presence at other groups' events.
- The school sunflower competition is a good project which could be extended. Perhaps appoint a link person to work with young people.
- Cliff Castle Park is real asset to the community with the parkland and gardens being maintained to a high standard. The heritage of the area is well illustrated but as the time was too short we were unable us to visit that part of the park.
- The centre with the war memorial is very attractive with well planted gardens and many seats for people to enjoy the area. The small flower beds under the trees are very attractive.
- We are aware that council resources are scarce so the maintenance becomes a problem. As changes occur new links have to be established to ensure the Council provide the best possible service to Keighley to maintain the planted areas and the street cleanliness.

## **Knaresborough in Bloom**

## **Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

The judges were impressed by the enthusiasm of the volunteers and the lovely display boards of photographs showing the work that had been undertaken during the year. Thanks to Community Champions Helen and Michelle who made time to come and share with us the fantastic work they have been doing developing Knaresborough Wellbeing Hubs Community gardening group. We enjoyed the gentle stroll round Knaresborough taking in the variety of planters and hanging baskets. The standard of maintenance of the In Bloom planters was particularly high and we were interested in the comparisons of peat free and peat based compost.

The individual floral displays outside the shops in Green Dragon yard were imaginative and enhanced the unique identity of this small enclave of independent shops. The churchyard of St John the Baptist was another highlight. This had recently won an Eco award for rewilding the area.

The sense of community in Knaresborough is incredibly strong with many different ways

being found to connect local people during the pandemic and to forge links with the new communities created by the many new housing estates surrounding the town.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- There were areas of weeds along the edges of the footpaths in the town centre. It would be good to remove these as they do not enhance the appearance of the area. There are much more appropriate areas in the town for enhancing biodiversity.
- The renaissance windows are a fabulous feature enhancing the local identity of the town. It will be good to see their renovation completed.
- The seating area at the top of Water Bag Bank is a potential area for development with cleaning of the benches and possible inclusion of planters.

Many of the Towns' pubs were undergoing a time of change, with many closing or being refurbished. The pubs have significant impact on the high street and it is important that they are encouraged to support the In Bloom efforts in their new identities..

## **Mirfield in Bloom**

**Gold & Category Winner**

### **Overall Impression**

Mirfield in Bloom is a very impressive operation achieving outstanding results across large parts of the town. There are challenges for example a main road which is used by commercial traffic divides the high street, development at the library garden is on hold pending a building operating starting and the station is to be rebuilt starting later this year. But by connecting with the community great things are being achieved with many groups developing support within their own neighbourhood increasing the overall impact and benefit to the community.

Being awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service clearly illustrates the success of the group.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The proposal to provide information board about the Mott and Bailey castle should be completed.
- Thought could be given to some explanation for the management of St Mary the Virgin extensive church yard and conservation project, this may reduce the fear that some people have about maintenance being abandoned.
- Documenting activity to provide records for the future in terms of plant numbers locations and so on should continue..

## **Pontefract in Bloom**

**Gold**

### **Overall Impression**

Firstly, the judges would like to say a big thank you to Claire and Colin for their tremendous hard work on the day in presenting a well organised, informative presentation of their Town under difficult conditions with the extremely hot weather we had on the day, a big thank you for the great effort.

To all the Friends Groups and Volunteers, we met on the day, your enthusiasm and dedication is a credit to Pontefract, thank you. To Darren and the Rangers from the Council who support the various Friends Groups and Volunteers and recognise how vital these

groups are to our communities and have formed a good working partnership, thank you for your efforts during our visit.

Thank you, Phil from the Civic Society, Joe from Highways, and various local Councillors we met on the day, what came through to the judges was the collective partnerships all working together for the pride they have in their Town, well done.

We started the tour at Aspire at the Park, a new state of the art leisure centre, which opened in Spring 2021 and is now a great asset for the Town and Pontefract Park.

The Friends of Pontefract Park in particular Kay, have formed a good partnership with Aspire with regular litter picking around the complex and Park every Wednesday morning. One note of interest was the litter pickers and bags available in the reception of Aspire for anyone wishing to help, this has potential to expand in organising specific litter picking events throughout the year inviting members of the Leisure Centre and residents or schools to come along and help litter picking raising awareness for Aspire and Pontefract Park.

The Park is extensively open grass, but the group has established two large flower beds and lakeside boat planters, which add an excellent display of colour in the summer along with extensive crocuses and daffodils the group have planted, again adding a colourful Spring display.

Special mention to the two rangers who work in the park who have designed a sustainable herbaceous border, which has excellent plant choice creating a colourful border complimenting the annual bedding displays.

Arriving at Friarwood Valley Gardens, which the Black friars occupied for almost 300 years from 1256 and then created as a public park in 1950, we were greeted by some of the Friends Group, Christine, Liz, Delia and Bob and a visit from the Mayor, which we thank you for your attendance and support for the Friends. As you enter the park you don't get a sense of how large the park is until you start to explore the different areas. Walking up the main path you discover the Cherry Arcade with some species 70 years old, sadly some trees have had to be removed but what is good to see was the Friends Group replanting with new cherries to keep this arcade a prominent feature within the park. With over 31 rose beds, which were cleared and replanted in 2014-15, it is commendable that the maintenance regarding dead heading, a labour-intensive task, the group have produced an excellent display of colour and smell.

What was also in evidence was the rose beds have local sponsors which forges partnerships with the businesses and Friends, well done. Mulching was used by the group in the rose beds to help weed suppressant and moisture retention.

When the Council fell any trees in the park the group have cleverly turned the old trunks into carvings which are placed around the park, one particular striking carving is the Friar, which welcomes you at the entrance.

Evidence of creating a wildlife area just to the side of the entrance with bird boxes, feeders, and piles of branches. Within the Park the group maintain the lavender bed, the memorial bed and have produced an excellent tree trail throughout the park. Good interpretation within the park with events happening throughout the year, one is the Lantern Festival, which the Mayor states is spectacular.

Leaving the Valley Gardens, we walked up to the Town Centre on the way passing both tiered planters and the addition of sustainable planting on the central highways to reduce maintenance and costs, both complement each other well.

In the main town you are greeted with again a mix of sustainable and impressive tiered planters, all in excellent condition with the help from the group and First Impressions. From the hard work by the group in transforming the Town Centre, there has been a good response from the local businesses and local pubs in sponsoring or purchasing their own hanging baskets and planters, which makes for an impressive display as well as forging new partnerships with the Council and Friends Group and from the good work the Civic Society also carries out with the local businesses.

Walking through the town we came across impressive displays at St Giles Church, maintained by the Church Community, two large Jubilee planters outside the museum which

we believe will be planted next year with more sustainable planting and a colourful display by the four planters around the war memorial.

Around Buttercross and the Market place was sustainable planting and tiered planters each complimenting one and other. It would have been nice to have the judging day when the market was on, to see how vibrant the area was.

An excellent Jubilee arch greeted us in front of the Town Hall, representing various groups from around the area which certainly attracts many views and is a welcome attraction to the Town Centre.

Our last attraction on the day was Pontefract Castle, from its construction in 1070 to its demise following the Civil Wars, the once-fearsome fortress of Pontefract Castle dominated Yorkshire and beyond, bearing witness to some of England's most momentous historical events earning itself the name of the Key to the North! Recently the Castle has received grants from English Heritage, local bodies and the National Lottery. The newly renovated visitor centre contains a café, small children's play area and shop plus an activity room. The extensive Herb border on the entrance that contains mixed herbs that can be used for brewing, medicinal and cooking. Also, Liquorice that the town is also famous for will look more spectacular when it is extended with additional seating.

Congratulations on the progress you have all made and the high standards through your hard work you have set.

#### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Benches at St Giles Church need re-staining
- Added grasses to the centre of the planters will create height and compliment the sustainable planting. I believe the group had a problem with cordylines, so grasses may provide an alternative
- Litter picking initiative, with use of the Litter Lotto App could help generate a little excitement and funding.
- We know the group have a problem with geese around the Lakeside boats, is there a potential to raise the height of the boat or move to a different location with an interpretation board explaining the history of the boat and why it is located there or as the group suggested try alternative netting but we feel this detracts from the display.

## **Category C4a: - Small City**

### **Team Harrogate**

### **Gold and Category Winner**

#### **Overall Impression**

Team Harrogate involves too many organisations to list individually, but includes allotments, conservation groups, BID, RHS, Agricultural Society, Churches and Horticap.

This extensive group includes a great number of volunteers carrying out a diverse range of work.

The environmental element is covered by solar panels at Horticap and the show site, a wind turbine and bore hole again at Horticap. Every group considered the reuse of materials, composting and working on the right type of plant for the right place.

In terms of Horticulture one should note that RHS Harlow Carr has around 450,000 visitors and 15,000 children use the Bramall Learning Centre.

The Horticap centre now has the building and facilities it deserves for the work it carries out.

### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The mowing regime on the stray may need to be monitored, the dry weather this year means that the narrow verges have not become overgrown as they might in wetter years.
- Some thought needs to be given to the future of the roses in the library garden as they are getting to be worn out.
- Continue to find ways to strengthen Team Harrogate to ensure this important project continues.

## **Category: - BID /Town or City Centre**

### **Discover Halifax/Halifax BID**

### **Silver Gilt**

#### **Overall Impression**

Halifax is a bustling town and the BID is promoting the area as a “Go To” destination for tourism as well as shopping and leisure. Heritage is very well represented by many beautiful buildings not least, The Piece Hall, Halifax Minster, Borough Market, the Town Hall building and many others. These sit nicely side by side with more modern buildings demonstrating Halifax remembering its past but looking to the future. Flower displays at Woolshops and at the entrance to the Minster, and many tree lined streets, extend a warm floral welcome to residents and visitors alike.

#### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- Clearly Halifax is a vibrant and modern town, forward looking with a bright future but also remembering its heritage. It was good to see how these beautiful old buildings are being cherished and brought into a modern age.
- The dedication and commitment from the BID team was impressive and the recycling initiative at Woolshops was very good.
- Many tree lined streets are a lovely feature. The sedum roof was an interesting and unusual feature, teeming with insect life.
- The Minster grounds are a lovely green oasis. Perhaps this might be an area to consider increasing insect friendly planting which would add to the calming atmosphere. Consideration could be given to increasing perennial planting in the square planters in the shopping centres. Dwarf Phormiums such as Jester, or perhaps, hardy dwarf hebes would be colourful all year round, hardy and low maintenance and could be teamed with seasonal bedding.
- Consider using lavender in planters near seating areas to bring in scent, insects and seasonal colour.
- Consider thinning out the planting below the Woolshops carpark, taking it back a little from the pavement and using a membrane where possible to suppress weeds. Whilst we appreciate that all local authorities have reduced budgets greatly, perhaps some discussion could be held regarding street weeds in some areas of the town.
- We look forward to seeing the redevelopment of Borough Market and are confident that the heritage of this beautiful building is in safe hands.

## Harrogate BiD

## Gold & Category Winners

### Overall Impression

The BiD successfully enhances the floral offering additional planting with 120 extra hanging baskets and around 190 planters. In addition to this the provision of a town centre ranger ensures that many issues can be resolved in a very short space of time.

The provision of murals such as on Cross James St, other sites and empty shop windows ensures that grot spots do not develop.

In terms of promotion the Harrogate Summer of Floral Celebrations builds on the towns numerous floral events, from the planting in town to shows and gardens in Harrogate. A flower themed trail supported by props and QR codes encourages visitors to walk through the town and understand something of the history of the place. This is enhanced by a wonderful film of Harrogate in the 1950`s and a static display supporting links to the floral theme.

### Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The BiD team have to balance between traders' requirements and council provision this is being achieved and should continue.
- Having established the floral theme with partners continue to develop projects and themes around it, through the bloom group things like school painting activity with the winners being displayed in the town centre.
- The planting around the air vents at Victoria centre would benefit from being denser. Some thought could be given on how to explain environmental issues and action being taken to mitigate the impact on the environment.

## Ripon in Bloom

## Silver Gilt

### Overall Impression

A reduced team of Ripon in Bloom is slowly recovering after the upheaval of the last couple of years but always looking to expand and as there are plenty of non-gardening skills needed e.g social media and fundraising so volunteers are welcome of all ages and abilities. The city of Ripon looked welcoming for the judges, colourful baskets, containers, tubs of varying shapes and sizes and planters were numerous. The In Bloom team, clearly very proud and enthusiastic about their town, and deservedly so, showed the judges the many projects and initiatives they are delivering for Ripon together with community support.

RIPON 2022 The team have fostered close links with a variety of businesses, organisations and establishments in the town over a number of years, which has paid off handsomely with some noteworthy displays and good participation levels which support the hanging baskets and planters etc. also a testament to The Walled Garden who provide the plants. Of special note were Moss Arcade displays and Kirkgate Traders Association. There is also a healthy interest in the Love Ripon gardens competition. It was good to hear about the Jubilee tree planted at St Wilfrids School and the children's desire for a bee friendly garden met with immediate support from The Lions. The transformation of Temple Gardens has clearly created an attractive area for people to enjoy this very tranquil space. The Workhouse Museum garden is such a remarkable work and thanks goes for help and advice to Newby Hall. The use of heritage seeds is commendable along with the free workshops and other activities in this garden, a further example of community coming together. We are sure

visiting children and adults alike have the opportunity to enjoy this nature area. The Courthouse Museum gardens and Bedern Bank are undergoing changes to make more sustainable planting schemes as funding is released, and the new static planters by The Cathedral were colourful and more water friendly.

#### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The Maze area on Spa Park may need some re-grassing as does the goal area on the football area but with the dry weather it is understandable that this is not the time to do it.
- Further interpretation boards to explain about how the areas Temple Gardens and Bedern Bank came about and are being restored by volunteers would be of interest.
- Some lampposts in the car parking area near the library need repainting.

## **Category C5: - Coastal Communities**

### **Filey in Bloom**

### **Gold & Category Winner**

#### **Overall Impression**

Very vibrant in Bloom group working within the town in partnership with Filey Lions Keep Filey Tidy Group and The Filey Rotary Club with one key objective to make Filey a great place to visit.

The shopping area was thriving and only noticed one vacant shop during our visit, the traders were all on board with the Filey in Bloom Campaign.

The hot dry weather conditions had made it challenging throughout the year but the bedding displays were in full bloom and North Cliffe Gardens and the Crescent Gardens sustainable planting were spectacular. The introduction of a range of art features around the route linking to the history of Filey added to the overall affect. The new HM Queens Platinum Jubilee Arch rose bed will bring the historic features up to date and it was good to see the group using local Artist and trades as part of the groups plans to enhance the visitor appeal.

Visits to the Filey Dams and Filey Bird and Animal Park demonstrated the Environmental and conservation aspect of the entry .

#### **Judges feedback on areas for consideration**

- The route was well planned and time limited stops resulted in the tour being delivered within the judging time allowed.
- The work achieved at the Shipwreck bed and refurbishment of the Bathing hut bed are what is needed to ensure the standards are maintained.
- It was good to see the plans for the renovation of the model train outside of the railway station and the work that the group had achieved in the raised beds and floral displays around the station welcoming visitors to the resort.
- The support of local businesses and the Town and District councils is an important element of future sustainability it was good to learn of plans for band concerts on Crescent Gardens and the relaunch of Best Kept Gardens Competition which will aid fund raising and the profile of Filey in Bloom.

- A more structured approach on some of the features we visited would have enhanced the marks. The Presentation at the Locomotive bed by Judith Mattrick, Filey Dams Ian Robinson, and Shipwreck bed by A Wilkinson was very good. Someone to lead on Northcliffe Gardens and specific areas of the Crescent Garden features would have helped. It was difficult to determine the role the Friends of Filey Parks had in the Crescent gardens.
- The Filey Bird and Animal Park visit required more focus to maximise the criteria. The site did have a beautiful Garden and wild flowers as well as large pond and information boards. The site owner may need briefing to ensure the tour hits key points in the judging criteria to maximise points.

## Category C8: - Grown Your Community

### Owd Martha's Yard

### Silver Gilt & Category Winner

#### Overall Impression

What a wonderful community garden with so much packed into a relatively small area, including raised beds for vegetables, ornamental beds with both perennials and annuals, children's activity area, a beacon in memory of the First World War, an array of unusual plant containers and much more. The dedicated work of the volunteers has transformed, in a matter of a few years, what was previously an overgrown area behind the Working Men's Club. The garden has clearly been involved with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with flags and brightly coloured 'ribbon hangers', not to mention specially designed features such as the Union Jack flower bed and Buckingham Palace complete with the Queen and her corgis! It is obviously well used and supported by the local community with a variety of events held throughout the year and many donations of plants, seeds, tools and suchlike. Well done to Alison and her volunteers. Keep up the good work!

#### Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The last two years of the pandemic have meant that local schools have been unable to visit. Hopefully as things return to normal, pupils from nearby schools will be able to make use of this wonderful resource.
- You have done well with your fundraising, which can be time-consuming, but keep up the momentum as it will allow you to maintain all areas of the garden and develop new features.
- The seating area adjacent to the house above the vegetable garden seemed a little barren and I'm sure this is an area you have earmarked for further work. Of course, when the sunflowers grow, it will have a colourful backdrop!