

RHS Yorkshire in Bloom

Entry Pack 2023 Category C7 RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood'



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Introduction to RHS Yorkshire in Bloom



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RHS Yorkshire in Bloom is a voluntary regional organisation that administers the RHS Britain in Bloom Campaign in North, South, East and West Yorkshire. RHS Britain in Bloom is the largest horticultural campaign in Europe and each year it grows in size and importance and involves more people, groups and organisations creating lasting improvements to local environments. Villages through to cities in the region are judged in spring or summer.

All other community, business, and educational establishments are judged in the summer.

Why Enter RHS Yorkshire in Bloom

- ❖ To improve the environment
- ❖ To foster civic pride
- ❖ To develop community spirit
- ❖ To improve the visual appearance of the place making it an attractive place to visit, work and live in.
- ❖ To create a good impression to visitors and to attract potential business.
- ❖ To involve local organisations – Local Authorities, schools, voluntary groups.
- ❖ To foster a sense of competitive spirit in order to achieve success

Remember that entering RHS Yorkshire in Bloom should not be seen to be purely for competitive reasons. This is, of course, important but it must also be borne in mind that any improvements made to the visual environment and in the development of community spirit should form the long-term objectives of the entry.

Which categories can we enter?

Entry into the RHS Its Your Neighbourhood category of RHS Yorkshire in Bloom is a free to enter campaign and having sponsorship from the RHS. Entry forms are available online, on the Yorkshire in Bloom website www.yorkshireinbloom.co.uk



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Judging Guidelines for Category C7



RHS It's Your Neighbourhood

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This category is aimed at small, resident led communities just starting out on enhancing their environment using the campaign as a catalyst.



Participants' Guidance Notes

Why should I join It's Your Neighbourhood?

It's Your Neighbourhood is a non-competitive scheme for community groups who want to 'green up' local areas –adding some colour to your community, making new friends and getting active in your local area.

Entry to the campaign is by completion of the Entry form located on the website, Link: <https://www.yorkshireinbloom.co.uk/entry-form>

This is a free to enter campaign, but registration through the entry form is essential.

When are we judged?

Judging takes place over a three week period in **July** each year. The exact dates are available on the website on the yearly Programme Dates page. It is usually the first three weeks of the month.

It's Your Neighbourhood benefits

Registered groups receive:

- An annual visit from an It's Your Neighbourhood assessor, with useful feedback and advice to help grow for maximum impact, for both your community and local environment
- Support from experienced mentors who will provide guidance and advice on how to progress and achieve your ambitions
- Recognition of your hard work with an annual certificate of achievement
- Membership to a nationwide network of groups engaged in community gardening
- Access to networking opportunities in your area
- A free copy of the RHS [community gardening magazine](#), *Grass Roots*, full of inspirational stories and expert advice
- The opportunity to purchase affordable [insurance cover](#), specifically created for community gardening groups
- Free advice from expert RHS horticultural advisors
- Access to a range of seed giveaways

The Judging Process

The Judges receive their judging allocation several weeks before the judging period. **They will contact you** as soon as possible to work out suitable availability dates. We request that Judges are as flexible as possible, and offer their services to suit your entry, noting that sometimes this maybe weekends or evenings.

There will be normally one or two judges who visit and carry out the assessment. The judge's names and contact details will be emailed to the entry around the same time that the judges are allocated. (This is referred to as the judging schedule) Thus it is important that the contact details posted on the entry form are the details needed to contact the right person.



We are very aware that entrants are probably nervous and concerned about the judging process so we do try to allay any possible fears. (Particular first time entries) We are a very social campaign and do our very best to put our entrant at ease.

How are entries assessed?



The suggestions that follow are examples of things that **MAY be present** in an entry – **they are NOT an extensive list of things that have to be done or to be achieved!**

When you form an 'IYN' group and begin work you should set your own goals which should be suited to your local needs - what follows below are ideas to help illustrate activities relevant to each pillar, not rules to be followed nor to-do lists to be ticked off.

When deciding your goals you should consider whether these are realistic and manageable and whether the work is relevant to the core pillars. If you are a newly formed group, your first set of goals may relate to things such as forming a group, deciding on a project, consulting with the wider community and so on. Then as the work of the group progresses so should the goals with the focus being increasingly on getting jobs done that move the project from initial ideas and planning to actual delivery and results. The examples below are just suggestions and assessors will also consider where your group started, the challenges that you faced and how far you have come.



As an IYN group you have access to a variety of resources to support you and we strongly recommend you make use of those resources. Some of those resources are provided by the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and can be accessed on line by visiting:

www.rhs.org.uk/britaininbloom/GardeningInMyCommunity/Gardening_in_my_Community.html.

In addition, you also have access to the RHS's team of gardening experts; simply send an e-mail with your question to advice@rhs.org.uk but please ensure you put **BiBNA** in the subject line as this is a service normally reserved for RHS members. In addition to the support provided through the RHS, there is also your RHS Yorkshire in Bloom groups, of which there may be a Bloom group in your area which could offer you advice and support (If you would like details contact the Co-ordinator).

IYN - is part of the wider RHS Britain in Bloom initiative but it is not competitive; benchmarking levels are used to recognise and applaud the achievements of the participants as well as to provide them with some feedback and guidance for the future. The assessors are there as mentors and friends – not as judges – and you should take advantage of their visit to get constructive feedback. The assessors benchmark your achievements in the areas of the core pillars by considering how much the you have already done and how much more you could do given your unique circumstances.

Assessment



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There is a total number of marks allocated to each section and the sections correspond to the 3 core pillars of RHS It's Your Neighbourhood. There are no sub-sections with allocated scores; the assessor evaluates the section as a whole.

The items listed within each section are simply suggestions of things that you could/should be doing for that core pillar; you do not have to be doing all or even most of them to earn a top mark for the section. The assessor needs to gauge how much has already been done against how much could be done by your group and under the conditions present. The assessor will also consider if, in relation to the core pillar, you seem to be just starting out (Establishing) or if you have achieved something truly outstanding (Outstanding), or if you are somewhere on the spectrum in between (i.e. Improving, Advancing, Thriving).

Levels of achievement – overall marks:

Level	Description	Points
Level 1	Establishing	0-35
Level 2	Improving	36-52
Level 3	Advancing	53-68
Level 4	Thriving	69-85
Level 5	Outstanding	86-100



The Core Pillars

The core pillars of RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' identify its main values and main areas on which groups should focus their efforts and activities. The core pillars are:

Community Participation	(40%)
Environmental Responsibility	(30%)
Gardening Achievement	(30%)

The percentage given after each pillar refers to how much each area accounts for when assessing a group/project's benchmarking level.

Community Participation

40% – 40 out of 100 total marks

Community participation is about working together for the benefit of the local area and it may or may not involve participants in the physical work; community participation can also include fundraising, moral support, provision of facilities and resources, publicising activities and many other activities.



There are no size limits – a group is more than one! Larger groups may sub-divide into smaller groups with particular objectives (i.e. involving children/young people; developing community gardening activities; providing refreshments, making leaflets/posters etc.). A group may not have large numbers of active workers or “official” members but they may be engaging others in their various projects and activities on a casual, drop-

in/drop-out basis. In other words, groups will come in many sizes and have as many different structures; the key is that even if there are only one or two key players driving the project they are already engaging with other members of the community in some way or seeking ways in which to do so in the future.



Examples of community participation are things such as:

- Being inclusive –the group is a part of the community and has an openness which enables any other member of the community to support, contribute to or have say in their work if they wish. A group may have a specific “membership” (i.e. a young person’s group) and still be inclusive.
- Being representative – the people involved with the group’s projects and activities are representative of the diversity of the people in their area.
- Local ownership and direction – the decisions about what needs doing and how things are undertaken are taken by the community and the group at local level.
- Making a difference to local people – it is clear that what is happening has the support of local people and is improving aspects of daily life in that area.
- Partnership working – the group may also be working with any one or more of the following: Area Panels, Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Watch groups, Wildlife Watch groups, police/community support officers, residents’ associations, etc. as relevant.
- Getting support – the group has succeeded in or is working towards getting the support of their local council or councillor and businesses in the community, finding sponsors or sponsorship-in-kind, securing grants or other funding, etc.
- Evidence of planning for the future – the group has shown they are thinking about and planning for ways to maintain the work they have already done and/or make even more improvements.
- Retaining local control – local people are involved with the planning and decision-making.
- Communities in areas where there are issues with anti-social behaviour or similar problems may develop partnerships with local police and community support officers.

In communities where the issues may relate to the lack of routine interaction between people, your group should consider how you can use RHS It’s Your Neighbourhood to create opportunities for interaction and to create a sense of community.

It does not matter what type of community participation takes place – only that it is positive and involves local people in the process of improving their area.

Environmental Responsibility

30% – 30 out of 100 total marks

Environmental responsibility is about care for your local area and where possible minimising adverse impacts on the environment. It may encompass aspects such as cleanliness of the streets and pavements or reducing use of natural resources. It is about the direct effects that people working at local level can achieve, and not about factors such as waste collection by the local authority.



Examples of community participation are things such as:

- Efforts to promote responsible dog-ownership and reduce dog-fouling.
- Efforts to reduce littering, graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping and efforts to clean up areas degraded by such activities.
- Promotion of: use of peat-free compost, composting of green waste in community composting schemes, separation of waste in the local cemetery, minimising water wastage in plant containers, etc.
- Development of community green spaces, including the increased use of the spaces and developing the skills and involvement of users.
- Conservation activities which may include promotion of wildlife through installation of bird boxes, bat boxes, planting of wildlife friendly plants, etc. where relevant/applicable.
- Efforts to encourage a sense of local heritage through education and heritage-related projects/activities (i.e. tree trails, history leaflets, signage/interpretation boards etc.)

Gardening Achievement



30% – 30 out of 100 total marks

The contents of this section will be completely dependent on the nature of your local area and should always be relevant and appropriate to your



needs and to the wishes of the community. At all stages there should be consideration given to good gardening practices that suit local needs. The gardening should enhance the locality for the community and should be within your ability to develop and manage over the medium to long term.

Examples of community participation are things such as:

- Good plant choices for the climate or soil, or which suit the heritage and local environment; balance of shrubs, perennials and annuals
- Appropriate quality of maintenance – good pruning, mulching, lack of weeds, etc.
- Creativity –the planting used for the area shows originality and local flavour.
- Development of community gardening activities – developing areas in partnership with village halls, church groups, allotment societies, residents' associations, etc. and/or undertaking group planting events for window boxes, hanging baskets, bulbs, wildflower areas, etc.
- Taking on the maintenance of neglected areas such as barren verges or waste ground.

The Judging Report



Immediately after your judges have visited, they put together the judge's report using the relevant Judges Report sheet and Matrix as below.

The report will include judges' comments on '**Areas of achievement**' and a section titled '**Areas of development**'.

These are the comments that the judges believe would assist the entry in improving and raising the profile of the business as an entry in the campaign. These are constructive suggestions and subjective to the judge's experience and opinion.

Each of the judging criteria is broken down into its component parts and the scores allocated to each are shown. This is a great indicator as to how the judges believe, you the entry, have attained within that scoring matrix.

A Final score shows the level of achievement medal awarded.

The reports and certification are sent out to all entries following the Award Ceremony in September



RHS It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) Assessment Form 2023



Section A - Community Participation (40% or 40 points)

The group is working towards things such as:

- Being inclusive of local people
- Local ownership and direction
- Making a difference to local people
- Involving local people with planning, decision-making, communication & implementation
- Representative of the local community
- Getting support (e.g. from local council, grant aid, sponsorship, in-kind aid etc.)
- Planning for the future
- Working in partnership with other organisations (i.e. police, community support officers, environmental groups etc.)

Total points assessed for Section A (out of 40)

Section B - Environmental Responsibility (30% or 30 points)

The group is engaged in environmental activities such as:

- Conservation (e.g. resources, heritage, wildlife, built environment)
- Composting
- Recycling
- Creating, maintaining or improving green space
- Sharing knowledge and skills

The group is engaged in addressing environmental issues such as:

- Fly-tipping
- Fly-posting
- Litter
- Graffiti
- Dog fouling

Total points assessed for Section B (out of 30)

Gardening Achievement (30% or 30 points)

The group is employing good gardening practices appropriate to the area, such as:
good plant choice
Good maintenance, presentation and management
Creativity
Innovation
Overcoming site difficulties
Enhancing the area through gardening

Total points assessed for Section C (out of 30)

GRAND TOTAL POINTS ASSESSED

LEVEL ACHIEVED

Areas of achievement:

Areas for development:

Results

Level	Description	Points
Level 1	Establishing	0-35
Level 2	Improving	36-52
Level 3	Advancing	53-68
Level 4	Thriving	69-85
Level 5	Outstanding	86-100

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Support and tools for your community gardening project – Check out these links



Working with volunteers

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/volunteers?type=0&tag=>



Set up a community garden

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/community-garden?type=0&tag=>



Transform a disused space

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/transform-disused-space?type=0&tag=>



Gardening with young people

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/young-people?type=0&tag=>



Run a community event

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/run-an-event?type=0&tag=>



Run a clean up day

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/run-a-clean-up-day?type=0&tag=>



Promoting your group or project

<mailto:https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/promoting-your-group?type=0&tag=>



Fundraising for your community garden

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/fundraising?type=0&tag=>



Make your area wildlife friendly

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/wildlife?type=0&tag=>



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We are Part of RHS Yorkshire in Bloom 2023

