



Judges Notes for summer 2016

Category 1A: Small Village

Esholt

Gold Award

Category Winner

Introduction

Despite it being a rather dank and dull day, we spent an enjoyable afternoon judging Esholt. We are full of admiration for the tenacity and togetherness the villagers have shown in bouncing back so well from the destructive winter flooding. The village judging route was impressively weed and litter free. The group has spent a lot of time planning and working on a very successful route. We hope you continue to maintain the high standards you have set and we are sure you will.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The containers, window boxes and baskets were a delight-providing colour at almost every turn throughout the village. Well done. Main Street was a joy to see without any cars and with a veritable mix of dwarf perennial planting interspersed with summer bedding. The scarecrows added to the mix too! The memorial village well was very well looked after by Jenny and Sam and it was nice to see the memorial "well" itself gleaming. The planting at Esholt Park has begun to mature nicely, adding interest to an otherwise ordinary area.

Areas for Improvement

Could containers with herbs or perennials be located in the village near the Bowling Green or near the footpath in their old recreation field? Consider using the undeveloped garden area at the back of the Post Office for raised beds for growing vegetables or indeed using it as an area to grow your own plants for the village displays. A judge's portfolio would help judges see the future projects the group has in mind and show all year round activities the group does.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

We were impressed with the clever use of a self-sustaining water system at the Post Office. There is good use of bark chippings in the park and near the church. The community composting on the allotment is a good idea and is to be commended. Community compost is also used in some residential gardens. It was pleasing to see the local resident's involvement in painting the telephone box, litter and even grit bin. A good effort by all that compliments the floral displays.

Areas for Improvement

Consider making hedgehog piles and erecting bird or bat boxes in the small graveyard or in and around the bowling green. Continue to develop the exciting new wildlife area near the old recreation ground footpath area. Consider plant plugs or wildflower seed mats for a quicker effect once weeds are under control. We hope the wildlife area near to the cricket ground isn't omitted from the group's attention due to the flooding. We hope that the group continues to input with that area too for future judging routes.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

It was good see the previous judges' comments taken on board and acted upon where possible. Judging day was well advertised with the impressive banner, erected near the Post Office. It was good to see the scheme on the allotment site which is growing vegetables for wider community use.

There is an impressively high percentage of villagers who get involved in some way in the overall In Bloom effort. There is clear evidence of a number of projects in the pipeline, such as the mini wildflower meadow and possibly a mini orchard. Keep up the good work!

Areas for Improvement

Can the group engage with the Brownies to develop a scheme where sunflowers or mini veg is grown next year? The group should check out external funding sources such as "Trees for Cities" and "Awards for All" to implement some of their future schemes. Liaise closely with the pub to offer a suggestion box for villagers and tourists alike to offer suggestions for future projects in the village.

Ledston

Silver Award

Introduction

Once again, the judges enjoyed a visit to this charming little village to the north of Castleford. With its origins linked to that of the nearby Ledston Hall, the village comprises a mix of older and new housing, with a pub (closed at the time of this report) and primary school located within its boundaries. The judges' tour was ably led once again by Martin and Gerald and unlike the wet Spring visit the sun chose to shine brightly!

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

As ever, the residents' gardens were of a high standard, and while varying in style and plantings, they provide an attractive backdrop to the village streets. Some residents also look after features in front of their houses (beds, tubs, troughs etc.), whilst some communal areas (such as Manor Park) have been planted and are now tended by owners of the nearby houses. Grass verges were neat and tidy with mowing being undertaken either by a nearby resident or Ledston in Bloom. Annual plantings at the village entrances provided a colourful welcome. The introduction of small conifers into many of the planters will provide an evergreen framework throughout the year.

Areas for Improvement

Twenty five planters planted substantially with pelargoniums provided bright splashes of colour throughout the village. The judges would encourage the judicious use of more perennials in at least some of these planters to reduce the need for watering and the demands of constant re-planting. In a similar vein, perhaps consideration could be given to removing the planters underneath the trees on Hall Lane and planting the likes of Hellebores and Cranesbills directly into the grass verges.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The new seating in the wooded area at the northern entrance provided a peaceful and shady spot for a rest and the decision to paint this and other 'street furniture' in a pale green provided a tasteful and co-ordinated theme through the village. The area adjacent to the telephone box has in the past been improved with a gravelled area and since the Spring judging, Ledston in Bloom have been successful in achieving the move of the in-wall post box to a location adjacent to the pathway, making it more accessible for those with mobility issues.

Areas for Improvement

It would be nice to see some recognition of the heritage of this old village either through interpretation or 'art in the landscape'. While some sustainable practices are in operation (composting, use of water from the stream), it would be good to see these extended. In addition to the comments on perennial plantings above, it might for instance, be possible to consider the use of water butts where practical.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The local primary school had been involved in a poster competition to 'advertise' the Yorkshire in Bloom judging and to remind residents of the tasks to be carried out in advance of the date. Posters were in evidence in many of the houses along the route of the tour. Following comment in the Spring judging, the noticeboard had received a new coat of paint matching that of the street furniture (see above). Residents take part in litter picks twice a year.

Areas for Improvement

The judges heard that Martin will shortly be leaving Ledston to move elsewhere and we thank him for his in Bloom work and wish him all the best in his new home. This now leaves Gerald as the only remaining member, therefore it is to be hoped that one or more residents will 'step into the breach' to help Gerald with the great work he does. Although out with the control of Ledston in Bloom, it was sad to see that yet again the local pub had closed down. It is hoped that not only will new owners be found soon, but that they make a success of the business and contribute to village life and its ethos of a pleasant and attractive environment. It would be good to see the local primary school involved in some gardening, either on-site or within the village. Three planters which have been bought for the school (but yet to be installed) should help with this aim.

Welwick & Weeton Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

On a lovely summer morning the judges were welcomed to the small villages of Welwick & Weeton. Lots of standout features are located through the villages giving an identity and welcoming feel to visitors. Of special note was the community gardening project which reaches out beyond the community to provide an educational resource for youngsters and their families. A small but dedicated group, Welwick & Weeton in Bloom have the commitment and enthusiasm to carry on the good work already being done and ultimately take the entry to the next level.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The use of wildflowers in difficult locations around the village has worked exceptionally well bringing vibrancy and colour to the villages. Thought had obviously gone into the selection of plants for the 'Kelk' and 'Blacksmiths' beds. The 'buy in' by residents and the few local business premises to the bloom entry was evident with good troughs and hanging baskets throughout the village. The use of the antique farm machinery at Weeton gives the village identity and is certainly a 'head turner'! The community gardening initiative is a simple project made possible by two committed and inspirational individuals who choose to share their garden and time on Saturday's with wider members of the younger community growing vegetables, bog garden plants and other interactive activities.

Areas for Improvement

The planting of summer annuals around the entrance signs to the village would be beneficial to add impact and colour, whilst the planting was well established with various perennials the need for more colour was evident given the importance of these gateways. Again consider the use of summer annuals to compliment the antique farm machinery at Weeton which will give a longer flowering period. Consider the use of taller perennials or shrubs in the centre of the 'tracked' planter at Weeton to compliment the Lavender. There is scope to add maybe a couple more flower beds across from the Blacksmiths bed, this will complement the existing bed and provide more colour in this prominent

position. Further beds could also be considered with permission from East Riding Council on the large verge / grassed area in front of the 'Kelk' houses.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The use of wildflowers especially on the roadside help to keep the 'Rural' feel to the village. The village was litter free and it was clear that residents took great pride in keeping it this way. The use of the old red telephone box as a book exchange is a great idea and adds interest to the village. Good communication with East Riding Council was evident with regard to highway maintenance.

Areas for Improvement

The notice board across from the village hall is looking tired and detracts from the flower bed, maybe gaining permission from the parish council to refurbish / replace it could be an option

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The community growing project is a great educational resource that will continue to grow and attract young families, a truly great initiative! The E'on grant has been well spent on essential items as well as plants and will help the group take the next steps with regard to improvements. Given the size of the village the range of events and fundraising initiatives taking place is to be commended.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to look for additional funding / grants especially with the community gardening project.

Category 1B: Village

Grassington

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

It was a pleasure to return to Grassington for summer judging. Once again the High Street looked resplendent with colour and horticultural interest at every turn. A strength of Grassington is the way small businesses and residents pull together and take pride in many aspects of their village. There are a good number of pleasing residential gardens and it was good to see the well-used allotment site. The village was litter-free throughout.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

High Street was full of colour and is a fine example of what can be achieved. The retail environment was greatly enhanced by the wonderful array of window boxes containing a mix of perennials, summer bedding and even a few herbs. The "Woggins" path was a delight and credit is due to Rory and Eric who help to maintain this hidden gem. There were some well-kept perennial beds near the Police Station and near the Royal Mail sorting office. Well done.

Areas for Improvement

Consider the inclusion of more low growing evergreen perennials such as Hebe and Lavender in pockets of the square and indeed the village entrance stone bed. Could the lovely perennial bed at the Royal Mail depot be complimented by several hanging baskets on the wall? Consider positioning some free standing tubs with sustainable planting to be positioned on the grass verge on Hebden Road to add colour once the spring showing of daffodils has finished.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

It was good to see the newly sculptured sheep bench which will be a real asset to the village in a highly prominent location. There is visual evidence throughout the route of the heritage of Grassington and the village stone further compliments that. There was no evidence of litter or indeed dog fouling on the route. This is particularly impressive coming so soon after the festival.

Areas for Improvement

We acknowledge that some containers have been treated with linseed oil. However the trough opposite Royal Mail would benefit from a repaint in blue. The elevated barrel display would also benefit from a dark brown staining to further enhance their positive effect. Are there any community composting or recycling schemes in the village or the immediate area nearby for the judges to see? Alternatively the Parish Council or District Council would be in an ideal position to encourage further composting.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

It is good to hear the local garden competition is thriving and thus helping further the bloom initiative. It was good to see the bloom group widely advertised on retail premises and indeed to see your impressively large outdoor in Bloom banner prominently displayed. We liked the concept of the group putting the judges' comments in the Notice Board. This allows villagers and tourists alike to read about in bloom and further establish awareness. Well done on the number of fundraising initiatives the group holds throughout the year, showing what a resourceful group you are.

Areas for Improvement

It will be good to further establish links with the school and implement your plans to engage with them and nurture the next generation of bloomers. It would be nice to meet more members of the Grassington in Bloom group at the end. To aid fundraising consider approaching the main hostelrys in the village to place donation tins on their premises for extra funds to help the group.

Kirkby Malzeard

Gold Award

Category Winner

Introduction

Kirkby Malzeard is a very old village with history in abundance, a very long street-style village with well-kept grass verges throughout. The judging was on a very pleasant sunny afternoon and had many highlights including the ancient church and an amazing school visit. The group was very welcoming and it was a pleasure to revisit the gardens seen in the spring and now in their summer glory.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

In such a long village it is difficult to create impact but all the planters were well cared for and a colourful and the improvements to West End barrels was very good. Good to see all small businesses and shops with hanging baskets and planters to brighten Main Street and the Queens Arms had a lovely display. Lots of good private gardens with good planters at Methodist Church and on outsides of all houses on the Main Street despite the size restrictions. Church grounds were well cared for with good use of Jacob sheep. Maintenance of both the school playing field and village playing fields along with the Bowling Green is to be commended. It was interesting to see 'Mud quoits'. Perennial borders at bowling club were well maintained. Kirkby Malzeard in Bloom is to be commended for trying to reduce the impact of empty premises

Areas for Improvement

Continue to expand on the Village Herb scheme. Some advice on the pruning of the roses in Jubilee Garden may be beneficial for next year's display

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The school was outstanding using all its resources of sections, woodland ,grounds etc. to teach children and engage them in caring for different natural habitats and learning how to conserve natural resources. The Green Man project throughout all the school years brings heritage and history into practise. Much evidence of composting at school, pinfold allotment and churchyard. Awareness of local Heritage will be enhanced by the proposed new information board - it was good to see it on display. Care and repair of verge planters and barrels is ongoing and commendable. Churchyard, Pinfold and butterfly verge all benefit insects, bees and butterflies. A litter free village

Areas for Improvement

Continue to support the school and possibly help with a butterfly/insect/bug survey the school have so much to show there it could be visited by judges in Spring and Summer. A village handyman will be great help - maybe the judges could meet him next year? Could the ancient cross be used as part of a floral feature? A visit to other Yorkshire in Bloom entries who have 'Art in the Landscape' could inspire some future plans?

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The delivered leaflets to all the village appear to be raising the profile, this awareness will bring benefits to the group in the future. Using the Mechanics Institute window for future displays will further expand this. The links with the Playing Fields Group, the Village Show Group and the History Group will also help and thus keep Kirkby Malzeard in Bloom sustainable for the future. Well done for helping and supporting the school gardening club. Each child at this school is ensured a knowledge of the environment and horticulture and are developing skills of communication and leadership. A captivating inspiring visit - thank you especially to Mr Houghton, Emily and Joe.

Areas for Improvement

Good to see a display at lunch and to discuss new initiatives such as bird box day. It makes good use of your judging time. Try to expand this display. Please continue to develop and with new ideas and the hard work of all the group this will help to maintain your excellent entry.

Spofforth Gold Award

Introduction

Spofforth is a small village situated between Harrogate and Wetherby. Its origins pre-date the Domesday book of 1086, and Spofforth Castle (a fortified manor house) was built in the early 14th century by Henry De Percy. Along with the surrounding estates, it belonged to the Percy family (Dukes of Northumberland) off and on until the English Civil War of 1642-6 when it was reduced to ruins. The castle now belongs to English Heritage and is a tourist attraction.

Spofforth in Bloom was first formed in 1985 and has gone from strength to strength with Gold Awards in both Yorkshire in Bloom and Britain in Bloom. The judges enjoyed a fascinating tour of the village led by John, Lynda and Lynn and enjoyed an outdoors lunch in the Millennium Garden where they had the opportunity to meet other members of the group.

SECTION A – Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement:

The colour scheme of 'Indian Summer' with flowers of oranges, yellows, deep purples and reds provided a wonderful display in the many baskets, planters and beds throughout the village and in particular around the village hall. Bedding plants are sourced from local nurseries. An interesting reflection of the theme of the 'Magna Carta' (reputedly drawn up in Spofforth 800 years ago) were the 'crenellated' box beds on the main road.

The newly developed Memorial Garden adjacent to the Church has transformed an otherwise somewhat unattractive spot into a peaceful, shady corner with seating for those who might wish to sit and contemplate or just enjoy a quiet outdoor spot. The red, white and blue colours of the plantings in the corner bed were appropriately chosen.

In the adjacent churchyard it was good to hear about the involvement of the local school gardening club in enhancing the entrance pathway by planting brightly coloured begonias and other annuals. The Millennium Garden with its very different style of planting (grasses, lavender and other plants tolerating dry conditions) had a more modern feel yet was sympathetic to its surroundings. With its easily accessible paths, seating and 'interactive' sundial, this compact area had something for young, old and those in-between! A high standard of care was noted across all green spaces in the village and also in residents' gardens.

Areas for Improvement:

Continuing the process of moving to a higher proportion of perennial plantings in at least some of the planters/beds will reduce the need for bedding plants and could contribute to lessening the need for watering/maintenance. Judicious choice of plants could provide colour and/or structure throughout the year.

The memorial garden has gravelled surrounds. The addition of some flagstones creating a 'path' to the seating might assist those who are perhaps unsteady on their feet to access this area more easily. At the time of visiting the Castle Pub, which in the past has always mounted attractive displays, was closed. It is hoped that the new owners will carry on this tradition and support Spofforth in Bloom.

SECTION B – Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement:

The group have embedded many sustainable practices in their work, including the use of peat-free compost, mulching, water retaining gels in containers, and moving to more perennial plantings. Waste plant material at the end of the growing season is ploughed into a local field.

Ginny Greenholes is a fantastic environmental play area. Created from what was originally the village tip, this area is in essence a mini nature reserve with mown paths through the meadow grass and 'caterpillar beds', and trees where the children can play and make dens. The diversity of plant life in itself (62 wildflower species noted in June 2016) provides an array of food and shelter for insects and birds. This is further enhanced with bird boxes, bat boxes, log piles and a very grand bug hotel! Interpretation boards throughout the site, many at a low level suitable for children, provide information on what may be seen in this area. Additionally, a more open area of the garden includes robust play equipment, picnic benches, and bicycle stands. Last, but certainly not least, are a selection of wood sculptures (badger, squirrel, owl) created from fallen tree trunks.

The heritage of the village relating to both its 'castle' and comparatively more recent railway history is recognised in interpretation boards at relevant locations in the village. Additionally, a Heritage Quiz Trail takes the visitor around the village in search of clues which reveal the historical past of the area.

Areas for Improvement:

The group might like to look at potential opportunities for water collection where practicable. The castle has extensive grounds which substantially belong to the village. It might be possible to develop some 'pocket' wildlife areas close to the perimeter including perhaps a wetland area by the stream?

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement:

Spofforth in Bloom is a well-established group with a good track record of undertaking a variety of projects within the village. In support of their activities they successfully raise money through sponsorship, grants, and merchandising products. They organise an annual Festival of Events which not only raise funds, but are clearly part and parcel of the social life of the community. Such events vary from quiz and musical evenings to annual Strawberry Teas and Open Gardens. They communicate with village members and beyond through a website and social media, the local newspaper and local radio for fundraising events. Additionally, they produce a regular newsletter distributed throughout the village and have a monthly column in the Parish Magazine. They support the local primary school in gardening, with a volunteer who runs the weekly gardening club. The judges were delighted to meet with three of the pupils and be taken on a tour where they were able to show us the work they had done to enhance the school grounds.

Areas for Improvement:

It was very pleasing to see the practical support for gardening in school. A number of organisations have websites and schemes which support this and can provide very useful guidance and resources. These include the RHS Campaign for School Gardening (<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/home>), Garden Organic Schools programme (<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools>) and the Woodland Trust's Nature Detectives (<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/schools-and-groups/>).

Introduction

It was a pleasure to return to lovely Upper Hopton on a pleasant summer day. A pleasure too to meet such a dedicated group of people working to benefit their community. The efforts of the group have created a lovely floral environment for local people. It was good too to see how the people of Upper Hopton support the Bloom group and their efforts. We were pleased to hear that new members have recently been recruited and have confidence that the group will continue its good work far into the future.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement**Areas of Achievement**

The planters around the village were full of colour. The circles of planting on the slope by the car park of Croft House really enhanced the car park area. The rose garden area with the newly planted circular beds were full of colour. The telephone box feature was very innovative and an exciting addition to the village. The newly planted beds and rockeries at the club were a tremendous improvement. Throughout the village the quality of the planting was high. There are many lovely residential gardens in the village and it is good to see the support for the Bloom group. All the planting was in very good condition and we were impressed by the way cuttings had been taken to increase plant numbers.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps dwarf conifers at intervals along the church path might provide structure year round and emphasise the route to the church. Consider if there are areas in the churchyard which could provide nectar sources over a long period of the year, consider placing these near the wildlife areas of the churchyard. Perhaps it might be possible to bring spring colour to the Recreation Ground by planting some flowering cherries there. Planting around the car park has really added to the area, continue building this up.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility**Areas of Achievement**

The beautiful stonework being carried out around the village is very impressive. We could see the cobbles at the entrance to the recreation ground are beautifully done. The phone box with its changing display is a unique focal point for the village. Clearly cleanliness of the village with no dog fouling, litter or graffiti is a credit to the group. The composting arrangements of the group are tremendously well organised and well used. Many examples of recycling were obvious around the area. We were pleased to see self-watering planters in use. The upcoming heritage at the local club will be an interesting event.

Areas for Improvement

Continue adding fresh nectar sources to the wildlife area, aiming to get a supply of nectar through most of the year. *Rosa rugosa* and witch hazel might be useful additions. Perhaps it might be

possible to add native berry shrubs, such as guelder rose around the wildlife area to bring more birds into the site.
Consider siting information boards near the sign at the village entrance giving the history of the tenter posts.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The new information boards at the entrance to the village are going to be really useful. We were pleased to hear of the monthly workshops with the preschool group. Encouraging a new generation of gardeners. We were pleased to hear of the support given by the Bloom group to other groups and Macmillan cancer support. The Garden Trail is a wonderful event as is the village fete. Both these things will really raise the profile of the group.

Areas for Improvement

Consider launching a competition for the best young gardener in the village. Think about staging events to celebrate the orchard, join in on the national Apple Day celebrations, in winter wassail the trees. Perhaps a photography competition could be launched for the village celebrating the work of the Bloom Group.

Category 1C: Large Village

Boroughbridge

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The Yorkshire in Bloom competition is as much about the community involvement, the environment and sustainability as it is about horticulture and bloom. For this reason it was a delight to revisit Boroughbridge and meet with the enthusiastic schoolchildren of both schools to allotment holders, business owners and the wide range of others who support and benefit from the groups work. The centre was looking colourful with baskets and floral displays and advances are being made in a number of areas. The secret gardens event on 14th August is an exciting project and will involve much of the community. An impressive start for this new group.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

It was brilliant to meet the enthusiastic young people involved with local school gardening clubs at both schools and to see the results of their work. Thank you to the adults who give their time to support and encourage. Local businesses are supporting "In Bloom" with sponsorship and with floral displays on their premises, particularly noticeable were the Post Office, Crown Hotel and the flower shop. Additionally there were a number of hanging baskets sourced by the bloom group and colourful planters around the town giving displays throughout for all to enjoy. A high standard of care was noted across all green spaces in the town and also in residents' gardens and further improvements at the rose bed and Chatsworth Grove.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps in winter the young people could organise a tree survey considering age and condition of trees and look for opportunities for planting new ones. Consider areas where a pick your own bed could be developed. Would the Methodist Church consider some work on their front garden or the possibility of a community garden where non-members could help?

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The allotment site was well tended and clearly thriving with a keen eye on conservation and wildlife protection and habitats. The diversity of plant life in itself provides an array of food and shelter for insects and birds. The new composting area at Chatsworth Grove was a welcome addition and sourced from recycled materials. There is a good amount of local pride and heritage awareness with opportunities for more.

Areas for Improvement

Look for opportunities to further enhance with bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels possibly involving other youth groups in preparation of these or suggesting possible sites. Interpretation boards for both

local heritage and wildlife could be considered as funding is available or as sponsorship items. By placing boards at a low level suitable for children, these could provide information on what may be seen in the area. Look for opportunities for rain water collection.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

How exciting to see the involvement and diversity of people getting involved with this new group. So much has already been achieved and now with the two schools involved and the forthcoming Secret Gardens event on August 14th there is opportunity for more. Good work has been done in raising funding and "in kind" assistance all of which is invaluable. Where the group has made impact it is encouraging to hear that local homeowners are supportive and being helpful.

Areas for Improvement

There is further opportunity to involve younger age groups with developing Twitter or Facebook sites to inform about new developments or seek feedback. At the Secret Gardens event do not miss an opportunity to tell people about "In Bloom" and the need for a diversity of volunteers who could perhaps just care for a planter or area near their own home whilst others may offer help with fund raising, publicity, technology etc. It was very pleasing to see the practical support for gardening in school. A number of organisations have websites and schemes which support this and can provide very useful guidance and resources. These include the RHS Campaign for School Gardening (<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/home>), Garden Organic Schools programme (<https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/schools>) and the Woodland Trust's Nature Detectives (<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/schools-and-groups/>).

Bramham Gold Award

Introduction

The magnificent Anglo-Saxon All Saints Church is the focal point to this very charming rural village, where it was clear to the judges that almost all the community is tied in to the 'In Bloom' effort.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The planting at Carr Beck was stunning and a perfect foil for this historical feature. The nearby Senior Citizens' Centre was also a fabulous place to see, with a very high standard of planting and maintenance. The grounds of the All Saints Church were of a remarkably high standard considering it is the work of almost one person!

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps consider introducing more sustainable planting in the more difficult to maintain beds.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The village was free of litter, graffiti and detritus of any kind - it was a joy to walk through! All signage and sponsors' plaques were in tip top condition.

Areas for Improvement

If possible, try to remove some of the Himalayan Balsam growing along the beck, where it is safe to do so. It is an invasive species which will spread to the detriment of native plants if not controlled. Consider treating the tall wooden sign at Bowcliffe with wood treatment.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group have secured a comprehensive list of sponsors. It was great to read about and hear the group donating the surplus produce to St George's Crypt for those in need. The group have produced some first-rate publicity material. It was good to see the group not taking too much on and the planned rockery on Lyndon Road is much-anticipated.

Areas for Improvement

For the bloom group to continue as they are and to continue to secure ongoing support in the village. The work they are involved with is much appreciated by residents

Burncross Gold Award

Introduction

It was a pleasure to visit such a committed and enthusiastic Bloom group. We were impressed with the way their activities benefit the community and with the amount of support they receive. Upon arrival, we were greeted with strategically placed scarecrows along the main road in to the village - a nice touch and fine example of engagement with the local school. The weather was very kind (and rather unseasonal!) for a change for our summer visit. Differing from the group's spring effort, this entry took in the local Foxfield's Spring Wood in all its glory, whilst the sunshine helped show off many of the group's beds and planters.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

We were impressive by the quality of planting throughout the village. The combination of sustainable planting and bedding is working very well. The various planters around the village really had impact and were full of colour. All through the village we saw many residential gardens which were really varied but all a real credit to their owners. The proposed improvements to McKenzie Park will make a big difference. The beds and grass at the entrance area at Bracken Hill looked superb, with the

summer bedding perfectly complementing the perennials - a real credit to the volunteers involved here. The tubs and history boards in the Milton Road area were planted and maintained to a very high standard.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps consider planting just one or two blossom bearing trees - something not too large, like flowering cherry, at the Foxfield's Spring Wood side of McKenzie Park. It would be interesting to see if the ongoing improvements of the local Costcutter can be integrated into the In Bloom effort. Encourage the pubs in the village to make their floral displays part of the Bloom initiative. Try to find a spot or spots where scented planting can be introduced, perhaps flowering herbs that can bring the movement and colour of butterflies into the area.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The work done in maintaining Foxfield's Spring Wood was particularly noteworthy, as is the work done in conjunction with the school. The bat boxes and planned interpretation board should enhance the site further and it may encourage further community involvement. The nature area is developing well and although small there are a pleasing range of wildlife friendly plants there. The new project concerning the council depot is very exciting and it will be interesting to see how this develops. Things like the new fencing by the Acorn Pub, although seemingly superficial, can make a big difference to 'street pride'. The lack of litter and graffiti made for a very pleasant visit. Planters and other street furniture in the village were well looked after.

Areas for Improvement

It was promising to hear about the potential partnership work at the old depot site, and the judges were as enthusiastic about it as the group. This area has recognisably been a bit of a contentious one, so it will be interesting to see what develops. Perhaps consider a small wildflower area in McKenzie Park. A spring visit to Foxfield's Spring Wood would showcase the bluebell display here. Continue to gradually extend the wildlife area, little by little, year by year. Consider planting more buddleias around the wildlife area to bring insect life in. The suggestion of arranging for a new dog litter bin by the woods is a good one. We were excited to hear of the plans for various interpretation boards in the wood. We were impressed by the wide ranging wildlife surveys on the wood.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group do not over-reach themselves and have got a very well balanced In Bloom initiative. The upcoming project in McKenzie Park sounds exciting, and would be an excellent, but manageable addition, to their portfolio. Obviously the group are involving themselves in the life of the community in many ways, which is good to see. The group is enthusiastic and active and we are sure it will continue far into the future.

Areas for Improvement

Continue working to make the community aware of all you do. Consider using an A board when working to inform passers-by. Perhaps it might contain an invitation to join the group. Produce membership forms which can be put out at all the village events to encourage people to get involved. Continue to involve local young people in your work. When the depot project is more settled give local people an opportunity to discuss and comment on it to help it become part of the community.

Great & Little Preston Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Next door to the much larger Allerton Bywater, the In Bloom effort here is led by a small but very dedicated group of volunteers. Always seeking assistance, they are nevertheless responsible for an excellent community effort.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The Glencoe Gardens looked particularly attractive and were a credit to the residents who maintain them. Preston Corner continues to be an attractive focal point for the village, and the solar powered light is an excellent way to help display the work that has been done here. The work on the Whitehouse Lane hedge is also particularly commendable.

Areas for Improvement

If possible, consider the removal of weeds from the gravel car park by the Mission Hall, plus an additional weed of the Memorial Gardens.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The group have done really well to accommodate the management of both the wildflower meadow and Meadow Wood, which we are sure will continue to flourish and become wonderful community assets. The group's publicity drive and community litter picks have paid dividends as the village was very clean, and on the whole, very well maintained.

Areas for Improvement

Some of the wooden planters were starting to look a little tired. If possible consider giving them a new coat of wood treatment. It would be worth investigating to see if there's potential to involve a charcoal specialist who may be interested in working in Meadow Wood. If the landowner is agreeable, it may allow for some much needed thinning at minimal cost.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

There is good engagement with the local school, as demonstrated by the work in Jubilee Gardens and Meadow Wood. The calendar produced by the group is an excellent way to raise funds and publicity.

Areas for Improvement

To continue working on projects throughout Great and Little Preston and bring together as a whole. The War Memorial opposite the church hall was not mentioned and would be worth incorporating along route.

Harthill with Woodall

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

After a warm welcome and very useful history brief by the group, including a look at their remarkable back catalogue of well dressing, the route of the village's summer entry differed from spring, with visits scheduled to the Jubilee Wildflower Meadow and the Community Centre. Highlights of the tour were a visit to the Jubilee Meadow to see a good display of wildflowers and the impressive floral displays along Union Street.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The 'Well Garden' on Doctor Lane continues to be a delight and complements the well superbly, which itself is a very popular historical feature integral to the identity of the village. It was good to see the Firvale bus terminus bed improved from the spring visit with sustainable planting, the addition of a bark mulch would further enhance the bed. The standard of maintenance throughout the village was good especially the sites where Graham was involved with, his undoubted horticultural knowledge and enthusiasm should be utilised further if possible.

Areas for Improvement

To help raise the overall standard of the entry, possibly consider an extra strimming around trees and signs on routes accessing / egressing the village. Removing epicormic growth at the base of trees would also improve these entry/exit points. Any self-setts by lampposts or street furniture should also be removed wherever possible. There is scope for slightly enlarging the village entrance stone beds with bolder planting to create a 'statement' when entering the village.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The 'Welcome' sign on Winny Hill was both very neat and original. The Jubilee Wildflower Meadow was very impressive and it was a pleasure to see such a good selection of wild plants in flower, and

the accompanying insect life. The introduction of a 'bug hotel' and rain water recycling was good to see following the judges' comments in spring. The allotments on Thorpe Road were generally well maintained with only a couple of vacant plots. Evidence of green waste and rain water recycling was clearly visible within the allotments.

Areas for Improvement

It would be very beneficial to the wildflower meadow if at least a small area could be mown and the cuttings collected and recycled. Perhaps community payback could be appointed to do this in September. It would be good to compare this then to the rest of the meadow in subsequent seasons. Alternatively a different area could be cut and collected each year. Local farmers could be persuaded to do the job for the price of free hay or just a small fee? A plant study could be undertaken on the meadow to determine species and if more diversification is required. Also consider the planting of a few more trees when funds allow to complement and add to existing trees. With future entries it would be good to see the reservoirs included within the itinerary, there are obvious environmental and biodiversity benefits attached to these important water bodies.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

There has been excellent work done at the school and it was pleasing to see the enthusiasm of the children for all things horticulture! The programme of activities at the Peregrin Centre were very comprehensive and the judges were very impressed with the opportunities available for the elderly community, this is clearly a much valued community asset. The chief organiser Ida Atkin performs a marvellous service organising day trips, raffles, bingo and a host of other community based activities.

Areas for Improvement

It would be good to get the 'Bee Hive' public house involved with future entries, the establishment being situated on the main road through the village. There are still a couple of local businesses who have not bought into the 'in bloom' bid and these should be encouraged /persuaded to participate in future entries.

Hutton Cranswick Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Hutton Cranswick in Bloom said they couldn't promise a lovely summer afternoon but could offer a warm welcome and an interesting tour. Well on this judging day they showed both, which certainly lived up to our expectations with an excellent and interesting tour around this lovely East Yorkshire village. Originally classed as two villages these now seamlessly blend into one well presented, and cared for with evident pride to such a high standard by the residents and village in bloom volunteers. Even Crawford the Cranswick crane came out to greet the judges.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

What any visitor to Hutton Cranswick cannot fail to miss is the high standard of residential settings. The grass verges, individual gardens, roadsides and many interesting flower beds and planters around the village collectively demonstrate the high level of commitment to the campaign the residents and volunteers have. All open spaces, and quality of grass cutting was maintained to such a high standard, with great support from local business and various village projects all encompass to give the village an excellent year round horticultural experience.

Areas for Improvement

Some excellent planting schemes in interesting places around the village. However consider grouping some of the smaller barrels & planters' together, particular those shown on the residential areas of the tour. This will help to achieve greater impact at specific vistas.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

There are many areas of the tour that the judges found to be of an exceptionally high standard. The work in Centenary Wood by Avis and Sonia with their conservation and development of the natural wood habitat (including seeing Avis's wildlife and butterfly garden). The standard of environmental cleanliness and street furniture together with the links to local heritage are a delight. The splendid work done by Pat and Pamela with the War Memorial, and the permeable pathways around it are in keeping with the setting. The work and partnership building achieved at the railway station with its inventive train display.

Areas for Improvement

The group have already identified that an information board would be suited at the railway station. This will enhance the entry and act as a sense of place and be in an ideal situation to inform many residents and visitors to the village. The village pond is a great asset, with its resident wildlife. Care must be taken not to allow the bulrushes to become too invasive and block out the vista from the seating area, and 'choke' much of the lovely flora that is there.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The impact and support of individuals and the many groups from within the village is self-evident. All areas of the village benefit from this well networked and interactive community. So many individuals working for the benefit of all is an asset for this village. The Village in Bloom gardens competition, use of local media and work carried out with the schools is a credit to those involved.

Areas for Improvement

Like all established groups it is often difficult to recruit new members. Continue with your use of media to encourage other volunteers to come forward. Continue to work with the Playschool and Primary School to help foster ownership and encouragement of parents to be part of and assist in sustaining this successful in bloom group.

Nafferton Silver Award

Introduction

Nafferton is an East Yorkshire village with a good focal area consisting of the Jubilee Garden, the Mere and the War Memorial. There is a good "In Bloom" team whose efforts are enhanced by many other organisations. As this is the first time entering the competition for a year or two and with new personnel the entry was well put together and a good basis for working on in the future and has the potential for doing very well. Well done and keep going.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement Areas of Achievement

There were some good residential gardens. The many areas of grass were all maintained to a very high standard. The war memorial, bus shelter, and 'bomb' site were well maintained, as was the Jubilee Garden. Permanent planting was well used creating colour and reducing the need for expensive bedding plants.

Areas for Improvement

The church yard needs attention. When considering future planting look to create impact, especially in the feature beds.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility Areas of Achievement

The brick planters and other use of bricks were good in demonstrating the history of the village. The sheep dip at Spittal Beck was an interesting feature with a good information board. The area was clean and tidy with no evidence of litter, dog fouling etc. The fortnightly litter picks obviously work well. All the self-watering planters and hanging baskets are a real asset.

Areas for Improvement

The heritage style litter bins were well maintained but quite a lot of the seating needed attention. There was little evidence of positive steps to encourage wildlife. Perhaps this could be a winter project to establish bird and bat boxes etc. A project with the school would be a good opportunity to work together in creating an interest in attracting and studying insects and butterflies etc. Consider a dedicated wild life area. Even though the village is surrounded by lovely countryside. There seemed to

be little evidence of general re-cycling, composting or water conservation. The old red phone box could provide a site for a very interesting display so good luck with that.

Section C: Community Participation Areas of Achievement

There is a good In Bloom Group that works well with other organisations to ensure support and funding for the future. The annual Nafferton in Bloom competition is a good community event creating an interest and involvement for different groups including children. Other events are also well supported.

Areas for Improvement

Good communication and publicity about "in Bloom" is always very important to ensure everyone is very well aware of what is taking place and how they can help by doing different jobs. "IN Bloom" always needs to be promoted. The contributions to the newsletter are good but it was felt more could be done. What about social media?! It was disappointing not to have seen first-hand work with school and to meet some children.

Ripponden Gold Award

Introduction

Ripponden in Bloom have excellent community support from all ages. The quality of the mixed planting and the variety of projects that are all undertaken under the "wider Yorkshire in Bloom" banner over the past 10 Years was very impressive and must be fully commended and supported.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement Areas of Achievement

The Judges were impressed with the quality of the maintenance of Mill Fold along with excellent planting around the Bowling Green. Business support was much in evidence with many Businesses having colourful displays of hanging baskets and window boxes. These include but are not limited to Old Bridge Inn, The Silk Mill, the Larder and Stanley's Kitchen. Jubilee gardens were maintained to a good standard and planted with a good selection of plants.

Areas for Improvement

More work needs to be done in Ebenezer Grave yard but with all the work already carried out it should not be too difficult to bring it up to an easier manageable state. On future judging's it would be nice to stop and have a closer look at the Soyland in Bloom Jubilee Garden. The Judges thought that although most of the judging route was well maintained and weed free a few areas stood out for a little extra attention like the corner of Green Acres and the front of the new building at the school. Although the judges fully understood the problems you are having getting Pennine Housing to maintain the grass bank across the road from the Car Park which is in such a prominent position it's a shame a solution

cannot be found. "Maybe a strip could be cut along the top of the wall, with Ripponden in Bloom removing weeds from the wall side."

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Although the Village centre is right on a busy main road there was no obvious rubbish, dog fouling or graffiti, everyone involved should be commended. It was great to see that Ripponden in Bloom took part in the Clean for the Queen even in difficult weather conditions. Your Balsam Bashing Morning seems to have been a great success. Keep up the great work. The Parish Council ideas about the refurbishment and future maintenance of its Benches with its limited budget is very original and could be the way forward for other Parish Councils with similar problems. The placement of bird boxes insect houses and hedgehog house in the grave yard. The restoration of the village stocks and the milepost and the repairs to the war memorial.

Areas for Improvement

Continue with your great work in expanding your 'Snow Drops Trail' and improving the woods behind Royd Lane Car Park. Although you have a great History leaflet it would be nice to see it develop into a trail with the possibility of small information boards at the places of interest. Look into the possibility of developing a nature trail either at the back of Mill Fold or in the woods behind the car park.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

It was lovely to see the nursery pupils growing vegetables and playing in a "Mud Kitchen" A very good and inclusive Facebook page keeping every up to date with everything going on. Community participation is very good with lots of youth and community groups involved. Lots of great leaflets have been produced by the Parish Council Prompting Ripponden. The leaflet produced by Ripponden in Bloom entitled "Our 10 years and Blooming" was just amazing and a great way of showing everyone what you do for your village. Well done to you all and congratulations on your 10 Year Anniversary. The Judges very much liked the "In Bloom "window display at the Parish Council office

Areas for Improvement

Hopefully the School projects will get into full swing next year with everyone's help and better weather. For future judging's it would be useful to see a slide show of completed projects and areas not visited at the end of judging.

Scholes Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Scholes is a village close to the north-eastern outskirts of Leeds. Its origins may date back to the time of Viking invasions as its name is believed to derive from the Norse word 'Skali' meaning sheep hut. Though for hundreds of years barely more than a hamlet, the population has risen in the last hundred years with around 1000 homes currently in the ward. Scholes in Bloom was formed in 2003 and has gone from strength to strength, receiving a Silver Gilt Award in last year's Britain in Bloom competition. The judges once more had a most enjoyable tour of the village led by Ben, Lila and Lorraine. They were also delighted to meet many more of the in Bloom team over a delicious and most welcome lunch.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Scholes in Bloom look after some 30 or more beds and 110 hanging baskets, these providing bright splashes of colour throughout the village. The beds vary considerably in style and have been carefully designed to fit their surroundings: from substantial perennial planting as found alongside the Sports Field car park, in the Japanese Garden, and in the bed adjacent to the Buffers pub (originally the station) which celebrates the rail heritage of this area, to the various colourful beds with mixed or annual bedding plantings including those found at the village entrances. Of special mention was the wonderfully bright 'Union Jack' bed, the result of a competition held for the local primary school. Carnaby Lander designed the winning entry and Scholes in Bloom planted it up in a bed adjacent to the school. The judges had the pleasure of meeting Carnaby and some of her fellow school pupils, not only to see the bed but to view some of the other plants they had been growing and to be introduced to some rather glamorous scarecrows they had made! The standard of residents' gardens was once again found to be very high and the group have been successful in finding individuals, couples or groups who will additionally undertake watering and/or maintenance of nearby beds.

Areas for Improvement

The Japanese garden is a lovely peaceful area which perhaps could be enhanced by the provision of some appropriate seating. Plans to change the manger baskets at the end of the Main Street to perennial rather than annual plantings will reduce the maintenance needed here. Consideration might be given to perennial planting around the tree adjacent to the Cenotaph. With appropriate plant choice, this could provide form and/or colour for most of the year.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Around 30 bird boxes have been put up around the village and a bug box has been sited at the rear of the Sports Club car park. Another one (not seen) is sited behind the Cricket Pavilion. The group are mindful of conserving water and all baskets have reservoirs to help prevent unnecessary water usage. A wildflower area has been planted near the village hall and residents are being encouraged to take part in the online Big Butterfly Count being held for three weeks in July and August. The heritage and

history of the town is recognised in the 'Buffers Bed' (as mentioned previously), in the two plough beds and in the carefully tended Cenotaph beds.

Areas for Improvement

The wildflower area is comparatively new and will require careful monitoring to ensure that more robust species such as grasses don't take over the area. An area of common land belonging to the Parish Council was noted on the outskirts of the village. Largely left wild with mown paths, there might be opportunities for Scholes in Bloom to work with the council to develop this as a wildlife area? Given the comparatively large number of baskets and the large 'chunk' of budget required to cover watering costs, perhaps the group might like to review the scale of this provision?

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Scholes in Bloom is a well-established group with a core of 10-15 members turning up for the regular Monday morning work parties, volunteers who look after nearby beds and more 'ad hoc' volunteers who assist as required. They have good community links working with, for example, the local school, churches, Cubs and Scouts, and the Bowling Club. They are extremely successful at fundraising not only through sponsorship and donations, but also through regular events such as their twice yearly coffee mornings and an Open Gardens held every alternate year. They also have links to local businesses and it was good to see the one of the pubs in town with attractive window boxes and displaying one of the 'in Bloom' posters designed by school pupils. A newsletter delivered to all houses in the village is produced 2-3 times a year.

Areas for Improvement

It would be nice to see the group give encouragement and support to some form of gardening in the school grounds. The newsletter is of course a great communication tool for the community, but possibly consideration could be given to developing a website which might engage with a slightly different audience?

Category 2A: Urban Community

Allerton Bywater

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The village's rich industrial heritage is very well represented with a superb miners' memorial and several other features from the mining past restored and maintained to first class condition. All this is complemented by modern hard-landscaping and the overall impression is a very well maintained village which was a pleasure to visit.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

It was good to hear that much of the bedding and shrubs were grown by one of the 'In Bloomers'. The fabulous bed on Hollinghurst, near the Welcome sign, was a real credit to the local lady who plants and maintains it. The superb Centenary Park on Leeds Road was again a real credit to the resident who maintains it and being on an arterial route is there for all to enjoy.

Areas for Improvement

If possible tidy up the mulched beds on Leeds Road, just as you access/egress to/from Great Preston.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Litter and Graffiti were almost non-existent and it was a pleasure to see this. The street furniture is kept in top-notch condition.

Areas for Improvement

Ask YWT to clean up the interpretation panel at Letchmire Pastures, and if possible request a representative to describe the site's features.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The allotments are starting to look really good and a real community asset. It was good to hear about and see there is a strong but sympathetic management in place.

Areas for Improvement

Would have been good to meet some of the children involved with community planting and maintenance. Would have been good to meet the couple involved in maintaining the War Memorial at the end of visit and also for judges to visit church grounds in future.

Introduction

The Judges were greeted with a warm welcome on a lovely summer's day. The Beeston in Bloom team were informative and helpful, explaining all the work they have been involved with. The whole team are wonderful ambassadors for Beeston working with businesses, traders and community groups within their area. They clearly define how being involved with Yorkshire in Bloom has helped to connect the community and has it pulling together. The passion shown by the team and the residents and businesses we met on route was delightful and an inspiration to other groups in the area.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement**Areas of Achievement**

The recycling and upcycling of the concrete planters shows inspiration and innovation. The co-ordination of colour schemes which link to the businesses. The 75 sponsored baskets and planters as well as the 22 recycled planters on the Beeston Road along with the 24 barrier baskets on the Dewsbury Road, plus the 9 Instaplanters all containing a mix of summer bedding, perennials as well as vegetables and herbs. The under planting around some of the trees looked good. St. Mary's church was a credit to Joy and Brian who look after this wonderful area. The National Citizenship Scheme have a project to work in the cemetery. The planting in Cross Flats Park is lovely, it was clear to see the area is well used by all the residents. The colour scheme in the area was good and we wondered if another colour added to the main colour would enhance the planting which was excellent in itself. Maybe a white along with the pinkish colour is a thought.

Areas for Improvement

You have already identified to need to re-seed the wildflower area in the churchyard this autumn and the general improvement plans for the churchyard, especially around the miners memorial will lift the area making it more attractive and peaceful for the people who visit. We encourage you to continue with this work but to remember it may take time. Stank Hall Barn is in its infancy. We were impressed with the proposed plans to complete the pottage where they grow a variety of heritage fruit and vegetables planted alongside companion plants to help heed off bugs, the proposed seed swop sounds interesting. This is a long term project and we hope it continues to expand when funding becomes available.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility**Areas of Achievement**

The whole area was extremely clean, we saw no evidence of litter, graffiti, fly posting or dog fouling which is impressive in such a large urban community. The use of wall art in the park has enhanced an area which could have attracted graffiti. The street furniture is well managed. The miner's memorial in St. Mary's Churchyard brings local heritage into focus, especially when we learned that one of the miners named on the memorial lived next to Stank Barn. There were a number of bird and bat boxes as well as bug hotels hidden around Beeston.

Areas for Improvement

It may be worth offering the other two sides of the walls in the park for further wall art. Continue to increase the number of bird and bat boxes. The new leaf composting area in the park will benefit your planting.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The funding and support for the community via sponsorship and local businesses as well as the local councillors and Leeds City Council is impressive and shows how hard the team have worked to achieve this. It was clear to see this is a year round enterprise with members from all sections of the community coming out in all weathers.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to encourage young people and other community groups to become involved. You are already working hard in this area and we encourage you to continue to do so. All your hard work is paying off.

Bramhope Gold Award

Introduction

Bramhope in Bloom's activities in maintaining every part of this historic village is very much in evidence. With all residents taking great pride and community spirit abounding everywhere, including the memory of founder in bloom members.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The choice of planting, colour schemes, ownership of looking after certain areas is well in hand, enabling them to be enjoyed and appreciated by all. The input by residents, businesses, and organisations is to be greatly commended and a fine example to society. The beds at the Tredgold shops are particularly impressive and demonstrate the power of Bramhope in Bloom.

Areas for Improvement

We look forward to seeing the development of the entry points into the village including the refurbishment of the wooden Bramhope sign (perhaps using wood from a Bramhope tree) and benches which will further enhance the floral displays within the village. Including a visit to the grounds of the church as well as the Puritan Chapel would add to an excellent tour.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Visible proof of all the village's wonderful heritage, including quality, cleanliness, and pride of ownership abounds everywhere. The completion of the refurbishment of the war memorial and the planting to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday only adds to the whole atmosphere.

Areas for Improvement

We have little to add. We note that previous judges' comments certainly have been taken on board and acted upon. We ask you to continue in this manner.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

All throughout the year everyone and everything is held together in planning and doing, including all ages of the community. The standard that has been achieved by the In Bloom group and the community makes it a special place to live and call home. It was a delight to meet the younger members of the community and to see the interaction between them and Bramhope in Bloom.

Areas for Improvement

It would have been an advantage to the judges to have received your portfolio before judging day.

Calverley Gold Award

Introduction

Calverley has a long interesting history with a lot of attractive stone buildings. Many of the gardens and surrounding areas reflect this in their style and choice of planting. The "In Bloom" team is very well established and has good relations with many working groups, who all contribute to this excellent entry. The judges enjoyed meeting so many people during their well organised tour.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

There were many very excellent features in the village that were all well maintained and provided colour and interest. The hanging baskets, planters and barrier planters were all of a high standard, colourful and well maintained. The new war memorial park area is lovely and is most appropriate for this time in our history. Good to hear about the recent service. The Park was looking beautiful with very good planting and everything was well maintained. The edible garden and the "90" were noteworthy as was the WI garden. There were many very good residential gardens, including Brookleigh Sheltered Housing, where many of the residents have their varied displays in lovely well maintained grounds

Areas for Improvement

Continue to provide areas and planting schemes to reflect current events. The teams all work very hard and should continue to do so to maintain this very high standard.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The local heritage is all very well identified and maintained to a high standard. Wildlife areas were evident with plenty of bird and bat boxes. The sheep and goats at St Wilfrid's Church yard were an excellent example of reducing the effect on the environment and were doing a good job! All areas were clean tidy and litter free.

Areas for Improvement

The work on Carr Road should continue and hopefully will have progressed by next spring. Continue with the programme for replacing benches etc. in the park

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

This entry demonstrates the benefit of working with very many different groups of all ages who all contribute to the village of Calverley. The portfolio is good and just right to be of great assistance to the judges. The publicity was good with many posters around. The judges enjoyed judging the school poster competition. Well done to all concerned. The park was excellent with many good sporting facilities and is well used. There are many community events including the street party and they all enhance life in Calverley.

Areas for Improvement

The work with so many groups and organisations is essential and should be continued.

Scarborough Old Town Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

This is an excellent Urban entry, and appreciation goes to all those who met the judges. The judging route was most comprehensive, and well planned, also giving many fine views of Scarborough Bay. Comfort stops were appreciated. It is very obvious that the locals are proud of their gardens, with many good examples along the route. The descriptive brochure adds to this entry.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Even with the smallest of spaces, there were good innovative features to appreciate. Gardens were well cared for, and sustainability was evident. St. Mary's Church Walk passed the Remembrance

Garden and the many well planted hanging baskets. Anne Bronte's grave was visited, and the nearby disabled access ramp is to be applauded. The planned refurbishment to the main town centre has been delayed but hopes to restart in September. An active Chamber of Trade and Commerce with a "Totally Local" group of independent businesses. The drive along the Foreshore Road passed the work on the Lifeboat Station, and saw the children's designed Flower Bed.

Areas for Improvement

Such was the thoroughness of the route that few areas needing significant improvement were to be seen, whilst painting of woodwork was noted. Perhaps strategic trimming of foliage, such as seen from St. Mary's Walk could improve the views.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Local environmental quality was impressive, with little sign of litter, graffiti or dog fouling. The street furniture and signage seen were good and commendable.

Areas for Improvement

Highly obvious management of vacant premises is always difficult, but this urban entry achieved it. A grant from North Yorkshire County Councillor Locality Budget has been well used and led to more sustainable improvements.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The judges welcomed the accompaniment throughout of the members of the support team, and the explanation, and enthusiasm continually being shown. Clearly, many of the locals play an active participation in preparing and maintaining this urban entry. The engagement with schools and young people was most apparent from the visit to the Friarage Community Primary School. Most impressive was group involvement in a year of varied activities.

Areas for Improvement

Well-placed and informative placards and/or leaflets of the judge's visit would better highlight the day in question. This entry can only get better. Well done.

Starbeck Gold Award

Introduction

Starbeck is straddled by a very busy main road and also by a railway line which bisects the road at right angles - all making life quite difficult! At it's boundary with Knaresborough there is beautiful golf

course, enhanced by woodland and mature trees, landscaped areas and floral displays. The community, in addition to its extensive housing also hosts a major supermarket and Betty's bakery and factory, two churches and a wide range of shops and business premises - a very busy place, but well supplied with green space, and people who care about their community and its environment.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The 'In bloom' group play a major part in ensuring that Starbeck remains beautiful, working well with Harrogate Council staff, the streetcleaners hut with its decoration made us smile. The group have close links with the schools, and with other associations in the area, especially those at Handprints and the Springwater special school, the latter having their own allotment. In the past Northern Rail adorned the railway platforms with half barrels and planters, and thankfully dedicated volunteers in the bloom group are continuing to maintain the station planters despite the difficulties in watering.

The group have an annual summer show with 45 different classes, and also a garden competition, which ensures that many gardens are maintained to a high standard. There are also barrier baskets, and other floral displays throughout the central area. The judges were pleased to be shown a wider range of residential gardens. The area around the war memorial has been renewed and the difficulties of a shading tree have been overcome utilising a mosaic

Areas for Improvement

It is interesting to see the greater impact of the paler floral colours in the baskets, perhaps you may wish to build on this. The seating at the side of the swimming pool would be more inviting by some maintenance and weed removal. We realise that you cannot show us all of Starbeck, but there are large areas of housing, such as the rows of terrace houses, which might be included in future.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Starbeck is well covered with children's art displays, examples of which we saw at the primary school, the Springwater community allotment and the annual show. Through other parts of the year we are told that they have quizzes, do planting and lay wood chips on wet areas of pathways. There are numerous areas of wildlife, including Addyman's Wood where we saw good examples of interpreting what visitors are seeing. Hedgehogs, and other forms of wildlife are well provided for. There was no sign of any graffiti or dog fouling, and litter picks ensure the central area is kept clean. The management of the hedges and banks of the beck was good to see and will encourage and promote diversity of wildlife along Becksides.

Areas for Improvement

A well-honed working group, so difficult to pick holes - perhaps look at water conservation by retaining water from roof tops of public buildings, shelters, etc.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Good engagement with schools and most local groups and authorities, good photographic records of a range of groups was on display in the church hall during our visit. As mentioned earlier there is the annual show in late summer and a range of activities, quizzes, fund raising events and bulb planting in the winter months.

Areas for Improvement

As redevelopment takes place near the railway it is important that good landscaping accompanies it. Could a presentation for school teachers to give ideas on how to integrate "In Bloom" into the curriculum possibly be repeated?

Swillington Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Swillington in Bloom are a hard working team who have worked extremely tirelessly to improve their community. The beds around the town are well planted with a mix of sustainable and annual planting. The sponsorship they have received from the community has aided Swillington's entry in the competition, enabling them to improve further the area for the community. The entrance wheels are a lovely addition to this entry

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The use of sustainable planting in the beds and large planters is developing really well. It was interesting to hear how the team split and move plants as well as recycle plants from their own gardens. They are rightly proud of their achievements so far. Areas to note are; St Mary's Church borders, the Rectory beds, Rocal entrance, The Green, the Bus stop planter and seating area and Astley Way industrial estate. The numerous seasonal planters and hanging baskets across the village help to create a colourful welcome for residents and visitors. The school are at the early stages of developing an outside garden but it was already showing signs of how good it will be once completed. It was a pleasure to meet the young people and hear of the plans for a potting shed and composting area. The visit to the Allotments was a treat, wonderful to see the abundance of crops being grown.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to increase the number of sustainable plantings. You identified how this is making your working load easier. It is a credit to you that you have been able to plant the circular beds at the side of Tesco's. Consider using ladies mantle and purple cranesbill to fill the space for next year. The judges were impressed with the alpine planting by the trailer company. The wooden planter would benefit from a re-stain in the autumn. The beds at the industrial park are starting to become established. Consider, as discussed, filling the front of the beds with low ground covering Alpines such

as some of the saxifraga's or Ajuga reptans (purple bugle), or creeping phlox and the many coloured varieties of heuchera that will tolerate a drier location.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

We were impressed with the cleanliness of Swillington. No litter, graffiti, fly posting or dog fouling were seen. The newly refurbished wheels at the entrances to Swillington identifies with its industrial past. The perennial planting supplemented by annuals looks good. The composting of green waste in the centre collection point in the church yard to provide soil improver/mulch.

Areas for Improvement

Consider adding further perennial plants to the entry wheels therefore reducing the need to use annuals to reduce your costs and workloads. Continue to involve the school in projects to increase wildlife; potential for building bird boxes, and bug houses to be put up at other locations in the village, maybe getting them to think about what plants benefit wildlife as well.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Swillington in Bloom have worked hard at gaining many sponsors for their planters and beds. It is a credit to them that so many of the businesses and residents are happy to support them. The team are strong and active in the community, they work with young people at the school which will help promote continuity for the future. Lovely to see the residents at Primrose House estate all doing their bit to brighten the street with their simple, colourful tubs and pots.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to work with the whole community. Consider further ways of promoting Swillington in Bloom such as posters, newsletters and continuing to promote through the new website and social media. Continue to encourage the school gardening club, Swillington in Bloom have a tremendous bank of skills and knowledge that can be shared with young people.

Woodlesford Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Woodlesford in Bloom are an extremely well organised team. It was clear from the start how inclusive they are and how the 'bloom' vehicle has helped to create a community spirit. Everywhere we went was clean and tidy with thoughtful and sustainable planting in evidence. The hard work this team and community put in is to be commended.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The perennial bedding was exemplary and helps considerably to reduce the time the team is required to work on the areas. Using sustainable and insect friendly plants helps with biodiversity. Highlights of seasonal colour especially around the main shopping area, were stunning. A few other areas to note were; the Tuff Shop bed, Midland House, The Canal gardens, The Green, and the many well maintained resident's gardens around the route. The Grey to Green projects on Midland Rd are to be commended, they have brought character to a once grey area. We were impressed that the team now look after all the grassed areas. The School visit was a well-planned finale to an excellent entry, the children were enthusiastic about their involvement with their garden and extremely knowledgeable about what they had been planting - this is a possible entry in its own right.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to increase your sustainable planting. You may want to look at raising the mowing cut in some areas when the weather is very dry, this will help to conserve water, but this was only in a couple of locations.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Woodlesford is an urban community with a high throughput of traffic. The whole area was spotless and a credit to the whole community and team. This soundly demonstrates the pride everyone takes in keeping Woodlesford clean, litter free and without any signs of dog fouling. The wildlife meadow sown with a 'fantasy' mix seed, on the green is a lovely area for attracting animals and insects. Woodlesford Lock and the orchards are to be commended, the team have worked hard here and have the support from the Canal Trust. Recycling and composting was evident and helps to reduce the carbon footprint.

Areas for Improvement

The team have already gone a long way with regards to environmental responsibility with sustainable planting, mulching and composting. We are sure they are also conserving and reusing, where appropriate, grey water. Perhaps consider how you may be able to weave Woodlesford Pottery into your planting to add further to your industrial heritage.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Woodlesford in Bloom are rightly proud of their achievements and those of the wider community from the children at the Jolly Giraffe nursery who help to water the planters and sang a lovely thank you song to the team, to the school poster project, to the residents of Midland House who are now planting out on their balconies. This is truly a community wide endeavour. Funding comes from the many planters being sponsored to individual donations and fund raising events. Woodlesford in Bloom are an inclusive team who welcome all into their ranks. The judges were impressed by the friendly

welcome and the many "hellos" received whilst on the route and by the large number of residents who were displaying posters supporting Woodlesford in Bloom

Areas for Improvement

It would be difficult to offer ideas on how you could improve in this area. Therefore the only comment we can make would be to continue to encourage and support your community. What you are doing works.

Category 2B: Small Town

Hunmanby Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

From the start of our tour the enthusiasm of this active 'bloom' group was impressive with many individuals and groups playing their part in enhancing this historic village set just a short distance from the East coast. It was encouraging that some of our suggestions made at our mentoring session in the Spring had been acted upon.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

There were many attractive and well maintained colourful features throughout this small country town - perennial plantings at Sebastopol bed -Malton Road beds - Jo's bed and Eddie's bed- Vi's garden - lovely tiny cottage garden of Southgate. The new self-watering tubs were well planted with a variety of eye-catching specimens. Businesses had played their part in enhancing the floral effort with hanging baskets, window boxes and tubs - the butchers - Post Office and The Cottage and White Swan pubs.

Areas for Improvement

Some of the attractive private gardens we saw could have been highlighted. The churchyard beds are in need of attention. The border between the Market Cross and the Methodist Church had been improved but will always be difficult due to drought and the shade cast by the overhanging large tree.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The features surrounding the Market Cross and the War memorial were of a high standard. Several plantings depicted the rural heritage with fencing, gates, seed sowing barrow etc. The plantings at the station promote the attractive surroundings of this community to the traveller. The Bayley Gardens looked after by Sue and Kath are to be commended for their efforts in maintaining this garden to a high standard with many interesting plants and the 'Stag' an emblem of the 'Homestead of the Huntsman' The village was clean and tidy

Areas for Improvement

It was good to hear of plans for some of the apparent derelict plots. The heavy rainfall over the winter may have unfortunate consequences for the community orchard and wild area and though the ducks and wetland plants seem to be thriving the plantings may suffer. Suggest advice is sought to plan for its future.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The list of supporters, individuals and groups involved with the bloom effort is impressive, many of whom have responsibilities for maintaining a feature in their part of the village. The list of events throughout the year is considerable often raising funds for the bloom effort. The calendar and cards of local scenes help to promote the village. The 20 or so people open their gardens every other year.

Areas for Improvement

Your portfolio outlined gardening excellence and inspired learning at the Primary School and showcasing this on our tour would have been a highlight. Ensure the route for the judges fulfils all the elements of the criteria with not too much duplication.

Upper and Nether Poppleton Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

We had an enjoyable return visit on a beautifully sunny day, we were met by the enthusiastic Poppleton in Bloom group and the overall effect of the summer planting and floral displays looked resplendent with pockets of colour dotted throughout. All the communal areas were well maintained and litter free. Pleased to see the businesses had made a superb effort with colourful hanging baskets and planters. We thought that the route was well thought out taking us on a different tour to see other features. The team are committed to making their villages a more attractive place to reside and pride in their community came across in abundance – well done on your achievements.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

We liked the themed planting throughout, which were well maintained and all gave good impact with the overflowing floral barrow and platform sign planters along with the resident's plantings such as the red and white display outside the School House, the planters outside the 'spinster' bungalows, community centre pansy pots done by the cubs and scouts and in particular the shops and pubs all looked splendid and colourful. The Pharmacy window display of old fashioned containers. The removal of the trees and cutting the grass to open up the vista down the river from the War Memorial was good. Mikes garden was glorious, packed full with a chocolate box of treats around every corner. The perennial planting in the church car park was excellent and full of colour and attracted insects. Good to see continued maintenance to keep the verges and edges tidy. The allotments were excellent, well looked after and brimming with tasty fruit and vegetables.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps the pharmacy could extend to a barrel with suitable herbs and rosemary to enhance the display. The sloped 'union jack' planter may be easier to water if it had batons in place to prevent water draining down. Consider looking for other areas to extend the perennial borders instead of lots of small planters.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The Millennium Green, Moat field duck and dipping pond are excellent resources for the community and the friends group had a management plan in place, balancing the naturalistic and creating play areas, it was litter free and dog fouling was under control, the orchard management was good along with organising 'apple days' to make cider and juice after picking the apples, the hedge coppicing, the willow tunnel, clearing nettles and keeping the circular pathways in good order, creating views, the fabulous metal sculptures, we particularly liked the variety of grass maintenance and we commend you on the new gate for disabled/buggy access. The Tithe Barn and adjoining Tudor garden are super, researching the heritage plants of Tudor times with scented plants such as Lavender, Old English Roses, the sedum along the bottom of the wall worked well and the six lavender plantings along Church lane links the area well. Duke of Edinburgh scheme weeding and clearing the Church car park. The posts with luminous strips around the grass verge are successful improvement.

Areas for Improvement

Consider a programme of maintenance of the seating near the war memorial. The RHS website would be of help to find more rabbit resistant plants for the mosaic planter. Consider having more compost areas. We would recommend that The Millennium Green, duck and dipping pond would be ideal for information/interpretation boards and bird and butterfly identification counts. Consider further planting in the Tudor garden to extend the seasonal interest.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Showcasing the children's paintings on the sloped planter was good. Newly formed Cricket committee to progress with the cricket ground project. Using the Tithe Barn for community events such as the forthcoming Christmas fair, also the village scarecrow trail. The annual Village show and Sports day events. The Centrepiece magazine is really a terrific channel to inform residents and visitors what's going on.

Areas for Improvement

Would be great to see/meet some of the children who have done any artwork or been involved in plantings e.g. under 5's rainbow club, cubs. Community centre would be great to do a short presentation, a display and introduce more friends of groups and volunteers, consider using shop premises for permanent Poppleton in Bloom promotion, consider some banners to promote Poppleton in Bloom in prominent places and continue to use sponsorship from local businesses. Consider using the magazine to more advantage by having a regular Poppleton in Bloom column.

Category 2C: Town

Elloughton cum Brough

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The Judges were greeted by Collen & Val and were shown a detailed and concise portfolio of the entry. The judges were also directed to the Elloughton cum Brough in Bloom web page which again provided detailed information and past achievements. It may be beneficial for future entries that the judges be provided with a brief portfolio prior to the judging day so that a full overview of the entry can be obtained. A judging route was compiled by the entry which was well thought through given the many road closures which were in place at the time of judging. A range of volunteers were met throughout the route that were knowledgeable and proud of their achievements to aid the entry.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The planting and work carried out by Judy on Centurion Place is to be commended, with the tubs and planting around road signs being well thought through with heights and selection of plants. Baskets and troughs on residential and business premises were generally very good with the display on Old Fellow's Hall being exceptional. The use of sustainable planting at Elloughton Primary School was well planned and compliments the new buildings perfectly

Areas for Improvement

Consider more specific planting for the entrance to Spindlewood, the use of dry tolerant plants would be beneficial to the location rather than the use of annuals. Selection of plants for specific locations is often difficult especially if plants are donated but care must be taken to ensure plants compliment their surroundings, In a couple of locations, for instance the new bed on Welton Road the location and aspect lends itself to ground cover shrubs rather than annuals which require more maintenance. In prominent locations such as the seat at the crossroads in Elloughton care should be taken to select 'impact' plants that stand out and make a 'statement'. The new planters on Hunter Road could also benefit from more 'Dynamic' planting of summer bedding filling out the planters to give maximum impact. The group maintain 52 beds/ sites at present and it may be beneficial at this stage to take stock and possibly look to improve the design of some beds with quality / selective planting and mulching where necessary, this will go some way to making the next step achievable.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Lots of good work is being undertaken at Elloughton Primary School with the bug stations, bird hide and sensory garden providing good educational resource for the children. Recycling procedures were evident both at the school and the allotments. The use of old/disused boats as planters is a great idea with the one situated alongside the 'Boat House' standing out prominently. The work carried out at the cenotaph has certainly been worthwhile with the monument and grounds looking pristine.

Areas for Improvement

Continue with plans for the development of the culvert / drain on Welton Road.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group has a core of good local funders who regularly contribute via the yearly calendar which is obviously popular in the community. The work being carried out in the Petuaria centre with service users utilising the outside space available.

Areas for Improvement

Try forming a Facebook page to attract younger members of the community to the 'In Bloom' group. The formation of the 'After School Club' in September will be an excellent addition to utilise the educational resources available within the school.

Garforth Gold Award

Introduction

Garforth, with a current population of around 16,000, was mainly agricultural and part of the rhubarb triangle around Leeds and Wakefield until 1830 when the pit shafts were sunk and five coal mines opened locally. Garforth in Bloom was established in 2008 by a group of local residents with a common interest and desire to improve the look of the town for the benefit of all who live or visit. Since then this enthusiastic and innovative group has gone from strength to strength and now has 25 members with an age range of 18 to 80. We were welcomed for our summer judging tour on one of the hottest days of the year with temperatures of 32 degrees and were amused to see the Garforth in Bloom Newsletter publishing our Spring visit when brollies and rain hats were the order of the day.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The group's aim is to ensure Garforth looks its best at all times of the year and the judges were impressed by the use of colourful perennials and shrubs in many beds and planters which were supplemented with annual summer bedding to give maximum impact and effect. The choice and quality of plants was superb and all were at their best even on such a hot day. Residents will appreciate the restful space in the jubilee garden in the busy centre and the judges were delighted to find wild flowers such as Vipers Bugloss growing almost opposite in the Pease beds. The annual autumn bulb planting in September ensure that Garforth will continue to put on a great show in spring which will improve year on year. The tubs, planters and barrier planters at the pubs and businesses were colourful with again a lovely mixture of perennials and annuals.

Areas for Improvement

Garforth in Bloom are well organised in their choice of plants and are encouraged to continue to use perennials and shrubs wherever possible. Further encourage local residents and families to care for specific areas or beds adjacent to their home. Continue with innovative schemes such as the tired garden to encourage children and teenagers to participate in the group's activities. To prolong the bulb flowering season consider planting other bulbs such as crocus, tulips and Cammasias as well as daffodils.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Looking after the local environment is key in all the activities of Garforth in Bloom with the council providing regular collections of recyclable and garden waste. All areas are neat and tidy with grass verges managed by the council. Wildflower seeds from the beds at the Pease garden are harvested and used at other sites around the town. The trial of a water butt disguised as a planter outside Scream Hair Salon appears to be a great idea.

Areas for Improvement

Encourage water harvesting with water butts discretely placed especially at the Golden Goose, fish shop and other strategic sites. The trial of a water butt disguised as a planter outside Scream Hair Salon if successful could be extended to other business premises. Continue to encourage planting to encourage wildlife in as many areas as possible

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Community involvement was evident throughout our judging tour. The judges particularly liked the Anderson shelter and the community allotment which provides space for groups to meet and relax. Barbara and Valerie are inspirational in the design of the Potty cottage garden, which also raised £11,000 for St Gemma's hospice. Garforth in Bloom makes excellent use of all aspects of publicity with an easy to navigate website, Facebook page and twitter as well as quarterly Newsletters and notice boards. The web has details and results of the "take your GiB bag on holiday" photographic project.

Areas for Improvement

The group's objective to replace the replica wooden coal tub with a genuine one is to be encouraged. Research of the five local mines and the association of the miners who volunteered for the First World War and were victims of the battle might be a project that the group could share with the Local History society and teachers and pupils at the local academy. If at all practical, it would be good to meet pupils of the local schools or the cubs and brownies who are involved with projects in Garforth.

Horsforth Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The Horsforth in Bloom group have done an excellent job in creating eye-catching colour in the shopping centre and surrounding areas. Horsforth Hall Park is outstanding and all associated with this are to be commended.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Hanging baskets, barrier baskets and geranium planting by the group were all eye-catching. Good sustainable planting at Fink Hill Car Park and at Brownlee Stone Centre. The planters and borders at Crabtree Car Park are to be commended especially since all containers are made by In Bloom members. The Central and Grove Methodist Church gardens are well maintained and the residential gardens on Hall Lane, Park Gate Close and Featherbank Lane were very good. On the commercial side the gardens at Bartletts and the bed and planters at W H Brown were excellent. Horsforth Hall Park was outstanding with excellent herbaceous borders, Japanese Garden and annual planting to provide eye-catching colour.

Areas for Improvement

The judges look forward to the future development of the ginnel area and the increasing involvement of local businesses and the efforts to raise the profile of the group in the town.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The group have installed bat and bird boxes in a number of locations. The wild flower meadow at the burial ground was excellent and Peter is to be commended for this, the area having been adopted by Horsforth in Bloom. A bug hotel is also present at this location. There are recycling facilities at Morrison's and the group have built the recycling area at Horsforth Hall Park. They also obtain surplus plants from the council to utilise through the town. There was no graffiti, dog fouling or litter in a busy town centre which is to be commended.

Areas for Improvement

Look to creating further wild life areas and maybe with the creation it may be possible to involve local schools in this project.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group meet weekly and have around 30 members on their mailing list. Horsforth in Bloom posters were seen around the town. At the Ducklings there were fruit trees and the monitoring of larva from egg to release of the adult insect should get the youngsters interested in nature. The involvement with

schools regarding the mural to be produced at the play area in Horsforth Hall Park, also the involvement with local scout groups and liaising with Broadgate Lane Primary School. Now having a Facebook page should increase awareness of the group. There is good liaison with other groups in the area. The promotion/fund raising at the church fetes and at Horsforth Gala plus the new funding from W H Brown and Stone bridge Offices.

Areas for Improvement

Hopefully the grant application for £3k will enable the group to further establish its profile in the town and hopefully enable the group to interest an increased number of members. Are there youth groups in the area who could become involved with the group to provide continuity and hopefully muscle when required!!

Otley Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Well Done Otley in Bloom another excellent entry. You gave us plenty of new things to see which demonstrates your commitment to everything 'In Bloom' represents, including your work on the Otley Phlox and the pride and ingenuity of the staff at the Ellar Ghyll Household Waste site. As we travelled around Otley it was evident that great pride is taken by residents and businesses and not just on judging day. This is demonstrated in the way the town and individual properties are cared for with very colourful floral displays, beautiful green open spaces and a very tidy and clean town throughout. We congratulate and thank all those involved for their warm welcome, commitment, hard work and effort. We do appreciate it. The route was well thought out and enabled us to see the difference that all those involved with Otley in Bloom have made to the environment and appearance of the town and has encouraged support from all sections of the community. Thank you for your hospitality and hard work.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Your planting plans reflecting World War 1 Remembrance (snowdrops), Cycle Races (wicker bikes and dry stone 'cycle' gateway into Otley), and summer planting colours (red, white and blue) are very successful. Horticultural achievement is excellent with a very high standard of planting producing very effective and attractive displays. Maintenance of all your planters and borders are excellent, each appropriately planted to fit in with the themes, and their position throughout the town. The barrier baskets and lamppost planters, together with the floral displays of the businesses in Otley town centre welcome residents and visitors alike and show that pride is being created in Otley. Green spaces in Otley are very well cared for. The riverside walk and Wharfemeadows Park are a delight and given the devastation that occurred on Boxing Day are tributes to all the hard work of everyone concerned. The development at the Old Workhouse is very attractive and well landscaped. We look forward to the development at Garnett's site and the opening up of the riverside walk into Gallows Hill Nature Reserve. Your allotments are well managed, used and productive with a mix of vegetables and flowers, and on some sites livestock.

Areas for Improvement

There is very little we can add here as your entry continues to be enhanced by the inclusion of diverse planting, features and continued support from residents and businesses along the route. We look forward to seeing what you do next year.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility Areas of Achievement

Environmental responsibility within Otley is excellent and of a very high standard. Your hard work at Gallows Hill Nature Reserve to encourage wildlife and improve natural habitats is paying dividends. The plans for future development at the Nature Reserve are exciting. The recent improvements to the Nature Reserve, accessible paths, encouraging use of the reserve by local residents, being part of the 'welcoming walkers' way, opening up the heart of the woodland, with seating, whilst preserving wildlife/wildflower areas is to be commended. The town is immaculate and appropriately maintained with an absence of any litter or graffiti. Enhanced by the floral displays your signage and street furniture are good. You are proud of your local heritage and this is demonstrated by art in the landscape. Your use of a bicycle to let people know what is happening with In Bloom carries on the cycling heritage. It is encouraging to see that some vacant premises in the centre of this vibrant market town are being let for occupation. The floral 'reuse' displays and enthusiasm at the household waste site truly demonstrates the difference that can be made with a little thought – well done.

Areas for Improvement

Again there is little we can single out, however we look forward to the environmental developments around the Gallow Hills area together with additional signage in appropriate places. We wondered whether an 'In Bloom' walking guide might be a useful addition to the work of Otley in Bloom, highlighting the main features of your work – a sort of mini portfolio walking guide.

Section C: Community Participation Areas of Achievement

As you demonstrated in your portfolio and during our visit community participation is your strength and your work with them is impressive. You also understand the need for succession planning as well as planting. We can see that you are working on this with younger members of the community. Your fund raising is impressive and your efforts are rewarded as demonstrated by the support from Otley BID, Rotary, and Town Council to name but a few. You know how to publicise and engage. Well done to you all.

Areas for Improvement

In recognition of the work you are carrying out with younger members of the community it would be an asset to your entry for the judges to meet some of the younger members of the community to see what they are doing and how they feel about it.

Pudsey Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

This small group of volunteers in Pudsey have made a major impact in the town centre and the community should be proud of the group's efforts. Good to see new members coming on board. Work the group has carried out can be clearly seen particularly around the bus station and leisure centre. The library garden is also a nice sitting area which once had nothing to attract people to their efforts are now being backed up by businesses putting out their own displays and helping to maintain troughs planted by the group. Expanding the route is helping a lot as the group find new floral areas to incorporate as well as maintaining prominent areas such as the entrance to Pudsey Lowtown and the planting around the old tripe baths. Also good to see the group engaging with young people through the local schools. Overall a very good entry and we would encourage this group for future years.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

New planting by the leisure centre car park. Good array of colourful herbaceous perennials which should give colour for several years. Planters around bus station very colourful and well-watered and looked after by volunteers. Library garden now a well-used area by people visiting the library and local cafes. Removal of old overgrown shrub beds in car park replaced with good perennial planting. Several areas in shopping centre would benefit from this if finances allow. Good to see businesses getting on board.

Areas for Improvement

The planters at the rear of the leisure centre would be worth looking at changing the plants as they are starting to look tired. However, only change them if you have enough resources to do so. As discussed lift the beds at the welcome to Pudsey site as there is very little soil there.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Good to see wild flower areas being created in Pudsey Park. The will link in nicely with the woodland wildlife area. For the size of Pudsey town centre the areas were particularly clean much of which is down to the group with their weekly litter picks. Good signage and art work. In library garden advertising local groups is a good way of making people aware of what's on offer in Pudsey.

Areas for Improvement

Would like to see more examples of recycling and water conservation. Crimbles allotments may be a good area to start. Woodland area in Pudsey Park good wildlife area which needs some thought and improvements but what we discussed were excellent ideas for this area. Try and get local groups involved.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Group now well established and going in right direction. Despite losing some funding group still actively seeking financial support and working with local businesses and the schools. Gaining new members and the work they have done is now showing dividends in the area. Keep up the excellent work and we look forward to visiting again in the future.

Areas for Improvement

As discussed would continue as the group is. Improving small areas but not to over expand. Encourage new members and get local businesses on board. Very good effort

Todmorden Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

It is wonderful to meet such a committed group of people and to see what a difference the Bloom group is making to the town. We were impressed at the year round involvement of the group in town activities. We were pleased to learn how groups are working together for the benefit of the community. The group are clearly enjoying widespread support from the people of Todmorden and rightly so.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The Sensory Garden was full of colour and the lavender is sure to attract insects for people to see in the middle of the town. It was a good idea to include grasses for height and movement. The Apothecary garden was an exciting place to be and it was pleasing to see the enthusiasm of those involved. The saddlebag planters and hanging baskets on the pergola brought welcome colour into the town. We were impressed with the quality of planting throughout the town. The garden at the recycling centre was a really original idea and it certainly did a lot to improve the environment round it. It must also improve things for the people working there. The planting around the cricket field was impressive and a credit to the volunteers there. We were pleased to see the children of Castle Hill School and to hear how much they enjoyed the gardening activities there which the group are involved in. The planting around the Polished Knob business was impressive. We were very impressed by the work done by the group on the Pat Moss Garden, a real difference has been made there. We enjoyed seeing the planting at the railway station.

Areas for Improvement

It might be an idea to add further planting to the Sensory Garden to develop the theme further by adding plants such as sea holly and globe thistles with a crispy, prickly texture. Perhaps provide simple recipes occasionally on the website for people to use, involving herbs from the herb garden.

Continue with the work on the Pat Moss garden which is a lovely quiet place for people in the heart of the town.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Obviously the recent floods have had a great impact on the group and indeed the town and we were glad to see how well things are recovering. We enjoyed seeing the planting for wildlife at the butterfly bed near the station. We were also pleased to see the insect hotels there. We were pleased to hear that pollinating plants are added to various containers and barrier planters in the town. It was a good idea to consult the Perfect Pollinator resource from the RHS. We were pleased to learn that reduced peat compost is used in the town and about the addition of slow release fertiliser and water retaining foam. Obviously the Pat Moss garden is an important part of local heritage and the work done there has had a big impact. It is to the credit of the group that we saw no litter or dog fouling to spoil the town.

Areas for Improvement

Consider planting herbs at the railway station for passengers to enjoy and to bring insect life into the station. Perhaps it might be possible to introduce a wildflower meadow somewhere in the park and perhaps increase areas of insect friendly planting there. Consider introducing further nectar sources and berry bearing shrubs into the Pat Moss Garden. The canal area is an important part of the town's heritage. Consider interpretation boards to inform visitors about it and possibly wildlife planting along the sides of the canal.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

We are confident that the group will continue to grow and thrive far into the future. The garden competition run by the group will clearly encourage support and raise the profile of the group within the town. The work being done with Castle Hill School is impressive. The work done with young people, for example the bursary awarded to a young lady of the town is valuable work. Lots of good publicity and public involvement is taking place. The group are making impressive efforts to obtain grants and sponsorship for their activities.

Areas for Improvement

Consider using an A board when the group are working to inform people and encourage new volunteers. Consider a poster or newspaper initiative inviting new volunteers to join. Perhaps the garden competition could be extended to include a section for young gardeners.

Category 2D: Large Town (12-35K)

Beverley Gold Category Winner

Introduction

Beverley Town Council continue to make a difference - even organising the sun to shine on a superb tour of this delightful town. We were met by Helen and Clive at The Racecourse, where one of the ground staff proudly showed us the new wooden planters they had made, full of abundant flowers and other improvements made to this immaculately kept racecourse. This was followed by a very comprehensive tour of a litter free town, which is enhanced by beautiful floral displays planted by Beverley in Bloom, by neatly cut grass verges and roundabouts maintained by East Riding Council and Beverley Council, who actively promote Yorkshire in Bloom, (with many new banners on display). They liaise with shops and businesses, and the In Bloom Group who help to maintain The Coronation Gardens, The Memorial Garden, the Minster Quiet Garden, and The Jubilee Garden and many others. 75 hanging baskets and 60 barrier planters - many with plants donated by Plantraisers, Shepherds and Breeder Seeds, all give residents and visitors a feast for their eyes.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The many barrier planters (98), hanging baskets, and gardens such as: The Coronation Garden; Minster Quiet Garden; Sessions House and the Memorial Garden. This together with cost neutral baskets, tubs provided by residents, shops and business premises all make Beverley a very attractive litter and graffiti free town. This entry is enhanced with wonderful allotments and open spaces. Flowers abound in The Jubilee Gardens and private and sheltered housing, including the Outer Trinities. A special mention must go to Pat Cooper and residents at Anderson Court which was a delight.

Areas for Improvement

Continue with the proposed improvements to the area outside Tesco and continue replacing the old wooden barrels with the new maintenance free ones. Keep the relationship going with East Riding Council regarding their planting schemes. This will give a more unified floral feel to the outskirts of the town to work in compatibility with that of the areas of town done by the in bloom initiative. - otherwise a wonderful achievement by dedicated groups of people ably led by Beverley Town Council and the In Bloom Group, in conjunction with East Riding Council -- Very well done.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Once again we were very impressed by Burton Bushes, a lovely wild wooded area, the Westwood pastures, the clearing out of Beverley Beck and Dyke and the many allotments in the area which help to provide natural habitat and wildlife areas. A very enjoyable trip on the Mermaid down Beverley Beck was followed by on the Sytan barge, a wonderful re-cycling presentation by East Riding Council. The Councils and Beverley in Bloom work together, to help keep Beverley litter and graffiti free, with

street cleaning, a handyman, and regular litter picks by the In Bloomers. There is obvious pride in the towns local heritage with the Elwell and Hockney paintings; and the new moth trail; The Towns Guild; The Civic Society and of course the magnificent Minster and St Mary's Church. New recycled planters and street signs all demonstrate Beverley's commitment to make its surroundings even more attractive. This is demonstrated by the cleanliness of the environment around the Saturday Market.

Areas for Improvement

Continue with the ongoing maintenance of street furniture. It is good that the group has identified areas for development and refurbishment. Work around the Library and Treasurer's House is ongoing work in progress, and it was good to see that this work had developed since the spring.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

We were delighted to see the new "In Bloom" Banners around the town and with the local press who cover the many events Beverley in Bloom and the council support, such as the start of The Tour de Yorkshire, the planned Open Allotments Day, The Minster Sunflower competition, Beverley Food Festival and links with local schools, Guides and Brownies, some of whom help residents in planting and maintaining displays. Funding is provided by Beverley Town Council, with some help from businesses and greatly helped by the many free plants supplied by Plantraisers and also Shepherds and Brexley Seeds. Once more a wonderful sense of community amongst the many groups and residents ably led by Beverley Town Council and the In Bloom Group in conjunction with East Riding Council - Making the town a delightful place to live in.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to publicise the work of Beverley in Bloom. Where possible encourage more volunteers to join the in bloom group. This will help with engagement and increased community awareness. Again very little to suggest - possibly in your excellent brochure giving us more information about funding.

Pontefract Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

On a sweltering day in Pontefract the judges were welcomed by Colin White from the 'In Bloom' group and Dave Mee the Countryside Officer from Wakefield Council. The improvements and inroads made by the group over the last 12 months was evident during the judging route with particular emphasis in attracting businesses at the forefront of the campaign. The judges commented on how clean the town looked with very little litter or graffiti evident in the town centre

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The judges were taken on a tour through Valley Gardens and were introduced to Liz Clayden a volunteer who proudly showed us the sponsored rose garden which offered a colourful array of floribunda and hybrid tea roses, the group also maintained the sensory and herbaceous beds within the park. The group attracted 38 local businesses to fund hanging baskets which adorned the town centre and coupled with an additional 34 baskets provided by the nursery and the 'in bloom' group the foundation has been laid to attract more funders in future years. The vegetable and fruit garden at Larks Hill School was impressive with potatoes, onions and strawberries amongst the produce being grown, the gardening club were knowledgeable and enthusiastic in showing the judges around the garden. The quality of front gardens especially around the Larks Hill estate was noted. The mixed planting outside St Giles Church was colourful as was the hanging basket displays outside the 'Tap & Barrel' and 'Beastfair Vaults' public houses.

Areas for Improvement

Care must be taken in committing to undertake work in the park, maintenance of the rose beds, sensory garden and herbaceous border is labour intensive and ways to minimise weeding should be explored. Spent mushroom compost could be utilised on the rose beds as a mulch which should not interfere with the grass cutting operations that the council undertake. It is good to hear that the P.O.W hospice has permission to design and renovate the circular bed adjacent to Half Penny Lane and should be a welcome addition to future bids. The relocation of 3 planters to the area around the war memorial would provide welcome colour to this busy thoroughfare

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Composting and rain water harvesting was evident at Larks Hill School along with a designated wildlife area. The interpretation boards in Valley Gardens were informative giving an insight into the Sensory Garden and Liquorish Plant!

Areas for Improvement

The creation of a composting area near the rose garden in Valley Gardens would be beneficial and dialogue with the council should be pursued. The wildlife garden at Larks Hill School requires some remedial work to be carried out on the pond and surrounds to make it safe especially around the pond area, a designated teacher could be appointed to the project to ensure all H & S criteria are met. Call upon the expertise and experience of Dave Mee to advise/ assist in the renovation. An outdoor classroom /seating area could be incorporated within the garden taking advantage of the natural shade provided by the mature trees. The sponsorship plaques situated in the rose beds within Valley Gardens require systematically replacing due to vandalism.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Attracting local business funding to enable an increase in hanging baskets is a positive and steps should be taken to encourage the businesses to commit for next year

Areas for Improvement

Keep pressing multi - national businesses to come on board and assist with the in bloom bid, try networking with other in bloom groups for idea's / approach. As with most in bloom groups attracting committee members and volunteers is often difficult. Involve local councillors to raise the issue and promote the in bloom group. A tour itinerary and portfolio would have been helpful to the judges and one or both should be considered for future entries

Category 3: Large Town (35-100K)

Halifax Silver Gilt Category Winner

Introduction

Halifax centre looks cheerful with its many colourful hanging baskets, tubs and railing planters. Both public and private areas are well planted and maintained.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

We saw both formal and informal planting schemes of a good standard throughout the town including the Woolshops Shopping Centre. We saw evidence of some excellent and innovative gardening practices in the Godfrey Road Allotments and Ravenscliffe Secondary Special School. Manor Heath demonstration gardens and Albert Park had good displays.

Areas for Improvement

Approaching more small businesses to provide tubs could be considered.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

There was plenty of evidence at Ravenscliffe School with their wildlife area, pond, insect houses, compost heap, water butts and free range hens. Hanging baskets now have reservoirs so require less frequent watering. The streets were generally clean and litter free

Areas for Improvement

Some signage and street furniture would benefit from sprucing up. Information boards for the vegetable and herb barrels would add interest and advice as to whether the public can pick or sample would be useful.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Halifax has acquired grants for hanging baskets and large business such as McDonalds, Santander, Vue, Duke of Wellington pub and Lloyds have helped with planting up their areas with the railing planters. There has also been good support from Rotary. There is a small gardening club at Manor Heath, volunteers help out at Ravenscliffe School and Godfrey Road allotment has a new plot suitable for disabled gardeners.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps the route can be re-examined so all the criteria can be evidenced. More publicity for the in Bloom scheme and what has been achieved could be put in place.

Keighley Silver Gilt

Introduction

Keighley in Bloom has undergone a major change in 2016 in that now it has become a partnership of local groups and Friends groups which are to self-manage the Keighley Bloom initiative. This does not mean that there is not a central direction and vision for Keighley in Bloom because there clearly is. The judges have no doubt that given the time to change this will be greatly beneficial.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The bedding around the Town Hall Square was outstanding and the number of hanging baskets were of good standard. There was a number of excellent private gardens and some businesses had contributed significantly to the in bloom initiative. Keighley in Bloom had taken on responsibility for a number of local authority flowerbeds and maintain them which was making improvements to the quality of maintenance in the town centre

Areas for Improvement

On the visit to the allotment site it was clear that a lot of allotment plots were underused and that some attention was needed. The visit to Devonshire Park was interesting and the park did have a number of unusual trees however the park was in need of an improved standard of maintenance. If the local college could be persuaded to maintain the beds around their former building that could make improvement to the town centre

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The recycling of wood, metal, paper and glass etc. by the shops and the local authority was good to see. The work carried out by local residents at High Springs was a credit to all those people involved.

Areas for Improvement

Street furniture outside of the shopping areas could do with some attention. Consideration could be given to increasing the amount of wildlife areas and natural habitat.

Section C: Community Participation
Areas of Achievement

It was clear that there was a considerable number of Friends groups that were being encouraged by Keighley in Bloom. It was evident that the environment group had a plan for year round events to continue to promote the thin blue initiative throughout the winter months

Areas for Improvement

It was a pity that the judges were unable to meet any of the schoolchildren or visit any of the schools in the area. As the local authority withdraws funding from Keighley in Bloom efforts will have to be made to find ways of replacing this funding in imaginative ways

Category 4: City

Kingston-upon-Hull Silver Award

Introduction

2017 will of course see the City of Hull become the European City of Culture, and work is well underway to make many improvements to the city centre. This of course means a lot of building and road works at the moment. The results of this work plus many events and projects will be viewed by the world. Community gardening is developing well across the city, with several outstanding projects, including a two acre community orchard.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The Wilberforce area and museum gardens provide an oasis of green space within a densely built area and is very well used by the general public. The Queens gardens provide city centre green space bringing colour into the city and acting as a gateway to the park. This area will be subject to further development prior to 2017. There are a number of public houses in the old city displaying hanging baskets, with some also having well planted courtyard areas.

Areas for Improvement

At the moment, of course, the main focus is on the works and actual events for 2017. I am sure this will be a success, not just for next year but with the effect carrying on well into the future. However as a point for consideration many commercial centres are now using bloom to promote themselves working to create an experience to effectively increase footfall. It may be beneficial if this could be established in the city with partnerships from shopping centres and other interested parties.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The work carried out to ensure that high levels of re-cycling is achieved is impressive. There is a good level of information available about the history of the city, which linked to ongoing works will further develop the cultural offer. The involvement of schools in growing and conservation is a very good program.

Areas for Improvement

The challenge of litter removal is well planned, but some areas of litter were noted. However, it should be noted that the city centre was litter free. It would have been helpful to hear or have seen more of the excellent conservation work that goes on.

Section C: Community Participation Areas of Achievement

Commercial and community input to the environment are very good, on a large scale St Andrews Quay a large retail park with extensive grounds alongside the river. A large number of public houses in the old town where displaying good quality hanging baskets. We then had the community orchard, the Case Project and Pickering Park all good contributions to the environment of the city and its residential community. Community involvement through a garden competition, supporting school gardens and a wide ranging Hull in Bloom competitions, which includes a best shed category.

Areas for Improvement

Regrettably the impact of severe funding reductions is having an impact on the quality of green space in the city. The grass cutting frequency would seem to have been reduced along with limited maintenance being carried out to rose and shrub beds all contribute to a less than pristine appearance. Some areas had quantities of litter and weed in the streets. Street furniture was mixed in terms of quality and maintenance.

Leeds Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Leeds City Council, supports, enhances and invests in bloom in a way that sets the highest possible standard for community involvement and partnership working. The statistics also demonstrate how much Leeds gains, with 52 active in bloom groups across a wide area of the authority. In addition to this the design a flower bed competition for school children , attracted 2000 entries, with the winning designs being planted in the city centre and signed to indicate their origin. By investing in bloom Leeds demonstrates both a positive return on the investment and an enhancement of community cohesion.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement Areas of Achievement

The scale of the city needs to be born in mind with some 4000 hectares of parks and green space, we were impressed by the quality of the horticultural practices we saw throughout our visit. We visited, allotments, bloom groups, Feed Ledesma hospice, church yards, parks and formal gardens. Because of the scale it is not possible to list all the sites. We in all cases we saw enthusiastic people achieving excellent results to a very high standard. An illustration of the high standards is demonstrated by the new park at Sovereign Street, with innovative landscaping providing a green lung between high rise blocks.

Areas for Improvement

This is really a case of continue to develop the partnerships, the apprenticeship scheme, and the support to the community. In this way we are sure Leeds in Bloom will continue to deliver a good environment for everyone.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility Areas of Achievement

A good sound policy on re-cycling and waste management, including the opening of an incinerator complete with visitor centre. A number of relevant information boards provide information on historical elements in the city. The developing plan for an HLF bid will, if successful, enhance the built environment, including historical buildings. Very little litter was seen, which considering the area we covered demonstrated a sound street cleaning operation.

Areas for Improvement

A number of small conservation areas were shown, and the portfolio demonstrated 156 conservation sites. Consideration could be given to either visiting a site or if that is not practical make more of the conservation/woodland during the presentation. Please note this is an observation and not a criticism. The soon to be established BID rangers will have a further positive impact on the quality of street cleaning especially the gum problem.

Section C: Community Participation Areas of Achievement

As highlighted in the introduction the numbers and range of people and organisations involved is an example that could be followed by others to gain environmental improvements and community support for the areas they live and work in. Good publicity including banners on main highways and a range of promotions such as the photography competition, gardens competition and the flower bed competition. This along with an awards evening where the Lord Mayor presents certificates and individuals meet others who are doing similar things continues to support Leeds in Bloom.

Areas for Improvement

Space does not allow us to list the individuals and groups we met on our tour, so our improvement is to ask that our thanks are expressed to everyone involved in Leeds in Bloom, and please continue to develop and take opportunities as they occur.

Category 4A: Town/City Centres/BID

Barnsley MBC Gold Award Joint Category Winner

Introduction

A thriving town in the heart of South Yorkshire Barnsley's local culture remains rooted in its industrial heritage of coal mining, linen and glassmaking. Barnsley has a lively shopping centre and social hub with a range of independent shops and a new museum based in the iconic town hall. The town has many well maintained areas and open spaces tended by committed members of staff for the residents and visitors to enjoy.

Barnsley in Bloom are committed to supporting many community groups and businesses in creating a better environment for everyone. The redevelopment of the shopping centre is in the process of demolition to make way for a new retail, library and leisure complex to be a hub for community activity, along with the other developments and partnership working which will continue to reinvigorate Barnsley.

Barnsley in Bloom are very open to suggestions and pride in their community came across in abundance – well done on your achievements.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The hanging baskets and floral displays were good quality, colourful and well maintained, the 20 sustainable timber planters were excellent and had good impact supporting greening up grey areas and also promoting Barnsley in Bloom. Planting in beds on roundabouts and traffic islands, block coloured for good effect quality. The Town Hall carpet bedding was garden mastery and sharpening the beds with the new metal edging and showcasing significant events was excellent.

The sustainable planting throughout the town was good especially in the Centenary Square. Churchfields Peace Garden preserving and improving a valuable woodland area. The open space cut grass, existing planting by the local school and community payback team and mulching was good in the underpass area has made a positive improvement in a challenging area which now has less anti-social behaviour. Many of the shops in the Victorian Arcade had put an array of colourful floral pots and containers along with new signage enhancing the revitalised arcade. Tree management programme was evidenced with new and replacement trees. The semi-finished landscaped zone by the college looks great and adds another quality outdoor green space.

Areas for Improvement

Consider adding some height or dot plants in the bedding schemes for added interest. To continue with additional plantings in the Alhambra underpass area to fill the gaps to extend the seasonal colour and interest. When possible to carry out the relaying of the paths in the memorial garden, as discussed on our visit.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Although the town centre was busy it was litter and graffiti free which takes diligence, there is the backup of a graffiti team when needed. There is an enormous amount of history with the town and celebration of local heritage was evident with art, statues, sculptures and plaques throughout the town and a new memorial for the Oaks disaster is being planned. The commemoration of the Somme art work and medals was inspirational and complimented the Town Hall gardens. The judges were impressed with the Countryside management programme with involvement from the Wildlife Trust and 'Love where you Live' focussing on 8 identified sites such as a former reclamation site and grey areas supporting with start-up costs for tools, providing training and skills e.g. how to control Himalayan Balsam, change in maintenance programmes such as grass cutting, using traditional methods such as horses clearing timber, woodland management in line with biodiversity and wildlife already surveyed 28 butterfly species and orchids. The sale of timber being re-invested in Barnsley in Bloom.

Areas for Improvement

When development is complete try to ensure that the existing high standards are maintained in terms of landscaping and street furniture. Monitor the landscaping at Pinfold steps and the sixth form college to try and ensure the trees become established/replaced and that appropriate maintenance is carried out.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Barnsley in Bloom has a well thought out programme of yearly events with good press coverage. Working in partnership with 18 friend's and community groups across the borough, the development of projects within the town and the partnership working with the various organisations, volunteers and trusts. The committed Barnsley in Bloom team support plenty of events e.g. The Markets federation sponsor the well supported Children's poster competition, using local businesses for sponsorship schemes, the successful celebration of Volunteers event has been extended to include media coverage, presentations and awards, the Garden competition run with Berneslai Homes, Barnsley beach and market garden. Commendation must be mentioned to The Barnsley Civic Trust committed to keeping and improving green spaces while supporting urban areas, promoting retailers and businesses such as shop awards.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to develop the many links with sponsors, volunteers, traders, and other supporters as well as celebrating the success that the town centre is achieving.

Leeds

Gold Award

Joint Category Winner

Introduction

Leeds has a vibrant and successful City Centre containing many different forms of stunning architecture from the recently restored church and grounds of St John the Evangelist to thriving Victorian shopping arcades. In contrast there are many well maintained high class modern retail premises with a whole host of new shops nearing completion. The city centre has many summer activities planned for children including a Temporary Play Scape and a Pop- up Park. Leeds City Centre is always busy by day with office workers, residents, shoppers, visitors, diners and students with the latter continuing well into the night. There are many plans for new buildings and re-generation in the pipeline which should maintain Leeds as the premier northern city it deserves.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The judges were allowed to visit the Sovereign Street Development Site which would be opening the day after their visit. The new pedestrian area had raised beds newly planted with top quality specimen trees, shrubs and perennials, a narrow rill runs down either side of the walk ways. At the far end of the site was a granite area approximately 3 x 8 meters which contained a state of the art fountain system fed from an underground tank. The illuminated fountain could be changed remotely according to the time of day and number of people in the area giving jets up to 3 meters high and draining down the rills to be recirculated. The judges were pleased to meet two of the planting team, one being a horticultural apprentice who had worked on the site and was hoping for a full time position with Parks and Countryside. He explained how he enjoyed the many aspects of horticultural training provided and hoped he could use his skills throughout his life making a difference to the local landscape. The aquatic Landscaping and fountain of the disused canal barge wharf in Victoria Quays suggested and maintained by residents in the adjoining apartments was an unusual but innovative way to manage the area.

Areas for Improvement

All the areas the judges saw in the City Centre Judging were kept to the highest standard. Maintaining a clean litter free City Centre is paramount for the ongoing success of the area along with horticulturally well maintained green spaces. Continue to provide staff with modern and effective equipment to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. Encourage more butterflies and pollinating insects within the City Centre by sowing small areas with an annual wild flower mix which should provide interest for everyone and increase the butterfly population

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

There was no graffiti, dog fouling or fly posting apparent at the time of judging. The condition and structure of the buildings on the route were very good including some excellent plant arrangements and hanging baskets on some of the public houses and restaurants which made a huge difference to the street scene. There were few if any vacant buildings which needed managing. Leeds is

committed to encouraging re-cycling and the amount of waste being sent to landfill. A new partnership with Veolia will help in the council's plan when the recovery and energy from the waste facility opens. Litter bins in the City Centre are emptied several times a day. At the present time there are several solar powered compacter bins in operation which if proved successful the number will be increased. The bins indicate to the cleansing department when the bins need emptying saving time visiting bins which do not need emptying.

There are many listed buildings in the area which have been renovated to the highest standard, these include some of the historical Victorian arcades, plants have been provided to be displayed outside many of the shop within the arcades. Storyboards in the area help to promote local heritage. There are many permanent and temporary art works on display in the area including hand carved benches by the artist Peter Yarwood. The benches won The Leeds Architecture Sword for Public Art in 2009.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to roll out and update street furniture appropriate to the area. Aim to have a seven day ambassador service when funding is available. Encourage landlords and building owners to continue to maintain their premises to the highest standard.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The Bid4Leeds's vision is one of ambition to drive Leeds City Centre forward, to compete on a global scale and to act as a pivotal coordinating voice uniting the businesses and communities of Leeds reflecting the diversity of the city. Businesses in the area have been consulted and are now moving forward to provide extra services for inhabitants and visitors to enhance the city's services. The Parks and Countryside Service are offering grant aid to external organisations in order to promote interest, understanding, learning and participation by citizens in issues relating to horticulture, nature conservation, countryside and the environment which should fulfil a roll in community cohesion at the same time.

The work of the crypt should be noted in both the quality of the garden, and the social program of assisting people to recover, part of the program uses gardening to help both with new skills. The garden also provides a quite area within the city for reflection and contemplation.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to encourage all your community to be involved with the rewarding work currently being undertaken within the city centre.

Morley Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Good to see Morley back in the Yorkshire in Bloom Competition where it rightly belongs. The judges firstly met community groups and people involved in Morley's BID. They showed there is a lot of community spirit here. Good to hear the children from different schools speak to so many people about the importance of their local environment and what it means to them. Some even weeded the flower beds outside the town hall before the judge arrived.

Walking down the main street in Morley you can clearly see how the area has improved with local shops clearly displaying posters promoting the competition. Good mixture of formal and informal planting providing much needed colour to the surrounding but also showing off some of Morley's rich heritage. Well done Morley and we look forward to seeing you back in the main competition in years to come.

Section A: Community Areas of Achievement

There is a good community spirit in Morley with a lot of groups involved in different ways to improve the community not only in central Morley but also surrounding areas. Businesses in the shopping precinct displayed posters promoting competition. Good to see schools involved.

Areas for Improvement

To get businesses in the high street involved in its own floral competition. Would add greatly to area and bring them more on board.

Section B: Maintenance/Development Areas of Achievement

Good floral planting throughout the area. Worked well showing off some of Morley's heritage. The roundabout coming into Morley was particularly colourful. May be worth introducing more herbaceous perennials into the beds to give extra height. Where used the perennials worked particularly well.

Areas for Improvement

The entrance to the park beds are overgrown with weed. It may have been worth avoiding this area. Consider more herbaceous perennials being used in Main street.

Section C: Environment Areas of Achievement

Good to see the preservation and promotion of Morley's vast heritage. Pleased to see a lack of litter and graffiti for such a large area. Very few vacant properties showing how Morley is improving even in hard economic times.

Areas for Improvement

Street furniture has had temporary repairs but now ready for refurbishment. Difficulties behind the shops and church grounds being tackled and we look forward to seeing improvements here in reducing anti-social behaviour.

Sheffield Gold Award

Introduction

Grey to green Sheffield Riverside Business District

The project is interesting and has presented challenges to the skilled team of people involved. On the surface the passer by will see an informal planting of perennial plants and bulbs. The design gives the impression of walking through a track with verges of flowers on either side. The challenge has been to bring what had become a disconnected from the city centre and in need of being re designed. To do this the road layout has been extensively re-designed and the planted areas are on what used to be highway. To assist with flood reduction the planting is a vital part of the drain system Sustainable Urban Drainage System, (SUDS). Some of the beds are divided by concrete walls acting as holding bays for excess water. All the beds are constructed with sugar beet washings, re-cycled crushed concrete, glass ground to be sand like and composted green waste. This is covered with around 100mm of gravel, the plants are about 30% in the gravel and the remainder in the soil.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The quality of the landscape design, planting design and street furniture, has all been carried out to a very high standard. The plant material is establishing well, and providing a display even in this its first year. The maintenance plan is developed but given the nature and purpose of the site it is under review to see what will work best in these circumstances.

Areas for Improvement

The only area would be to consider if some information boards would be of value to people who wanted to identify what is a big range of plants.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The use of high quality paving, street furniture and litter bins are used to good effect and are of the Sheffield City style, thus joining up areas of the city. Also the investment in quality products should ensure that they survive for a long time. The area was litter free, and well presented.

Areas for Improvement

Possibly not directly in your control but it is a shame that the bin at the end of the Brewery is of poor quality and surrounded by cigarette ends. Aging outside the project area but adjacent to it was the riverside path, which is weedy, and suffers from stressed workers discarding cigarette ends.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The area is mainly business based of which large office blocks dominate, although conversions are now taking place to develop residential blocks in the area. So extensive consultation took place with the business community and this continues with newsletter updates on both progress of the work and information on what was to be carried out next.

Areas for Improvement

Given the nature of the project and its location, work will continue with the business community. The involvement of the university at Love Square, and use of the area by children from the local autistic project will add to the value of the site.

Category 5A: Coastal Resort A

Whitby Silver Gilt Category Winner

Introduction

A seaside town with many interests to explore and everywhere reminders of its fishing port heritage, sees Whitby today as an often visited tourist destination. The colourful floral displays seen throughout the town, the many hidden yards with their own unique styles, the splendour of Pannett Park and a clear willingness from the wider community to make Whitby the best it can be, made the judges visit a genuine pleasure and a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The recently refurbished central border at Crescent Gardens is a triumph and deserves mention for its plant selection, design and execution. Pannett Park was exemplary in its presentation and it's easy to understand why it is popular with so many of the towns' visitors and the resident community. The many colourful floral displays seen throughout the town, from both seasonal and sustainable plantings, in containers and baskets, in borders and beds from public and private areas was commendable and a credit to all who contributed.

Areas for Improvement

The quality of a number of the floral displays from the pubs and retailers was good, but many more had limited displays or none at all. It is appreciated that the challenge to engage more practical

participation from businesses is not easy. It may be prudent to focus on the larger businesses generally, then to pursue groups of smaller ones in geographic zones to demonstrate the advantages of a cohesive approach.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

During the judging tour through the town barely any litter was seen, this despite the large number of tourists seen at virtually every location visited. A thumbs up for a great community effort. Whitby is steeped in history and much of the art and displays seen reflected this. Of particular note was the extremely well presented Sunken Garden highlighting the shelling of Whitby during 1914 by warships. The wider communities' participation in recycling schemes is to be applauded, from the reuse of green waste for mulching, use of grey water for watering container displays and as ably demonstrated at Fairways Court, the collection of rainwater for use in the garden.

Areas for Improvement

It was a joy to meet the children at their garden site at West Cliff School. The enthusiasm shown was good to see and to hear about their ideas for the future. To ensure the balance between provision of natural habitats, activity areas and plant display areas, a documented plan and timetable would give focus and help with resources requirements. The Quaker Burial Ground project is clearly going to be a longer term scheme. More consideration may need to be given to the promotion of it as a wildlife haven, as compared with its use for frequent but regulated public access as it is a key town centre site.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The excellent portfolio and presentation to the judges gave ample evidence of the programme of year round activities and endeavours of the Whitby in Bloom group. The levels of sponsorship and funding achieved by the group speaks volumes about the levels of commitment, time and hard work the group members put into achieving the standards they have reached. Well done. From the Dementia Garden development, school children's bulb planting activities, the monthly meetings linked with Whitby's other interest groups, the involvement of the payback team and the publicity and sponsorship signs in tandem with articles in the Whitby Gazette, all not only raising awareness of environmental issues but sustaining them throughout the year. It's a blueprint for success that others would do well to follow.

Areas for Improvement

The successful activities of the group have achieved much, but this has also increased the need for greater involvement for additional volunteers to continue the good work so far. Recruitment of more willing participants is essential if the momentum the group has established is to continue. This entry is close to achieving even greater accolades and with the levels of commitment already demonstrated, could do very well.



Category 6: Public and Private Charitable Establishments

Abbeydale Residential Home Gold Award

Introduction

The Abbeyfield Residential Home was a delight to judge and its owner Bob rightly proud of his achievements and that of his staff. With over five and a half thousand bedding plants around its extensive grounds. The grounds provide a floral paradise for the homes 36 residents, either directly outside their rooms, formal terraces or rolling lawn. The Abbeydale is planted from roadside to roadside, back to front with attractive bedding rose's, baskets and containers as well a great array of trees. A beautiful setting and a pleasure to visit

Areas of Achievement

Good use of colour throughout garden with a great mixture of bedding shrubs and trees. Well maintained baskets and containers throughout the grounds all very colourful. Well maintained property and lawns. Great array of bedding plants.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

If bedding does get too much may be worth reducing roadside bedding with colourful ground cover plants or herbaceous planting.

Audley Court Estates Limited Gold Award

Introduction

Hollins Hall, run by Audley Court Estates is a residential retirement development close to Harrogate on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. Set in 14 acres of landscaped gardens, formerly the grounds of the Georgian hall, there are a mix of flats, bungalows and houses. The grounds were set out as shared communal areas for the benefit of all residents and comprise substantial lawned areas with a variety of beds and borders which were initially planted with the standard landscaping planting of shrubs, bushes and small trees. Over the last few years, gardener David Hullah has successfully transformed a largely green oasis into one which provides an abundance of colour in summer and throughout the seasons.

Areas of Achievement

Over a period of time, David has gradually replaced much of the shrubbery with flowering perennials, supplemented in summer by colourful bedding. Many of the plants used in this still on-going process have been grown from seed, cuttings and division as well as donations from residents. Particularly attractive were the beds to either side of the Hollins Hall reception and the formal garden immediately opposite the building.

A variety of containers throughout the site provided splashes of colour alongside paths, adjacent to car parking and on the rear terrace of the Hall. David works closely with those residents who enjoy gardening, clearing beds to allow mixed plantings or even creating new beds, laying patios or providing containers as appropriate. There were many wonderful and creatively planted areas being cared for by residents. Additionally, for those who like growing fruit and vegetables, a small 'allotment' area was provided on the edge of the site. While residents are expected to care for their own garden areas, David is sensitive to the need to sometimes step in and help out or even take over for a while.

An additional benefit of the introduction of mixed plantings has been a rise in the number of birds on the site, also encouraged by feeders provided by some residents. The 'balancing' pond to the rear of the building has become home to a colony of great crested newts and also provides a home for water birds such as moorhens as well as a variety of wild plants such as flag iris on the water's edge, and on the banking's beside the pond. Congratulations must go to David for his steady approach in transforming a site which would have been pleasant but otherwise rather boring. He is also to be commended for his work in supporting residents in their varied gardening endeavours.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The pond is an on-going development project and the support of a local environment group should further support the aim of creating a haven for both wildflowers and wildlife. An old orchard to the side of the site has a number of old apple trees. A local group such as The Northern Fruit Group may be able to assist with identification of the varieties in the orchard and advise on its maintenance.

Barnsley Hospice Gold Award

Introduction

The team of volunteers has been reduced in numbers, but their enthusiasm and skill remains. They are keeping the large and in places difficult site maintained to a high standard and in keeping with the objectives of the hospice. The entrance provides a bright welcome by using seasonal planting in wall planters, baskets and tub planters. This planting works well being limited by the need to allow vehicle access and car parking.

Areas of Achievement

The water or secret garden provides a quite reflective space for patients with wide opening doors to make the garden fully accessible. The design for the new garden looks very good, having been

developed with the needs of patients, and visitors in mind. The provision of bird baskets and feeders encourage wildlife and again add interest to the garden. Working with Spring Well School to build planters for the garden. The gardeners had aimed to have a garden area visible from every room which was praiseworthy. Patient groups were involved in the planning of the garden areas. Good use of composting bins

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The obvious point is to try to increase volunteer numbers again, to prevent the task of maintaining the site becoming too much of a burden. Consider alternative planting in the rockery area, possible use of heather's would provide year round colour and if planted into a weed free area would reduce future maintenance. Celebrate the new garden when it is completed.

Case Training Services Gold Award

Introduction

The project has been running for a number of years, creating opportunities for less able people to develop skills and make a positive contribution to the development of the two plots. This development involves growing both edible and ornamental crops outside and in tunnels. In addition using recycled timber sheds and shelters that have been built and sets been developed using a sofa frame planted with potatoes, on a mat of marigolds along with other work to form The Couch Potatoes garden.

Areas of Achievement

A good quality of plant material and use of the plots along with innovation such as the globe and potato couch. The new shed has given pride to those involved in its construction. The enthusiasm of the service users and the welcome they provided on our visit. The objectives of the project and skill of the staff, who achieve such good results.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Given recent staff changes it would be desirable and productive if the horticultural skills of staff could be re-introduced to ensure best value is obtained for the clients, involved in the project.

Donisthorpe Hall, Leeds Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

A large residential nursing home on the outskirts of Leeds situated in large well maintained grounds. As you enter the drive you cannot help but notice various attractive features and gardens on the left as you approach the reception area. The well maintained recently enlarged car park is situated near by surrounded by trees.

Areas of Achievement

The area just outside the entrance door has a well maintained floral feature and a covered seating area for the residents to enjoy. A little further along a grassed area with flowerbeds and delightful shrubberies. There are also wooden arbours placed in strategic places to catch the sun and a peaceful garden with a fountain where the residents can be soothed by the running water as they sit beneath the tall Monkey Puzzle tree which offers partial shade from the sun. There is also a fairy garden with fragrant rose bushes and shade for residents to stroll through. The grounds are maintained to a high standard by the highly motivated staff that encourages the residents to have an interest in the garden when pruning or planting. Fallen leaves are composted and re cycled throughout the grounds.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The use of brightly coloured bedding plants in residential areas may help those residents with a visual impairment. If all the grounds cannot be shown to the judges on their visit use an up to date portfolio with photographs of before and after any improvements or changes. The portfolio should show how the various Yorkshire in Bloom criteria have been achieved. This may take some time to compile before the visit and the assistance of office staff and management may be needed to achieve higher marks explaining how the criteria are being met. Maintain the already high standard of horticulture throughout the grounds and continue to introduce new features.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council - Worklink Sewerby

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Worklink Sewerby is an outreach project based at Sewerby Hall and Gardens helping adults with learning disabilities to develop life skills, to ultimately support their place in the community and potentially go on to employment. The clients gain experience through team working in the glasshouses, nursery and plant sale area, used for propagation and display. As a first time entry the judges were impressed by the high standards achieved and how well the team have integrated into the operations at Sewerby Hall. Congratulations all round for a job well done.

Areas of Achievement

The high standards of horticulture produced in the plant display house, propagation nursery and herb beds. The innovative Roald Dahl display features constructed of recycled materials seen throughout the walled garden. The Heritage Beds project, linking with the on-site Museum, growing herbs of historical significance from heritage seeds.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Explore opportunities for energy saving measures within the unit, particularly use of thermal screens in the glasshouses. A potential exists to host a demonstration area for energy saving at the unit where a wind turbine and solar panels could generate power for enhancing the annual display features. To

compliment the sale of the Christmas wreaths, other seasonal products such as planted Easter baskets could be introduced to develop continuity of production and variety.

Friends of Western Library Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The objective of the garden is: to encourage the local community of all ages to learn, to grow, to cook, and eat healthily whilst encouraging recycling by engaging and teaching at the same time, creating a beautiful surrounding for all the community to enjoy. The volunteers involved achieve this and more. At least nine organizations/groups are involved and activities include a curious tea party, allowing arts crafts and story telling to take place in the garden.

Areas of Achievement

Engaging the local community in both the garden and the activities based there. Achieving the clear objectives and purpose of the garden. Using the garden and library to encourage projects around reading for children, this year's project is Twilight which is read twice a week with separate sessions for different age groups. The main credit is of course the establishment of the garden and the work of the volunteers who make it such a success.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Consider reviewing the planting and future maintenance as some encroachment is taking place across the main path. Also as the garden matures some replacement planting will need to be considered to ensure the garden meets the expectations of the community.

Grimston Court Residential Care Home Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The grounds surrounding the hall are lovely and this must be a beautiful and peaceful place to live. It was a pleasure to visit it on a lovely summer day. The commitment of the single gardener there was impressive considering that he only has a limited period each week to look after the gardens.

Areas of Achievement

These grounds are large and looking after the beds and grassland is an impressive achievement. The many spring bulbs planted around the woodland must be lovely in season. A gardening club for the residents is a lovely idea and hopefully their sunflowers will do well. There are many varied places where those residents able to, can sit. Fruit trees are a lovely idea, again for the more able residents to enjoy. It was good to see feeders to attract wild birds onto the site. Having hens on site is again lovely for residents and the fact that they were rescued battery hens is very commendable.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Consider developing scented planting around areas where most residents are able to sit. Perhaps buddleias planted close to sitting areas might be a low maintenance way of bringing the movement and colour of butterflies to areas where people linger. Fill as many beds and borders as possible with low maintenance shrubs, aim where appropriate, for those which will provide ground cover and reduce weeding.

High Green Methodist Church Gold Award

Introduction

At the centre of the village lie's a hidden gem, the grounds of High Green Methodist Church were outstanding. The attention to detail and floral features were of the highest standard. Everything from the Yorkshire rose embalm flower bed to the kitchen garden at the rear of the church was well manicured.

Areas of Achievement

The grounds of the church were very well maintained. The feature Yorkshire rose flower bed to the front of the church. The kitchen garden that is used not only as a food resource but to help local children into horticulture. The attention to the environment has to be commended. Good evidence of mulching with regards grass mulch on the rose garden to suppress weeds and retain water.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Look into funding for re-constructing paths around the site. Look into increasing your volunteer base for sustainability.

Horticap Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Horticap is a Social Enterprise supporting some 40 adults with learning difficulties in developing a range of skills and in some cases, the opportunity to acquire a qualification. Based at Bluecoat Nurseries on the outskirts of Harrogate, students, staff and volunteers are involved in the running of a commercial nursery, shop and café and gardens incorporating vegetable growing and wildlife areas in addition to areas of perennial plantings.

Areas of Achievement

This long-standing enterprise has successfully supported many students over the years and indeed some current students have worked there for many years developing skills and knowledge which sometimes outstrip that of the staff! They are well-supported by the local community in terms of

visitors to the shop and gardens, fundraising, gifts in kind, volunteers (with a waiting list) and support from local businesses through 'work days'. Mixed perennials and bedding at the roadside entrance and at the nursery/ shop entrances provided welcoming splashes of colour.

The nursery has a high standard of plants for sale, as well as craft items made on-site which are available in the shop. At the time of judging a new greenhouse was being eagerly awaited with this addition aimed at improving the sales area. The gardens, with many interpretation boards and a 'Dandy Lion' quiz trail are of interest to adults and children alike. Horticap also attend various local events such as the Spring Flower Show, and the Great Yorkshire Show where they have put on award-winning exhibits. In fact, on the day of writing, they have just won a Silver Gilt Award and Best Educational Garden Award at the 2016 Great Yorkshire Show! In addition to its great strength as a provider of horticultural training, Horticap is also a wonderful example of an enterprise run on sound environmental principles. From rainwater harvesting, a wind turbine, composting, to provision of wildlife areas and re-use of plants pots, there are numerous sustainable practices in operation not only reducing their 'carbon footprint' but also providing examples of good practice not only to those in the trade but to other organisations and also to visitors.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The garden to the rear of the shop/café is a wonderful resource. While appreciating that bark paths work well with the natural setting, perhaps the provision of at least some hard standing paths would make this area more accessible to families with buggies, those who struggle walking on uneven ground, and those in wheelchairs. While aiming to encourage schools along to the site, it wasn't entirely clear to what extent this actually happens, and the website focuses on Key Stage 1 only. The gardens have the potential not only to provide a wide range of activities for visiting pupils but also provide examples of things that could be undertaken back in their school grounds e.g. minibeast hotel. It would be nice to see this aspect developed, perhaps with a focus on local schools for pupils with learning difficulties. It would be good to see recognition of their successes in Yorkshire in Bloom (and indeed any other awards) on their website.

Knaresborough House Gold Award

Introduction

Knaresborough House commands a prominent position on the High Street and the planting to its floral frontage draws your eye to the mansion house and is a credit to the dedicated team that maintains the floral features.

Areas of Achievement

The introduction of the hibernaculum underground bug house. Floral displays to the frontage of the house. The council team that tirelessly maintain the grounds to such a high standard.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

More is needed to back up the community involvement if Knaresborough in Bloom are not involved with the judging route. Look into replacing the window boxes to the front of the house as per last year's comments.

Nidderdale Children's Resource Centre (NYCC)

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Nidderdale Children's Resource Centre is a residential home providing respite care for up to 5 children/young people with complex special needs. A garden to the rear of the property is used by residents and staff. Previously just a lawned area surrounded by trees, it has been transformed by the addition of a sensory garden - 'George's Garden' - designed by parent Lorna Batchelor. Originally a show garden at the Harrogate Spring Flower Show, Lorna has masterminded its transfer to and installation at the Resource Centre. The garden has interactive features and plants for all the senses – touch, taste, sound, smell and sight – and is sure to be well used by residents, staff and parents alike. It also provides a focal point for gatherings and activities, and has indeed already been used to host a Queen's Birthday Party.

Areas of Achievement

Although comparatively compact, Lorna has done well to incorporate such a wide range of features and appropriate planting providing a feast for the senses. Within the planting, herbs provide opportunities for both taste and smell, with other plants providing different textures to touch, and grasses and bamboos the sound of rustling in the wind. Brightly flowered annuals within the perennial plantings provide splashes of colour. A wonderful water feature, complete with bilge pump, gave the opportunity for residents to cascade water down the sloping roof of a shelter through pipes and into a series of 'trays', with of course, the accompanying sound of flowing and dripping water and a chance to dabble in it too! The garden also included sound and light features and ceramics. Within the beds salt dough 'sculptures' had been created with the help of the children. Lorna has been very successful in obtaining sponsorship by way of funding and gifts in kind allowing not only the initial creation of the garden, but also its transfer to the Centre and its further development on-site.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

A corner of the original garden just beyond the sensory area would provide the perfect spot for attracting wildlife with the addition of perhaps birdfeeders, bird boxes or bug habitats. As the garden develops it would be nice to see the introduction and development of the three 'R's – reducing (waste), re-using and recycling. It was noted, however, that steps were being taken to recycle water from the water feature, a good start on this journey. As the sensory garden is a fairly new feature within the grounds, there needs to be some clarity around the on-going maintenance, so that the garden can continue to be the brilliant resource that it is.

Nightingale Hall Residential Care Home

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Nightingale Hall is a lovely flowery place and it was a pleasure to visit it. Those living there must really benefit from their lovely colourful surroundings and the peaceful atmosphere which filled the site. Obviously a lot of dedication and commitment is going on looking after the planting in a limited amount of time.

Areas of Achievement

There was tremendous impact from the colourful planting and everywhere the plants were in very good condition and cared for to a high standard. The colours chosen were very effective. The watering system is a good idea. The courtyard area is a nice place to sit. Everywhere the hard landscaping was well kept. The climbers in the courtyard were a good idea.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The steep bank at the side of the site is obviously unsuitable for residents to use and will always be hard to care for due to the steepness. Consider filling the area with low growing, insect friendly shrubs which will both draw in butterflies, benefit bees and also cut down work by providing ground cover. The area under the tree at the front is a problem if hostas do not work well consider filling the area with a suitable vinca which will provide groundcover and be trouble free. Continue working to develop the courtyard planting.

Northcliffe Environmental Enterprises Team

Gold Award

Introduction

Northcliffe Environment Enterprise Team is a social Enterprise, working with people with learning difficulties and very ably headed by Ian and his wonderful team. In the last 18 months the charity has received funding and help from Zurich Trust, Department of Works and Pensions and Electec to name a few and have developed the greenhouses and polytunnels where they produced 50,000 bedding plants and hanging baskets for sale. With the help of Marshalls they have formed raised beds for a vegetable area, with access for wheelchairs. Pots of flowers and herbaceous plants are displayed on raised tables with the group tenderly looking after them. Produce is used in the new kitchen and cafe area together where the group have also built a brick Pizza Oven. The well-equipped Joinery shop enables the group to repair many items, make new shelving and planters all from reclaimed timber. New toilets have been installed with the helpers on a rota to maintain them. All the tasks are chosen by the helpers themselves, and give them a feeling of wellbeing and a purpose.

Areas of Achievement

A wonderful nurturing, caring resource which helps people who come to develop their potential in a safe, happy environment. The use of recycled products is to be commended. Sourcing of items on Ian's

wish list is usually successful! Floral displays of the plants they have grown, colourful planting up of a timber wheelbarrow, even a timber train are all delightful, as is the new cafe area with its new kitchen which is work in progress. The generosity of the business and organisations Ian approaches is amazing. The new kitchen is a prime example of this and has been sourced at an unbelievable price. The new polytunnels, green houses and shed all give extra working area together with new movable shelving for the benches will make growing easier for all. This is an incredible organisation which helps to transform people's lives. Congratulations.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Hopefully a wished for class room near the pond for visiting schools will appear soon, and the area above the new environmental friendly drainage system will be developed when the ground has settled and the group have decided the best way to landscape it.

Overgate Hospice Gold Award

Introduction

The established garden of Overgate Hospice is a tranquil environment and well used by residents and their families. Phil, who works two days per week and is assisted by two volunteers, ensures that the grounds are well tended and meet the needs of the users with sensory features and seating areas. The grounds are also used for activities such as garden parties and Christmas events.

Areas of Achievement

The fruit, vegetables and cut flowers, especially lavender, are all used by the hospice. The lush, green lawns are impressive and the perennial planting at the front, with its arbours and benches make a very pleasant area for day patients. The living roof on the garden pod, bird boxes, compost areas and water butts show commitment to the environment. The hospice receives many donations which are used for plants and garden furniture.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

An herb growing area is planned for near the kitchen door. Consider planting clematis or other climbing plants on the pergola in front of the main entrance.

Riverhead Hall Nursing and Residential Care Home Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Riverhead Hall is situated in a lovely rural setting in well maintained grounds. There are plenty of seating areas for residents to enjoy the outdoors. Beech is an important feature here, in the form of lovely mature trees and hedges of varying size. The garden is still managing the effect of one tree that blew down, with others needing a lot of attention.

Areas of Achievement

The gardens are well maintained with some good effective planting and are well used by residents all areas were neat and tidy. The roses are in keeping with the building and surrounding areas. It was good to hear that the small greenhouse is used for food production for use in the home. Many community events take place which are well supported and raise much needed funds. It is good that residents have contact with young people which is of benefit to the both.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

It is good to hear that there are plans to further develop the gardens and provide additional plantings of shrubs and perennials for the residents to enjoy. These plans include improved accessibility. The proposed poly tunnel should be a real asset so that the residents can be involved with and participate in horticultural activities. Both of these need good expert advice.

Rosevale Residential Care Home Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

It was lovely to visit the site on a nice summer afternoon. The windows at the front were hosting very attractive displays and together with the hanging baskets on either side of the front door, a very good first impression was produced. This is a lovely flowery place for residents to enjoy and a lot of effort is clearly going into making it like that.

Areas of Achievement

There is obviously a high standard of care and horticultural knowledge being devoted to the site. The front display made a very good impression and the car park below it makes caring for it hard. The hanging baskets at the back garden were very well looked after, plant condition, choice and colour were all impressive and produced a great deal of impact. The planting around the patio area was a good mix of sustainable planting and bedding, all in good condition. Growing roses was appropriate considering the name of the site. The sound and movement of the water feature was lovely. The box balls under the giant redwood were well maintained.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Consider more scented planting near the patio. Continue developing the area at the very end of the back garden, near the redwood. If any problems develop in the difficult area under the redwood, vinca would do well and be low maintenance

Introduction

The first impression on arriving on a lovely summer day was that this is a pleasant, flowery place for residents. A very good first impression, There is obviously a lot of care, commitment and horticultural knowledge going into looking after this site.

Areas of Achievement

The planting was in good condition, bright and colourful and well cared for. The hanging baskets were lovely. The plants were in good condition and the choice of plant varieties and colour was very good. The trailing planting adding colour and interest below the baskets was pleasing. The new rose bed is an interesting feature which should get better year on year.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

For difficult, dark areas under trees consider choices such as ivies and vinca which will fill the space and keep down weeds whilst adding colour and interest. Consider increasing the amount of scented planting in areas likely to be used by residents. Consider planting such as flowering herbs which will bring in the colour and movement of butterflies.

Introduction

St Gamma's Hospice sits in approximately three acres of outside space providing a tranquil and relaxing atmosphere for everyone. As you enter the grounds through the hospice you are immediately greeted by colour co-ordinated tubs troughs and baskets, not a bright and brash combination but calm and soothing. The judge was then taken to see the path of life exquisitely planted with shade tolerant plants and ornamental grasses which swayed gently in the breeze. Then to another corner with a view down the length of the garden which contained a long rill with the soothing sound of bubbling water running into the distance. There was a surprise round every corner from woodland walk to wild life corner, from recently re furbished alpine beds filled with healthy ground hugging plants and topped with new alpine grit to a tropical garden planted with Cana and Tropical ferns, all planted to the highest standard. It was difficult to find a plant out of place in the whole garden. If anyone is looking for the wow factor this garden provides it.

Areas of Achievement

The present head of horticulture has not long been in post long but has transformed the garden from using vast quantities of annual bedding plants to more sustainable planting, cutting down on the cost of plants but still keeping stunning displays throughout the year. The quality of the lawned areas has been improved from previous years giving lush green areas which can be admired by everyone. Garden waste is composted and returned to the ground and leaf mould is made nearby in a specially

constructed wooden bin. The greenhouse is used for propagation and overwintering the less hardy plants and is sometimes used by the patients. There is an herb garden near the kitchen. The fish pond is crystal clear with the fish rising to be fed when people pass. The box labyrinth is neatly trimmed inviting people to wonder round. In the car park the two entrance beds are planted with entirely different planting schemes. Both beds were growing very well one side in the shade and one side in full sun. One bed in the garden was sown with double flowered Poppies which were in full bloom. The display of certificates in the hospice entrance was good to see.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Continue encouraging the expanded volunteer group to assist with the daily work in the garden. Look into the possibility of repairing the roof of the pod, perhaps a sedum turf roof would do the trick. Take care of the small area with box blight which should recover in time. Consider showing before and after photographs showing changes in the garden and seasonal displays.

St. Nicholas Church and Almshouses Gardens

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The residents and many visitors to Hornsea will no doubt be impressed and grateful to Brian and Jane for their skill and enthusiasm in developing and maintaining these two very prominent sites in the centre of Hornsea.

Areas of Achievement

The planning and planting of areas around the church building and the boundary retaining walls of the churchyard with interesting with attractive perennials, alpines, shrubs and annuals providing colour throughout the year. The landscaping and planting in front of the Almshouses is a fine example of the appropriate use of materials and plantings providing year round effect, to be enjoyed not only by the residents but also by visitors and passers-by. The wide range of plants was very interesting and impressive. Shame that the plans for a wild habitat area in the churchyard were not allowed to mature.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

It would be helpful to Brian and Jane if the grass maintenance contractor would liaise and understand the various maintenance regimes in the churchyard.

The Memorial Garden, Centre Vale Park, Todmorden Gold Award

Introduction

We enjoyed our visit to the Memorial Garden very much. We were impressed by the high level of care which is clearly devoted to it and to hear that the park has a thriving Friends group. This will clearly be of great benefit to the Memorial Gardens.

Areas of Achievement

The standard of care the garden is receiving is impressive. The standard of cultivation was impressively high. The mix of perennial planting was colourful and really lit up the garden. The paths and other hard landscaping were in good condition. The condition of the grass was very good.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Perhaps further bedding could be planted to complement the perennials. Consider dwarf conifers to add structure to the garden through the seasons. Further scented planting close to the memorial would bring in insects and movement. Perhaps some perennial grasses would add movement and seasonal interest. Continue to develop the valuable relationship with the Friends of the Park.

Wetherby Manor Care Home Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

On a lovely sunny day what an experience to walk into the gardens of the Care Home, and be met with such a colourful beautifully planted array of flowers, beds, hanging baskets, barns and tubs. Carefully manicured grass areas and level paths for residents to wander round safely. They have their own green house and vegetable plots and seating placed in many places in the garden. A total joy for all concerned

Areas of Achievement

Words just cannot describe the beautiful layout of flowers, sustainable planting, hanging baskets. All borders and beds were an absolute delight filled to the brim with colourful designs. All residents, guests and staff were beaming with pride with what they all called THEIR garden

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

We couldn't find areas to improve at all as the commitment and enthusiasm from the staff, gardeners and management was plain to see.

Category 7A: Public Houses and Restaurants

Askwith Arms Silver Award

Introduction

The owners of the Askwith arms have only had it for the last two years and have been busy refurbishing the inside of the building as well as adding a new conservatory come eatery. However they have added planters at the rear of the building which invite guests from the extensive car park to pub and outdoor eating area. This entry has potential and will develop for the future. Set in a very rural setting it has some lovely views overlooking Denton and Ilkley Moor.

Areas of Achievement

Planters around outdoor seating area and entrance from car park. Each planter fed by a self-watering system. Planters at side and front of building. Permanent planting and herbs for culinary use around conservatory. Good outdoor seating area.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Remove weeds from paved areas and around car park. Fill pot holes in carpark and re surface over a period of time. Look at self-watering system at side of main building tidy or re align to make it less obvious. Think about putting large tubs at front of pub and remove existing planting in a difficult to maintain area. Encourage further planting around base of conservatory with a mixture of low growing perennials and herbs.

The Box Tree Restaurant Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

The Box Tree Restaurant may have one of the smallest gardens in Ilkley but by does it pack a punch. Colourful boxes of apricot begonias adorn its walls before you are hit with a mixture of immaculately cut box trees and more begonias. Even at the side of the building you have attractive wall baskets and raised planters of herbs which are used in the restaurant. For such a small area it has everything and you cannot fail to miss it as you drive past coming from the dales into Ilkley. Well done

Areas of Achievement

Choice of colourful plants used in the display fitting the setting perfectly. Use of raised self-watering beds containing an array of herbs for the restaurants kitchens. Well maintained box trees along front of garden and within.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Would not change anything due to size of area. May change colour schemes for future years but present combinations do work.

The Stansfield Arms Gold Award

Introduction

This former coaching inn has developed well over many years in the competition and despite the threat of flooding from the River Aire this winter has achieved a high standard. Very floral exterior and good signage and is well positioned to attract visitors traveling between Bradford and Leeds. Good array of hanging baskets planters and hay racks can be seen and enjoyed by visitors particularly on hot summer evenings when sitting outside on the attractively furnished outside eating area. All plants are maintained by the owners of the Stansfield and everyone involved mucks in. Excellent entry and look forward to visiting in the future.

Areas of Achievement

Colourful wall baskets, planters and hanging baskets. Good mix of perennial planting and permanent planting. Entry clean and colourful everywhere. Good clear signage throughout well maintained and inviting. Entry looks clean fresh and sharp.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Cart at entrance to Stansfield arms could do with more soil in to lift floral display above edges of cart and can be achieved. Keep the Virginia creeper on the walls of the Stansfield under control. Don't remove it as it will give good colour in autumn but restrict from climbing into roof and gutters. Encourage more planting of herbs in pots/containers for display and use in the pub kitchens.

Three Horse Shoes Gold Award

Introduction

Situated right on the busy main road at Oulton, close to the M62, you can't miss this riot of colour! A spectacular display of hanging baskets, wall planters, and tubs adorn the building and spill out on to the adjacent walk ways. Combined with more sustainable planting in the car park area this is a special entry. The colour combination being chosen this year to celebrate Her Majesty the Queens 90th birthday; the patriotic red, white and blue make a real impact. The whole feel of the pub says "Welcome"

Areas of Achievement

Thousands of plug plants have been lovingly planted, maintained and nurtured by Norma and Geoff, with help from Walter with dead heading and feeding (good use of beer slops), it's nice to see some of the barrels and planters are given height using more permanent planting. The "St George" flag design in the road side barrels works really well, along with the mini orchard, and the barrier planters are stunning. Norma informed us that pansies & polyanthus alongside "tete a tetes", crocus and hyacinths provide the show in spring.

It's always hard to bring colour to functional areas such as the large tarmac car park, but this has been done by creating planting areas around the edges, filled with hebe's and small conifers, with pyracantha's helping to cover walls which will look stunning when in berry, as well as providing food for birds in the winter time, and hydrangeas just coming into their own. There's even a veg plot on the flat roof; training strawberries, tomatoes and cabbages can clearly be seen from the car park. Green waste is composted by the pub and reused. Yorkshire in Bloom is clearly publicised at the entrance to the pub, and inside the walls are adorned with past awards for both Leeds and Yorkshire in Bloom, it's clear to customers that the Team at the Three Horse Shoes are very proud of their achievements.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Again difficult to suggest improvements; may be consider a few photographs of the pub in spring, would be nice to see how the Pub looks all year round.

Wilson's Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

An amazing floral impact on approaching this entry, with a general colour scheme of gold, orange and yellow. Hanging baskets and mangers hang from every available hook and bracket. For a first time entry this is a most creditable achievement.

Areas of Achievement

An ingenious watering scheme results in even and adequate watering for all plants. This is a creditable tourist attraction, with an overall and excellent display. Good maintenance has achieved a creditable reward. A clean and tidy presentation, free of litter and dog fouling. The judges appreciated an explanatory brochure.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

A total renovation has led to an excellent result. The proprietors are already looking to place next year, further more strategic floral displays

Winter Gardens Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The Winter Gardens in Harrogate form part of the Royal Baths complex adjacent to the famous Turkish Baths. In the 1920s and 30s visitors could relax indoors amongst the potted palms and listen to piano or orchestral music. In its most recent re-incarnation, the Gardens have become a Wetherspoon's pub, though still maintaining many of the original features of the building (and the potted plants!). The entrance to the front of the pub and the patio garden to the rear have been enhanced through the addition of a variety of planted containers and baskets and it was these areas which were the focus of the judging. The planting design and maintenance of the containers and baskets is undertaken by a small commercial firm based in East Yorkshire, with the pub management being responsible for some of the watering.

Areas of Achievement

The front entrance to the pub afforded minimal opportunities for enhancement, but three railing mounted baskets to the left of the entrance and some clipped box within the entrance vestibule added colour to this otherwise 'grey' area. The rear entrance of the pub, however, was flanked by two containerised olives with bedding at the foot of each tree and a further railing –mounted basket above, giving the appearance of a floral 'pillar' to either side of the way in. Also on this side of the pub was the patio garden. Until the involvement of the commercial company a year ago, at the request of the management, this area was described as being somewhat akin to a school playground, with hard surfaces and bound by metal railings! The array of baskets on the railings, on the pergola above the seating area and the fuchsia pots on the tables have completely dispelled this association and brightened up the area wonderfully for the benefit of all customers and indeed those parking in the adjacent car park.

The baskets were imaginatively designed by Eleanor Adams with effective colour theming, and the use of more unusual species and varieties of bedding plants. Additionally, the majority of baskets or containers not only had a focus of a small palm or conifer but also made effective use of trailing ivies. This perennial 'framework' allows ease of transition from summer to winter bedding without the need for complete re-planting. A particularly unusual feature was an extended 'window box' mounted on the fence dividing the smoking from the non-smoking area. This was planted with a continuous mounded ribbon of saxifrage plants interspersed with small dianthus. While at the time of judging the flowering was almost over, this feature still softened and added to the interest of an otherwise harsh boundary.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

While recognising the limitations of a pub setting, the management and the commercial company might like to give some consideration to environmental matters. It might, for instance be possible to discretely mount some insect homes or even bird boxes in the garden or on the building. This might then throw up the further opportunity to purchase these from one of the local craft/horticulture charities. It might be possible to look at water recycling options for some of the watering?

Category 7B: Guest Houses, Holiday Cottages and Small Hotels

Basin Howe Farm Cottages Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

First impressions count. At 700 ft. high, Basin Howe Farm Cottages give an impression of peace and tranquillity in a glorious setting. Most of the 3 acres garden was cultivated to a high standard, and the judges were given a very detailed tour by the owners, with a good explanation of the Bronze Age burial mound. Well-dressed stone was comprehensively used, with barely a brick to be seen.

Areas of Achievement

The plan of this entry given to the judges on arrival, showed the detail and complexity of the total site - highlighting the work and effort needed to maintain everything to such a high standard. The views seen in every direction were accentuated from within the height of the imaginative 'pod' Summer House. The list of most impressive sculptures, the gates both in wrought iron and in yew underlined the imaginative flair of the owners. Close to the mound are 2 further carved sculptures - a buzzard and an owl - both in view.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Further features are being considered. This is an excellent entry that could be enhanced by a more visible recognition of Basin Howe Farm Cottages entry into Yorkshire in Bloom

Category 7C: Large Hotels

Middlethorpe Hall and Spa Gold Award

Introduction

Middlethorpe Hall is a beautiful 18th century 'Queen Anne' style house set in 20 acres of gardens and parkland. Many of the original buildings remain providing a setting full of character and charm. The red brick walled garden provides a sanctuary for productive crops of vegetables fruit and flowers all of which play their part in providing the residents with a very pleasant place to walk and relax. Produce is also grown for floral displays and for use in the kitchen. The wider estate is home to a rich collection of plants and trees in a setting that blends perfectly with the surrounding countryside. A real gem!

Areas of Achievement

The floral displays and vegetable garden were well maintained and contained a good mix of cultivars carefully chosen to provide a complimentary display and a range of produce for the kitchen. Flower arrangements in the foyer were very attractive and are prepared by one of the garden volunteers using material from the garden. A wide range of plant species collected and carefully put together provide a very interesting and long season of interest. Fruit trees trained on walls frame and arches are very well grown and at the time of the visit were heavy with fruit promising a bumper crop of apples and pears later in the season. A range of beds and borders offer the visitor an opportunity to see plants from different continents and those that are suitable for a range of garden conditions from damp shade to full sun. Maintenance is to a high standard, both the staff and 14 volunteers are to be commended for their dedication and competence.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

A garden with such a range of interesting plants is brilliant for the visitor who is a keen gardener and whilst labelling can be a little unsightly a plant list or an 'A' board upon which the garden staff can identify 'plants to look out for' would add interest improve the experience. The pictorial album in the foyer is a brilliant way of showing the garden through the seasons but may be a little expensive to provide in bulk for resale. An alternative would be to select a number of images and produce postcards that can be purchased at reception.

Nidd Hall Hotel Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Nidd Hall, which was built as a family home in the 1820s, is now a Warners Leisure Hotel. The hotel is set in over 30 acres of gardens and parkland, all of which are maintained to a very high standard. The concept of care is based around the guests' experience. There are 4 gardeners who work together as a team in providing a balance between excellent floral displays near the hotel and naturalistic areas, including a lake and many mature trees.

Areas of Achievement

The complex is entered along a long driveway which has an avenue of cherry trees on either side. On reaching the hotel you are welcomed by a high quality floral display and sign - most of the car parking is partially hidden so it does not detract from the landscapes. In the grounds there are quiet seating areas, exercise opportunities (but these are very discreetly located), beautiful views out to borrowed landscapes. The staff are very knowledgeable and react positively to the guests needs, indeed one of them organises a weekly tour of the grounds for the guests.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

We were told a new extension to the hotel is to be built this year. This will need careful integrating into the existing landscapes - having seen a project that they have just done we are confident they will achieve a similar high standard when the building work is completed.

Rogerthorpe Manor Hotel

Gold Award

Introduction

With the temperature touching 32c the judges arrived at Rogerthorpe Manor to be greeted by a near full car park which is always a good indicator of how popular an establishment of this kind is! First impressions are immensely important and the entry entices its customers in with an array of colourful and innovative floral features which draws the eye to every corner of the gardens.

Areas of Achievement

The creation of raised planters adjacent to the new suites provide colour and interest to this recently completed phase. The standard of maintenance carried out by Vic was of the highest quality with not a weed in sight, the hanging baskets, pots and mangers were full to capacity and obvious thought had been applied into the choice of plants. Hedges throughout the formal garden were trimmed immaculately with skill being demonstrated to create 'turrets' and 'waves'. A comment also has to be mentioned on the quality of the lawns which looked pristine and complemented the garden features and permanent planting. The commitment from the owners to maintain standards and provide resources for new projects both within the hotel and outside is clearly evident. Yorkshire in Bloom certificates were proudly displayed in a prominent position within the reception area.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The development of a composting facility for composting grass cuttings / bedding plants would be beneficial to the entry. A small portfolio / timeline / or picture book (if pictures are available) may offer an insight into the development of the garden over the years and may be the ideal place to document future plans/improvements.

Tankersley Manor

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Tankersley Manor is a busy hotel and event centre catering for many different functions. It is set in landscaped grounds that enhance the setting for these functions. The mixture of formal and informal planting works well together

Areas of Achievement

The new path next to the bio-mass boiler. Tankersley hall bug hotel the high standard of maintenance throughout the grounds are a credit to Keith and volunteers

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The circular bed needs redeveloping as this is a main focal point outside reception Consider adding a water feature to create more interest the plans to redevelop the planting outside the event centre will enhance this area

Category 8A: Visitor Attractions

Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

Gold Award

Introduction

A warm welcome awaited the judges with a precise timetable of train rides to enable us to have a leisurely view at each station on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway line. As we arrived we were delighted to see a black five steam engine and tender were being delivered to Ingrow station on a low loader. The line itself dates back to 1867 when it was built by local business men to bring coal to their mills and distribute the goods produced there. Since 1968 the K&WVR has been a heritage railway, operated and managed by a team of 500 volunteers and funded by the 100,000 fare paying passengers each year. The team is pulling out all the stops to attract passengers to travel on the line staging special events from Postman Pat and Jess, to Keighley Korma and Steam and Ale trains

Each station on the line has a team of dedicated gardeners, who design, plant and maintain the rather challenging beds at the side of the line often having to cross the line on foot carrying plants and their equipment. Keighley and Worth Valley Railway is a high profile tourist attraction run mainly by large number of varying skilled volunteers with a small number of paid staff the main station being in Keighley with others along the line

Areas of Achievement

Some of the station platforms were a riot of colour from planters, beds placed strategically for maximum impact and hanging baskets. The picnic and wildflower garden at Keighley station with its wooden model train and people, will be of great interest to visiting children and their parents. There were safe and well laid out to encourage families to have fun, watch the trains and explore the garden. The team were somewhat disappointed with the barrier planters but on our second visit, they were bright and healthy following the warmer weather. The trackside gardens were varied and well planted mostly with shade loving plants and with every effort made to attract wildlife and be environmentally friendly. The judges were pleased to meet representatives of the guides who planted and maintained tubs at Oxenhope station. The cafes and station facilities are of a high standard and each station having its own character is an inviting place to be.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

With the exception of Keighley Station some of the approaches to all the stations and the car park areas could benefit from some improvement. A better effect might be created by moving the now large shrubs to other locations and redesigning the welcome bed at Ingrow station. The design, using perennials and some summer bedding, could be a competition for families or school children and the winners helping to plant the bed up – great publicity! Local schools might be encouraged to explore projects with themes connected to the railway e.g. the use of trains and railway engineers in WW1. Some of the seating on the stations would benefit from a planned programme of refurbishment and restoration. Although the paperwork is somewhat daunting, encourage submission of an application

for Heritage Lottery Funding as the educational potential of this enterprise with its connections to the industrial past and proximity to the Bronte Museum at Haworth.

Knaresborough Castle Gold Award

Introduction

Knaresborough Castle has a multi-generational appeal boosting a variety of cultural facilities including Museum, Castle, Bowling Green and formal gardens. The views from the parapets are complemented by the splendid grounds of the castle which are well maintained by a small team of dedicated gardeners.

Areas of Achievement

The interpretation around the site was excellent giving a very good overview of the history. The slopes to the river once manicured are now managed to encourage wildlife is a vast improvement for the biodiversity of the site. The commitment and vision of the grounds staff has to be commended. The cottage bed was well maintained and the interpretation of the planting was displayed.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The floral picture bed would benefit from better signage/ Interruption for park users. Improvements to the signage regarding the bowling green could be improved to stop confusion of it being a lawn area.

Ripon Racecourse Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Ripon Racecourse rightly deserves the title 'Yorkshire's Garden Racecourse' with a well maintained course, enclosures and attractive grounds. It had only been a few days since the previous race meeting and credit to Carl and the team there was little sign of the effect of the large crowds that had enjoyed the event.

Areas of Achievement

There were several very attractive and colourful bedding displays, the area in front of the Wakeman Bar, the area near the main entrance, the troughs on the balcony of the main stand and the striking colour themed beds surrounding the lovely bandstand. The two old fashioned phone boxes had been transformed into floral towers with multi-coloured begonias flowing from all the windows. The 'behind the scenes' facilities for plant propagation, and the composting of organic material. All the furniture, signs and fittings throughout were well maintained.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The cone hanging baskets in many areas were not to the same standard as other floral features and suggest a review of the growing medium and choice of plant material. Rabbits appear to have the upper hand in some areas, it may worth doing some research into which plants will survive in these areas.

The Forbidden Corner LTD

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The Forbidden Corner began as a folly to amuse the owners and guests but due to public demand it grew to be a somewhat different tourist attraction. Set in the Dales National Park and surrounded by beautiful countryside the drive to the venue is also a delight and the park grounds are clean with sweeping lawns and well established trees. However the estate also comprises of holiday accommodation and a beautiful wedding venue with stunning views. The gardens here have delightful scented roses, climbers and well stocked borders.

The folly/maze is planted in keeping with the attraction with garden areas such as the herb garden with amusing frogs. The restrictions for the gardeners here are that the folly and maze need to be cleared of power tools and, in general, any workers by 11am yet despite this the venue is very well cared for and displays the enthusiasm of the garden staff.

Areas of Achievement

The area used for the wedding venue comprises well-tended lawns with borders of colour around three sides which have a mixture of sustainable and bedding planting. The walls have climbers and roses which fill the air with their scent. The seating area outside of the cafe is well maintained, clean and surrounded by bedding, and borders by the holiday accommodation are filled with shrubs and roses. There are wall mounted troughs filled with bedding plants. Composting and collection of leaf mould which is returned to the borders when ready evidences some recycling. Further water retention/collection sites could be considered.

Although signage to the park and facilities is adequate further additional signage is restricted by the National Parks who also impose other restrictions. The herb garden is well laid out with an interesting range of features. The restrictions on ability to work in the public area when in use makes it time limited and clearly identifies the enthusiasm and energy that Andrew puts into gardens.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

With the inventiveness and nature of this attraction the addition of a stumpery would be an interesting addition adding to the atmospheric ambiance. Consider feature planting such as an alpines area to introduce further interest. The addition of a greenhouse area would be a useful resource and better if combined with rain water collection.

The placement of some floral and/or colourful sustainable planting at the entrance and car parking area would be a welcoming sight. For winter weddings remember evergreens come in a variety of colours and textures. Replacing some of the bedding with sustainable planting, possibly some alpines, would reduce demand on watering. Consider recruiting volunteer gardeners who could help with routine work such as dead heading etc.

Areas of the herb garden need attention, some time for researching new plant choices may be profitable. Remember to provide for all the senses particularly smell and touch. Consider encouraging further liaison with schools and extending educational opportunities possibly with provision of bat, bird and owl boxes and creating other habitats such as bug hotels. Creating some islands of meadow flowers along the drive would provide additional colour and provide additional habitat.

With different criteria to other competitions Andrew may enjoy joining the judging team of "in Bloom" and if further input is desired will find helpful suggestions.

Treasurers House Gold Award

Introduction

Treasurer's house is situated in the shadow of the great York Minster, and as the name suggests this and other adjacent buildings were occupied by various individuals that supported the effective running of the Minster. Frank Green the son of a wealthy industrialist from Wakefield purchased the whole of Treasurers House, which at the time was divided into three dwellings. He restored the main structure to reflect its former character and developed a garden in the area that it is thought was a mason's yard for the Minster. Sympathetically designed to complement the surrounding architecture the gardens comprise of subtle combinations of textures and colours restricted to the pallet of white and blue, although there are trees in general these are managed carefully to keep them in scale with the garden footprint.

Areas of Achievement

The standard of garden maintenance are very high and with help from green volunteers the whole site is clean and well looked after. Interpretation boards sit neatly in the borders providing information relating to the plants in season and elements of the garden. The neatly pollarded London Planes are most attractive and a lesson in managing plants to achieve scale and character. Now under the stewardship of the National Trust, the site and garden staff are knowledgeable and passionate about the history and presentation of the house and its environs. A Picture frame set up on the lawn provides visitors with an opportunity to have a quirky photographic record of their visit. Plants are clearly labelled and are appropriate to the setting being recycled from slate roof tiles cut into strips with white painted lettering.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

A small annex to the gardens in the form of an herb garden is located a short distance from the house and plans to establish public access would add another interesting and attractive experience. A raised

viewing area not at present accessible due to the need for a handrail would provide visitors with a lovely view of the garden from an elevated position, it is hoped that this will be the subject of future development. Plans are in place to restore some of the original views by removing or reducing some of the tree stock.

York Racecourse Gold Award Joint Category Winner

Introduction

Zack and the grounds maintenance team are to be congratulated on the layout of the many features and the very high standard of maintenance of the course and all the landscaped areas on and surrounding the buildings and facilities at the Racecourse. Visitors to race meetings and other events can only be impressed with the overall layout and ambience of this facility.

Areas of Achievement

One is immediately struck by the stylish well designed and colour themes of the many baskets, barrier baskets and balcony plantings. Newly refurbished areas had matured perfectly, planted with shrubs and perennials to give an all season attractive effect. Signage was of a high standard. Hard landscaped areas were clean and tidy and grassed areas of the course maintained to high technical standard required for race meetings. The litter bins topped with colourful floral troughs.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

There was little to comment on for the future, except perhaps that as a lot of thought had gone into the design of the floral features there is only one practical problem I could foresee which was the dead heading required for cosmos on the very high balconies, this must be quite challenging.

Yorkshire Lavender Gold Award Joint Category Winner

Introduction

Yorkshire Lavender is a wonderful place to visit for the whole family. It is set in a marvellous south facing landscape which brings many challenges. Visitors are encouraged to touch the plants along their way around the garden. All the staff we met during the visit were passionate and committed to the enterprise. It is wonderful to see how the garden continues to encourage local young people to become involved. The whole area invites you in, it is tactile and pleasantly invades your senses. It is a place where you can either sit quietly and enjoy the vista or explore the varied areas.

Areas of Achievement

From being introduced to Nigel, the owner, it was clear that Yorkshire Lavender is his passion and that passion spreads among the people who work there. The growing and planting team are extremely knowledgeable and helpful. The plants draw you in and encourage you to walk among them. Julia

showed me around the first part of the garden explaining how the garden evolved and the changes being made. Julia was rightly proud that the plants have been checked and graded highly enough to be able to produce a high quality oil from them. Last year they were harvested for the first time which has enabled them to make their own products. Wildlife live in happy unison with the garden. Recycling is part of their process including feeding their small deer herd with the left overs from the cafe! Signage is clear and whimsical. The whole area is clean, tidy and inviting. People from all over the world visit. Nigel encourages schools and people with special needs to visit and help in the garden. This is an inclusive business working with the local community, employing local people and providing a place to learn as well as enjoy. Touching the plants is encouraged, throughout the garden there are signs encouraging you to do so.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Nigel is constantly thinking of ways to evolve the garden and creates innovative projects. It is clear from speaking with him to see the changes he has made over the last few years from creating the 'cricket team', the amphitheatre with 9 landscaped steps leading down to it and the pond area. It will be interesting to see what develops from the mounds he created for a project. Will they be completely covered in Lavender or will they be something else? It would be difficult to suggest further development other than to continue doing what you are doing - it clearly works.

Category 8Ba: Business Premises - Small

David Higgins Hairsalon Silver Award

Introduction

Though there is no sign to signify the hairsalon, however the landscaping and plantings suggests that the owner has a passion for design and an interest in plants.

Areas of Achievement

The plantings to the front and side of this corner plot are well designed with a wide range of trees, shrubs, perennials and colourful bedding. Colourful baskets on the wall and the unusual standard lilacs were a real feature. A large collection of containers, and the wildlife is well catered for. The customers can only be impressed with his large display of Bloom certificates awarded over many years.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Some of the permanent plantings are mature and consideration might be given to rejuvenating some sections.

Hutton Cranswick Fisheries Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

As we approached the Fisheries we were met by Pearl Humble. She showed us a lovely display of hanging baskets and a window box which are planted by Richard Benwell from the local nursery, Killick gardens. An "In Bloom" notice in the window helped to raise awareness of Yorkshire in Bloom and the Hutton Cranswick group and it was good to see recycling bins at the shop.

Areas of Achievement

The Fisheries is in a wonderful location overlooking the Village Green, It is immaculately clean with beautiful floral displays and excellent signage, there is evidence of recycling and the Judging date clearly on display helped to raise the profile of Hutton Cranswick in Bloom and its continuing support for Yorkshire in Bloom.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

If possible it would be good to use recycled water for watering - Otherwise difficult to suggest anything! Very well done, keep up the good work.

James White High Class Family Butcher

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

A lovely welcoming traditional Butchers shop in a wonderful location overlooking the village green. The shop was made more attractive by a beautiful stone window box, planted up by Richard Benwell from the local nursery, Kilnwick Gardens. The non-stop begonias on the window sill inside the shop were a delightful touch.

Areas of Achievement

A very welcoming shop with beautiful displays of colourful plants, both inside and out. The white stone planter was immaculately clean with a good choice of quality plants - it must be a pleasure to shop there.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Evidence of recycling would be useful.

Mount Pleasant Kennels

Gold Award

Category Winner

Introduction

The place to give your pets a good holiday has got to be Mount Pleasant Kennels where even the pets get the floral display. The enthusiasm of the owners and their staff is there for all to see

Areas of Achievement

The pond with the carp fish in it and the peaceful restful sound of running water are a delight to all. The highest standards of horticultural maintenance of the grounds can only be a credit to those involved in undertaking the work. Growing plants of such quality at high altitude and strong winds has got to be difficult for all concerned but excellent results are achieved.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The entrance road running up to the main gate does not do justice to the delights which are beyond and if this could be improved in some way it would enhance the experience of a visit to the kennels.

Paul Harrison Cars

Introduction

We were met by Andy of Paul Harrison Cars who obviously takes great pride in the appearance of this family business. The forecourt was immaculate with tubs and hanging baskets, including 2 original

sheep troughs, all filled with colourful displays of plants from a local garden centre, all planted by Paul and Mike. The perimeter of the garage has a lovely border of herbaceous and evergreen plants, including buddleia which attracts butterflies, geraniums and begonias are recycled as is refuse and there is a massive water tank filled with-off water, for watering the plants.

Areas of Achievement

A colourful forecourt with sustainable planting around the perimeter and lovely displays of flowers in tubs and hanging baskets. The wooden planters were made by a local farmer, plants are recycled and the enormous water tank for rainwater shows environmental awareness.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Just keep adding environmentally friendly plants around your fences - very well done.

Category 8Bb: Business Premises - Large

Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate Gold Award Joint Category Winner

Introduction

This production site is adjacent to residential properties, but the owners are very conscious of their responsibilities and have created a very 'green' site, which is extensively landscaped, although due to them producing food products there are many limitations. They have 6 pillars of good practice, including that all garden waste must be removed from the site, but this is still taken to be composted - excellent. Whilst being a 'factory' site it is also very much a wild life sanctuary where there are many nesting boxes, but also an artificial pond which has dragon flies and many other valued creatures.

Areas of Achievement

The quality of the extensive landscaping is very high, well maintained by Gary and Kevin. There is a functional orangery and courtyard where the researchers grow coffee beans. In the car park there are pleached hedges, and nearby a yew being trained into the shape of a tea pot, there are also raised shrub and decorative beds, dry stone walls where birds nest, and near the cookery school vegetable and fruit beds. Everywhere is spotlessly clean, a model factory site showing what can be achieved by dedication from all levels of staff

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

As further building work proceeds the gardeners will have a challenge in ensuring that their high standards are maintained, but it is good to know that they will be fully involved in the implementation of the new required landscaping.

Country Style Foods Ltd 2016 Gold Award

Introduction

There's an immediate "Wow" factor as soon as you walk through the gates of Country Style Foods. Christine and her work force have all been involved in the planting of this garden. It must give all the staff who work there a great pleasure to be able to see such a wonderful sight every day. Country Style Foods is a large scale craft bakery, and the welcome to the site must have a great impact on their customers old and new.

Areas of Achievement

The Old Church/training centre is set off by a quality planting of antirrhinums and mimulus, and the car park retaining wall is completely covered in hanging plug bags filled with colourful begonias. On top of the retaining wall it's nice to see traditional standard Rosa Eglantyne giving height, under

planted with Benjamin Brittain & Claire Austin, (pinks and lemon combination), creating a wonderful scent near the main entrance. Alongside the main building wall, are recycled containers (egg buckets) overflowing with colour, with petunias, verbena, geraniums, lobelia and becopia. Hanging baskets with trailing fuchsias and begonias, adorn the fences and building walls.

Green waste is being managed on site, creating compost to go back into the beds and containers, and an irrigation system has been installed and water retaining granules have been used to aid with watering the many containers. Containers with spring bulbs are stored off site for reuse next year. The Company is involved with a local school where children of some of the staff attend, by sponsoring their sports kit, and occasionally they visit the factory to help with planting. The site is a credit to all involved.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The selection and use of plants around the site, leave it difficult to suggest any further development. On speaking with staff, it's clear they have a pride in the garden. Maybe consider ground cover plants in the rose garden area or Old Church bed, or smaller varieties of lavender, to provide scent and flowers for insect life, that will survive happily in a sunny/dry spot.

Park Fisheries Gold Award

Introduction

You can hardly miss Park Fisheries when driving towards it. The whole area is ablaze with colour and all co-ordinated. This year's theme is pink and purples, the outdoor seating area planters and umbrellas have been co-ordinated to match the planting scheme. Every little detail has been carefully thought through.

Areas of Achievement

The combination of colours that flow throughout the display complimented with the well clipped box trees and parasols. Pink and purple theme is continued through including the small displays with paper parasols. We were very impressed with the variety of containers and planters. The plants were in excellent condition, well fed, watered and deadheaded with not a weed in sight. The whole area was spotless, a lovely place to sit and eat. The work they do with the local in bloom team is commendable, both working their colour schemes to complement each other. An excellent garden thank you for letting us view it.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

With a garden of this standard it is hard to comment or suggest further development. We encourage you to continue with the high standards that you have achieved. We look forward to seeing or hearing about next year's displays and the colour choice.

Proudfoot Supermarket Newby Gold Award Joint Category Winner

Introduction

Proudfoots Supermarket is a local company, in this instance, serving the community of Newby and Scalby in Scarborough. They have taken "bloom" to a new level both in quantity and quality of plant material which certainly creates a "wow" factor, both in the car park and from the busy road outside the premises. It is clear that although it is costly to produce this quality of planting, the end result of happy customers is worth every penny!

Areas of Achievement

The supermarket walls are full of high quality baskets, boxes and mangers, packed with colour and well maintained. The car park and surrounding areas were spotlessly clean despite being heavily trafficked. Proudfoots have introduced some tree planting at the back of the car park which will give height and seasonal colour.

Flower baskets have introduced on the Coldyhill side of the building this year as an experiment and appear to be thriving.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

It would be difficult to suggest "improvements" as the quality and quantity of baskets seen at Proudfoots is excellent. Perhaps, just a hint more yellow in the planting would "lift" the flowers against the red brick of the building but this really is a minor point in an excellent display.

Villa Farm Shop Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

As we drove into Villa Farm courtyard we were greeted by a stunning display of planted colourful tubs, stone troughs, milk churns, hanging baskets all based on a farming theme, all plug plants had been grown in their own greenhouse which was heated with warm air from the air conditioning in the adjacent farm shop and cafe. Farmyard manure is used on the beds and supplied to local allotments and residents. Solar panels are fitted to the poultry sheds and locally sourced products were being sold in the cafe and shop - a delightful establishment

Areas of Achievement

A most beautiful display of bedding plants all grown in the eco-friendly green house. This year there is a sunflower competition for children. Solar panels were fitted to the poultry house and their own farmyard manure has been used on all the beds and supplied to local allotments and residents. Local produce was sold in the shop and cafe including their own eggs, beef, and sausages. The theme of farming is echoed in the containers of the colourful and vibrant troughs, planters and hanging baskets. A credit to you - well done Villa Farm.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

We would like to see more evidence of community involvement and, water conservation

Category 8C: Shopping Centres and Retail Parks

Airedale Shopping Centre

Gold Award

Introduction

The Centre is located in the heart of the town adjacent to the bus station and market and has good parking for 425 vehicles. The Centre has good public facilities for the visitor and all in all the visitors should have an enjoyable experience whether purchasing goods or not

Areas of Achievement

The support for local charities should be applauded and the high level of support for Keighley in Bloom should be commended. It is clear that all the members of the centres team are committed to promoting the in bloom initiative and a high level of visitor satisfaction experience.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Consideration could be given to water harvesting from the roof of the centre and persuading the bus station to take a more active role in the in bloom initiative.

Crystal Peaks Shopping Mall & Retail Park

Gold Award

Introduction

Not just a shopping centre, open your eyes and look around, nestled in one of the valleys and hills of Sheffield, this entry makes use of every piece of open ground and borrows views from the surrounding countryside to create a welcoming shopping experience. The management team fully understand the benefits of the landscape around them and are working on ways to improve not only their site, but work with the local community to give something back. Their support of the summer campaign "Herd of Sheffield" to help raise awareness and raise funding for Sheffield Children's Hospital is also commendable.

Areas of Achievement

Wonderful to see the pride of everyone involved in the maintenance and developments of the site, the added bonus of having their own dedicated gardening team of 4, reaps dividends. The seasonal, floral displays around the complex add high colour to the site, the entrances are bright and welcoming, and plant choice and quality is excellent. The mature trees and shrubberies around the complex car parks, not only add height and structure, but cool shade in what could be a harsh environment at the height of summer.

The many grass banking's around the complex are being maintained for bio-diversity, and numerous species of wildflower, including bee orchids can be found. Nice to see interpretation boards to show visitors what they can find in the wildflower meadows and banking's. With the 4 bee hives on the roof

this provides the bees with a local supply of nectar & pollen. Good to see that they are also working with the wider community, joining forces with Sheffield City Council, Landscape Trust & Sorby Nature History Group, and local schools, on the meadowland project at Ochre Dyke, and actively encourage their staff and retail employees where possible, to get involved in volunteer opportunities such as dry stone walling and clean ups. Sponsorship of the floral displays on the Sheffield City Council owned roundabout at the entrance to the complex is just another way of giving something back to the city.

Green waste is processed by ACM into viable compost, but the gardens team produce their own chippings where possible and the resulting material is used back on the shrub beds as soil conditioner/mulch. The gardeners have an on-site greenhouse, where plants are brought on, both from plugs and seed, saving them thousands of pounds. Wonderful to here they have a young apprentice working in the gardens team, and that the Management team are committed to the training and development of all staff.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Good to hear there is a programme of tree and shrub replacement across the site. The "stumpery" wildflower area will benefit from the provision of an interpretation board, to help tell the story of the site to visitors. The future plans as part of the "Greenway Projects" will only enhance this entry, creating more opportunities for wildlife around the site, helping to link Crystal Peaks into the wider community green space corridors and gateways.

Flemingate Center Gold Award

Introduction

Flemingate Shopping centre is a new shopping centre built on a 16 acre site of a former chemical works. Located near the train station and only minutes' walk to the Minster and the heart of Beverley Town. The main shopping area is well designed, and sympathetically retains the styling of its surroundings. A new Beverley College Campus is built to abut the centre, which affords such facilities as a Premier Inn Hotel, 500 space car park, a 6 screen cinema and children's play area.

Areas of Achievement

The design of Flemingate Centre with its choice of brick (1 million) is all in keeping with the surrounding buildings and environment. Not surprising to discover it is a Site of Architectural Merit (SAM). The design and quality of the sustainable planting at the front of the development with great use of evergreen materials and enhanced with planting large structures, create a safe and wonderful setting for the children's play area and visitors alike. An enclosed playground with seating and open 'lawned' areas to relax in with landscapes borders of lavender and box hedging all act to make this a pleasant environ. Used by the college students, it was an ideal setting for the 'Teenage Market Project' (and Jake Quickenden!) a scheme which was well supported and is set to be a yearly event. The clean spotless environment with a crew of permanent staff out working the centre helping to maintaining this appearance, with the 80 cascading baskets that adorn the lampposts throughout. As Graham Tait

(The Centre Manager) is proud to announce they have it on record that 95% of its waste is recycled, and they have recently had installation of electric car charging points.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The judge's appreciate that the centre is new and still developing, however the main avenue would be further enhanced with planters. Strategically placed large planters together with extra seating would make the shopping development a more inviting place to sit and stay a while. Continue to foster relations with the work done with St Nicholas Community Primary School and Beverley College as well as differing community groups.

Woolshops Shopping Centre Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

The many colourful hanging baskets and the well planted perennial borders in front of the car park enhance the stonework of this shopping mall situated next to the Piece Hall. The pedestrian walkways were very clean and the signage for the shops was in keeping with this historic area.

Areas of Achievement

The perennial plants used for the landscaping and in Hatters Fold were well chosen and the foliage and blooms give all year interest. Various community groups including primary and special schools are given stalls in the centre. The environmental management at the Woolshops is commendable. The service area enabled the recycling of biodiesel and cardboard and the tenants were responsible for sorting their waste. The reservoirs in the hanging baskets meant that they only required watering once per month.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The vegetables in planters may need feeding and an information board would be helpful. The signposts for pedestrians were very useful but some would benefit from repainting. Installing bins by the benches would be practical.

Category 8D: Caravan, Camping and Chalet Parks

Weir Caravan Park Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

The new containers at the entrance to the site set the standard for the rest of this very attractive caravan park, with a beautiful river frontage for those lucky enough to have this view and a large natural pond surrounded by facilities for tourers. Congratulations to Geoff and the rest of the team on achieving a high standard of facilities and maintenance. This with the constant threat of flooding which creates considerable difficulties which they overcome on a regular basis.

Areas of Achievement

Geoff had created a very effective 'bedding theatre' (syn Auricular theatre but with summer bedding!) as well colourful troughs, containers and hanging baskets. There were several areas of permanent plantings with roses, shrubs and perennials to screen and enhance sections of the site. Several static vans had created very stylish colourful displays in tubs, window boxes and other containers on their verandas. The team are very proud of their award from David Bellamy for their healthy environment and care of it, with otters, bird boxes for many species, an island in the middle of the pond for mallard ducks and geese etc. The pond is stocked with fish for the keen angler, bee friendly border and bee and bug hotels. The grass areas were well maintained.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

This site is liable to flooding and therefore the caravans have to have float chambers and anchors under the van. This space is not particularly attractive and perhaps some thought could be given to improve the visual aspect. It would be perfect if all the static vans emulated the beautiful terrace/veranda displays of one or two of the colourful examples.

Category 8E: Country Houses, Estates and Parks and Gardens

Brodsworth Hall and Gardens Gold Award

Introduction

Brodsworth Hall is a stunning example of a mid-Victorian country house, set amid the beautiful landscape of rural South Yorkshire, and is surrounded by exquisite Victorian influenced garden compartments. The visitor cannot fail to be impressed by the standard of maintenance and diverse somewhat unique garden elements such as the Fern Grotto, Target House and Lawn, unique Rose Garden, and Hibernaculum. The Victorian garden with its beautifully designed seasonal bedding display was absolutely stunning, bursting with colour shape and texture, a true delight.

Areas of Achievement

There is no doubt that this garden is looked after by a very capable and passionate team of gardeners and volunteers, Led by Daniel who's vision and enthusiasm is infectious. It is easy to see why there is an army of garden and house volunteers eager to be part of the presentation and development of these gardens. The standards of maintenance are very high and whilst there are still areas that Daniel plans to rejuvenate there are a wealth of ideas and planting combinations to inspire the visitor. Volunteers are not seen as competing with garden staff moreover support and encourage the permanent gardeners in their quest to present Brodsworth as an enchanting garden. It is easy to see that a visit to the gardens will take a few hours in order to enjoy its many facets, but there are high quality facilities, tea rooms and gift shop to make the list very special.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

People make gardens for others to see and enjoy, Brodsworth is no exception and like all large estates the pressure on maintaining and rejuvenating them ever present. English Heritage and the team at Brodsworth are to be commended for their determination to present the hall and gardens so well. The development of 5, 10 and 50 year management plans will guide restoration and focus fundraising, as will the exploration of how to refresh the visitor experience. Support is always sought for both expertise and financial help, hosting events such as Specialist Society days may offer the visitor the opportunity to seek further understanding of specific areas of gardening, and be a source of volunteers to provide a research resource.

Burnby Hall Gardens Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Burnby Hall is a garden of incredible charm and character. As you enter the gardens you are treated to a view across the large lake, home to the National Collection of Nymphaea, a real floral extravaganza. Originally the estate was developed by Major Percy Stewart an adventurer and collector. The gardens and museum were left in trust after his death in 1962. The upper and lower lake are set in nine acres

along with woodland, Victorian Garden, Stumpery, Aviery and an original Backhouse rock garden. The Museum houses many of the artefacts collected by the late Major Percy Stewart during his eight world tours.

Areas of Achievement

This year brings the good news of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant for the restoration of the lake boundary and the Backhouse rock garden, a great achievement and its completion will be eagerly awaited by many visitors and garden professionals. In addition a grant to improve the children play facilities has been secured from East Riding County Council. The overall maintenance and presentation of the gardens and grounds is excellent and a credit to staff and volunteers, who, in addition support fund raising projects and will be involved in the delivery of the Heritage Lottery Fund project. A bi-annual event held at the gardens is the Schools 'Design a Garden' project, this year the theme was 'An Insect Garden' Nine local schools took part and creating a garden in 1 metre square filled with colour and ingenious insect accommodation.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The 'stumpery' garden is a great place to see native flora and fauna, and the introduction of interpretation boards will guide the visitor on what to look out for. It would be great to see the schools competition become an annual event providing local sponsorship can be secured. The welcome pack distributed to new housing development properties is a brilliant idea and a great way of introducing the gardens to newcomers to the area.

Elsecar Park & Local Nature Reserve

Gold Award

Introduction

The enthusiastic team of volunteers that make up the Friends of Elsecar Park are a fine example of how the community need to join together to save a community resource. Not only are they influencing the local councillors/ council officers they are pushing forward themselves organising concerts/events and applying for grants to make improvements within the park.

Areas of Achievement

The work to open up the dell has to be commended as too does the contribution to the friends group to apply for funding for the project. The events organised by the friends group for the local community has to be commended. The staff on site/ friends of/ volunteers are not working alone they are a team galvanised for a common goal Elsecar Park which I was humbled and infused to be part of on judging day.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The plans to revamp the old paddling pool area into a cycle track and picnic area would enhance the park facilities. Look into more interpretation boards around the nature reserve to explain the history and diversity of the site

Lister Park Gold Award

Introduction

Lister Park was initially developed in the late 19th century following the sale of land in Manningham to Bradford Corporation by the industrialist Samuel Cunliffe-Lister on the condition that it should become a public park. The park retains many features from this time including the Cartwright Hall which is now an art gallery. The park was renovated between 1998 and 2002 with funding provided by the Heritage Lottery and Bradford City Council and included the construction of a Mughal Water Garden.

Areas of Achievement

Lister Park is clearly a resource that serves its community well. On the day of the visit, albeit a weekday, there were families enjoying the play area, individuals enjoying walking and running through the park, playing tennis and just sitting in the peaceful surroundings. The park has many different areas encompassing 'something for everyone' in a comparatively small area: open grassed areas, a botanical garden with geological trail, sensory garden, water gardens, shaded walkways, sport facilities and a boating lake. Plantings include formal beds, many with colourful summer bedding and the area to the front of Cartwright Hall in particular providing bright splashes of colour. In other parts of the park, shrubberies and perennial plantings provided interest and calm 'green space'. Credit must go to the grounds staff for the standard of maintenance throughout given their staffing issues at the time of the visit.

Complementing the facilities within the park a range of activities and events further enhances its usage by the local community. These include concerts in the bandstand and a weekly Park Run. A Park Ranger also runs a variety of activities including school workshops. Local groups can also book space on an ad hoc or regular basis for their own events. All entrances to the park have information boards and additionally a range of leaflets are produced including a Guide and Map of the park, a walks leaflet and an orienteering map. Further information can also be found on the Park website.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Currently there is no 'Friends of' group for the park and it is highly recommended that efforts are made to set another one up as these groups can be hugely beneficial in many ways including fundraising and practical help within the park – both important in the current uncertain financial climate within local government. Also with reference to the latter, the grounds staff have made the sensible decision to reduce the number of annual plantings and have experimented very successfully with a perennial flower bed replacing a traditional annual bed to the front of Cartwright Hall. This approach is to be encouraged for environmental as well as financial reasons. As mentioned above a Park Ranger

runs a range of activities, however, there is no detail of these on the website. It would be nice to see more information available including some for schools to encourage their use of this wonderful space. This might even encompass self –guided packs?

Manor Parks Gold Award

Introduction

It was wonderful to come to this beautiful site on such a lovely day! Wonderful too to meet such an enthusiastic group of people working there. Arriving at Manor Parks, the judges had little idea that these facilities were available to the people of Sheffield. The entry covered the three key sites with Green Estate's management, and the judges were delighted to be shown an excellent variety of facilities that hugely benefit the community.

Areas of Achievement

Arriving at the site was a lovely experience. The masses of wild flowers near the entrance were both welcoming and exciting. Manor Fields Park - The judges were very impressed with the standard of maintenance considering the challenges faced from the surrounding area, with the almost complete absence of litter, graffiti and dog fouling. The swathes of wildflowers were superb, and Green Estate's practice of mixing non-natives and natives in certain areas works wonderfully well, and this is the first time the judges have seen this. They were also impressed that the practice is undertaken with advice from Sheffield University. It was pleasing to hear of the regular work done with the volunteers and school. It was also pleasing to hear about the cooking classes in the park house with the disadvantaged and the use of surplus supermarket food.

Manor Lodge - Credit is due to the staff's expertise and work in creating the superb wildflower 'avenue' to the Tudor house. It was brilliantly simple to see why it is popular for wedding photos!. The Apothecary garden was also impressive, with its array of medicinal and culinary herbs. The Lavender Maze was also both novel and very well-conceived, being both attractive and requiring little maintenance.

The Manor - It was very good to see the on-site nursery and hear about the sustainable horticultural practices - it seems very little goes to waste here!

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Perhaps consider a large notice board somewhere near the Manor Fields Park entrance. This could raise awareness of the excellent features of the park and would perhaps have more impact than smaller interpretation boards. The Apothecary Garden is lovely. Perhaps since space permits it might be possible to think of creating other herbal gardens, a potpourri garden, and a garden devoted to herbal cosmetics, a strewing garden, dye planting or a garden of edible herbs might be possible. In the Apothecary garden it might be an idea to provide a range of interpretation boards giving modern and historical uses for the herbs.

Newby Hall and Gardens Gold Award

Introduction

You approach Newby Hall down a long tree lined drive with the house prominently centre stage. An inspiring and stately Adam House that sits well in its landscape and surrounded by exquisite gardens and facilities to engage the young and old alike. The gardens have an established feel yet a freshness to their presentation and maintenance. Clearly a well-cared for site managed and maintained by a team with passion and enthusiasm, Newby is a House and garden with a rich and varied offer, with plenty of places and spaces to relax and refresh. Excellent tea room facilities.

Areas of Achievement

For an attraction to remain high in the ' must visit' locations, it has to be sensitive to visitor needs and expectations. The team at Newby take very seriously the visitor experience, the whole team regularly meet both to deal with the day to day routine and to exchange ideas and overheard comments, constantly analysing how to improve or adjust facilities. Gardens are ever changing and the team at Newby have continued to add new and interesting elements and planting combinations in the formal areas whilst being sensitive to creating a relaxing route that links them together. Facilities for young people are discrete yet easy to find and very engaging. A diverse and well-presented attraction, a real family friendly site.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

A garden requires constant attention, and the team have carefully considered plans to continue to refresh existing plantings and to introduce new elements that complement the existing features, vista's and landscape. Whilst a proportion of the visitors may not be keen gardener's information about plants in the form of plant lists or bed plans may help and avoid the need for extensive labelling. Balancing staff interaction with visitors whilst achieving maintenance targets can be a challenge, communication is vital and supports the visitor experience, the introduction of an information card with details of web and social media that can be carried by staff and given out to visitors may be something that could help support staff.

Oakwell Hall Country Park Gold Award

Introduction

Oakwell Hall, a 17th century building, lies at the heart of a 110 acre country park run by the Kirklees Museums and Galleries service. The grounds encompass gardens adjacent to the hall, a visitor centre, play area and extensive areas of both open field and woodland, some reclaimed from the former Gomersall Colliery site. The judge enjoyed a most interesting tour of this fascinating and beautiful site led by Park Rangers Amanda and Tony along with Eric from the Museums Service.

Areas of Achievement

This wonderful site has so much to offer and is clearly well used by the local community and visitors from further afield. The gardens adjacent to the hall are largely formal and planted in the style of a 17th century garden, the exception being the gardens to the front of the Hall which contain more modern plantings. A newly developed pathway from the car park to the visitor centre is flanked by attractive perennial planting. Further afield can be found a wildlife garden with a pond suitable for 'dipping' at the centre of an area with wildflower meadows and coppiced woodland. This area is used for school and family activities. A further wildlife area encompassing four ponds and bogland has been developed, with a boardwalk allowing viewing access across the site. Varied wildlife habitats across the site can be visited on a two mile nature trail and interpretation at various locations provides additional information.

A faith garden provides an area for contemplation in a peaceful 'green' setting. The Park Rangers run an established and well organised volunteer programme with regular Thursday morning work sessions. Volunteers are given the opportunity to undertake training (e.g. drystone walling) and take a level of responsibility for the projects they are involved with. They also provide work experience/volunteering opportunities for local colleges and businesses. Recognition of the site's heritage not only encompasses the original hall and its gardens, but also the history of the mine. The wonderful gates at the entrance to the visitor centre include many elements of the site's heritage including old miner's lamps and a sculpture near the Countryside Centre also reflects this industrial heritage.

A thriving programme with a wide range of activities for all ages is on offer, from regular Park Runs to environmental activities for the under-5s. Schools are also well catered for with a choice of varied history and science topics available. Income to support development and use of the site is generated in many ways including weddings and other functions, and donations in kind from local businesses. An active Friends group support the many activities in the park and undertakes fundraising. Both the Oakwell Hall and the Friends websites provide a wealth of information on the Hall and Park and the large range of activities on offer.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Plans to develop a community orchard in a field on the edge of the park are to be commended and should provide an opportunity to plant heritage and other varieties of top fruit. As a tribute to the volunteers, an area of garden with seating and a view across the site is due to be developed. A lovely way to say 'thank you'. Already underway is a project to develop an Iron Age Round House which not only will be of interest to visitors but will add to the portfolio of onsite educational resources. Lastly – keep up the good work! This fantastic site is a credit to the vision and hard work of all the staff and volunteers involved.

Introduction

Pannett Park has a number of features making it attractive to local residents and holiday visitors alike. It has seen many changes over the years but retains much of its original character, and still contains many traditional features such as the floral clock and formal rose beds. These are complimented by the relatively recent introduction of the 'all ages' play area; Jurassic path and chain saw sculptures. The continuing success of the park is testament to the enthusiasm of all those involved, it includes those from the local authority and also the Friends of Pannett Park whose' energetic stewardship of the park keeps the park as attractive as ever. It is easy to see how it is all working so well, we wish them every success for the future.

Areas of Achievement

The impressive publicity pack presented to the judges, details a busy schedule of park events, with many activities taking place every month throughout the year. Bold approach to changes made to bed layout with some removed and others reshaped, to improve bed design and allow alternative use of other areas. All without major community backlash hinting at successful communication with users. The retention of the formal areas of the park such as the rose beds in front of the museum, has been successfully combined with many less formal areas introduced for either relaxing, or promoting interest in the past exemplified by a prehistoric crocodile in the Jurassic garden. The innovative use of the old tree stumps for very pleasing chainsaw sculptures and the identification and highlighting of the presence of a colony of the rare Alytes obstetricians the Midwife Toad in the lily pond. It is difficult to see how the list of park activities, features developed and overall high standards, would have been achieved without the tremendous efforts of the Friends of Pannett Park, a guide and an inspiration for others to follow.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The Friends need to keep looking to the future and recruit members young and old to keep up the good works. The second decade of a very dedicated commitment will demand continued effort from even more volunteers. Within the Jurassic Path consideration could be given to introducing the number of millions of years since the rocks and fossils were laid down being set into the path. This would provide further educational value of the differing geological ages (delineated by a change in path colour and fossil type)

To help mitigate the proposed loss of Spring bulb planting and the subsequent reduced quality of the bedding displays, it may be opportune to generate additional funding by seeking a donation to the Friends group from the many commercial photographers and organisations which use the park facilities and landscape throughout the year.

Red House and Gardens Gold Award

Introduction

This little gem of a garden forms part of the Red House Museum site run by Kirklees Museums and Galleries Service. The house was originally built in 1660 for cloth merchant William Taylor and remained in the family until 1920. It has links to Charlotte Bronte who featured the house in her novel, Shirley, and the planting and layout of the garden have been chosen to reflect that of this era with the likes of island flower beds bounded by metal 'baskets' and box hedging. The gardens are maintained by a team of Park Rangers (who also cover nearby Oakwell Country Park), ably supported by a team of volunteers and the judge was given a most interesting tour by Rangers Amanda and Tony, and Eric from the Museums Service. Regrettably, at the time of writing this report, Red House is under threat of closure with a consultation process being held.

Areas of Achievement

Despite its small size, the garden encompasses different areas and styles of planting, from the island beds referred to earlier, a wonderful and highly scented rose border, to large mature trees bounding the site and shrubs bounding the accessible hard surfaced serpentine walk which takes the visitor around the garden. Interpretation around the garden offers the visitor an insight into the historical features and plant varieties used. In the cart shed area to the rear of the formal garden, the garden takes on a different mantle with an informal space beneath the trees planted with snowdrops, bluebells and daffodils for winter and spring and flowering perennials for summer. The cobbled courtyard housed a few tastefully planted containers.

The museum and gardens make good use of their links to the community not only by providing a free access garden but by offering volunteering opportunities for the Friends group and for local businesses, providing for visits by schools and special needs groups, and offering work experience for local colleges. They are also highly successful in fundraising through events such as their regular summer Open Theatre, grants applied for via their Friends group, through local business links and by generating income from weddings and similar events.

Sustainable practices are in operation with the style of planting throughout the site requiring minimal watering, all garden waste being composted on-site, and use of peat-free compost and the style of planting in general providing habitats for wildlife. Congratulations go to the staff who not only maintain and develop a wonderful garden and site of historic significance, but have also successfully adapted to the challenges of reduced budgets and staffing levels

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The area behind the cart sheds has the potential to be developed further as a wildlife area while still retaining its purpose as an open and attractive site adjacent to the tea rooms.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Homestead Park Gold Award

Introduction

The Homestead Park has been open to the public of York since 1904, when the then owner, Seebohm Rowntree (son of Joseph Rowntree) placed a notice in the Yorkshire Gazette, that said, ' The fields behind the house would be made available for the children attending the York Elementary School, The site is open to the public year round with variable opening over the different seasons. For a city centre site the park has an incredible range of facilities for young and old alike, play facilities, beautifully manicured and maintained gardens a plant sales area and cafe. Historically significant elements include a rare example of a 'Backhouse' pond, and rock garden area.

Areas of Achievement

The new entrance signage is clear and well presented, the incorporation of leaflet dispensers for a general park leaflet, tree trail and wildlife identification chart, all of which are both informative and engaging. A newly refurbished recycling and green waste processing facility converts grass and plant waste from all the sites owned by the Rowntree Foundation produces an incredible amount of compost, mulch and wood chip, recycling almost 98% of all the green waste from all their sites. The pop-up cafe franchise is proving popular and is a great addition to the park facilities. New timber gates are a welcome replacement for the old steel gates which will be re-used to secure the recycling yard. The themed bedding display is exceptional, well maintained and a well-executed design, it is clear that the staff and management take great pride in their work looking after an exceptionally well maintained site. The time line interpretation panels researched by a member of staff is a fascinating representation and historical reference.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Plans to improve the serpentine footpath will ease movement around the park for visitors with mobility issues. Creative solutions to old tree stumps by wood sculptors will add interest and character. The development of the 'Circle Garden' designed to highlight issues associated with dementia will add to the already extensive features. Proposals to promote the site as a community park with help from the RHS Community Action Partnership should be encouraged. The children play facilities are a continuously changing facility, adding elements for all abilities, and the possibly of an undercover facility on the paddling pool site will be much used and a valuable addition.

York Museum Gardens Gold

Introduction

Minutes' walk from the centre of York, The Museum Gardens are truly a horticultural gem. Set amongst stunning architecture and heritage the gardens stand proud complimenting this rich cultural attraction. A varied range of aspects means that the range of conditions and plants is very extensive. Not without its natural challenges sat on the banks of the river Ouse, the garden shows great resilience helped greatly by the skill and enthusiasm of the staff and management of the site.

Areas of Achievement

The standard and quality of horticultural maintenance is exceptional, given that the site is open all year round with an annual footfall in excess of 1.7 million visitors. The new geological map is brilliant, a most intriguing feature designed and installed by Janette Ireland, representing the work of William Smith. The adjacent 'Pavilion Cafe' is a welcome addition to the food and refreshment facilities at the site. A newly created 'Edible Wood' garden is both sympathetic to the surroundings and a brilliant addition to an already diverse garden and along with the Pavilion Cafe area and the events space in front of the Art Gallery increase the site by some 2.5 acres to 12.5 acres in total. The environmental achievements continue with the Tansy Beetle and urban bug projects, indeed the whole site is home to a rich, diverse and extensive range of wildlife.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The continued restoration and plant additions to the garden are most interesting with a local plant expert donating choice plant material. The events area in front of the Art Gallery will benefit from new art/sculpture installations over the coming months and will further enhance the museum offer and the garden. The pot display at the Marygate entrance is most attractive but the signage here would benefit from a little refreshing.

Category 9: Open Spaces

Calverley Park Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The well-established park looked lovely and all areas were very well maintained.
2. The excellent floral displays added interest and colour and included the WI bed, the Edible Bed (for use by the community) and the "90" Bed. It is good that children and different groups contributed to them and to some of the tree planting. The hanging baskets added an extra dimension.
3. There are many sporting activities including cricket, bowling, boules and an exercise circuit. All of these are well used.

Areas for Consideration

1. Continue with the replacement of seating and other items in the park.
2. Working with young people is so important and should continue.

Carlton Marsh Nature Reserve Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Carlton Marsh Nature Reserve is a stunning natural heritage site and has an amazing amount of flora and fauna within it.
2. The work undertaken by all involved is to be commended, with Cliff leading from the front!
3. The creation of the new reed beds is a great addition to the site along with new notice boards, newly painted rails at the car park and a wealth of information in the bird hide
4. Notice Boards and the newly painted rails at the car park,
5. The wealth of information in the bird hide.

Areas for Consideration

1. Continue to encourage schools to see the reserve
2. Continue to look at encouraging people to see the reserve, may be through open days and bird watching walks.

Churchfields Peace Garden Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The initial idea and hard work that has been put in to save and develop the area back into a real asset.
2. The enthusiast volunteers who also work with the adjacent care home and are now tackling the church grounds that are also close by.
3. The display illustrating the re development of the park, events and success of the group.
4. Tree management programme was good

Areas for Consideration

1. Some of the seats would benefit from a programme of refurbishment, we understand that the tree cover will make this a constant and difficult task.
2. Given the location of the park there may be an opportunity to have a limited information board illustrating some of the wildlife.
3. Consider the type and location of the hanging baskets and beds as it may be possible to increase the wow factor by using a different type.
4. With expansion plans in place it is important that the group works within the resources it has available, to continue to enjoy the projects and not to become a chore.

Clayhouse Park Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation

1. A commendable partnership between the group and the Council has seen a considerable increase in usage of the park and hall for various events. There has been much clearance work completed which has made many more people visit the park on a daily basis and the team must be congratulated
2. The collection of roses on the pergola is admirable perhaps there could be some labels so the public can learn the names of the roses – a plan of which rose is planted where would be useful for your records. Additionally there is a good collection of climbers on the site and perhaps there would be scope to create a leaflet to give more information to the public
3. It was good to see the boundary stones refurbished - a really unique feature
4. There are some good plantings that are encouraging insect pollinators to the park maybe this could be continued in other areas

Areas for Consideration

1. The guide to Clay House North Dean Woods and West Vale Village is a most informative document maybe it is time to consider an update or some of the information could be turned into a leaflet specifically about the park and the planting.
2. There are opportunities to use teams of volunteers from Tesco and the Co-op to help with the larger projects such as painting the pergola. There may be other occasions to work with Community Payback on other projects

3. There could be discussions with the Countryside Officer about some of the areas of the park and whether to make them better habitats for wildlife with access for the public. There may be opportunities to get some tree whips from the Woodlands Trust which could be planted by the school children
4. Maybe a little more research on what plants prefer what conditions would be useful in some of the new plantings to make sure right plant right place is chosen

Cross Flatts Park Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. This park is extremely good in all aspects and is a credit to all those involved, especially in relation to what it was some years ago.
2. The park is well used by individuals, groups and for many, good and very well supported events. Many sporting activities are available and there are different children's play areas for varying abilities.
3. It is well maintained with very little litter, dog fouling or graffiti.
4. All grass areas were very well maintained as were the different horticultural areas including the millennium garden and rose beds. There were good information boards.
5. The contribution of the many groups and agencies is commendable for support and funding.

Areas for Consideration

1. Although the park is well maintained, there were very small areas that needed attention.
2. Some of the rose beds were lovely but others needed some improvement.
3. It was unfortunate that a working party was organised for the Mini Orchard the day after this judging but in time for Beeston in Bloom the following week. Allowances were made for this.
4. Keep going it is a credit to all concerned

East End Park, East Leeds Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation

1. A large well maintained park with many sporting and fitness facilities including trim trail which can be used in conjunction with an app, very popular bowling greens, play area football and skateboard facilities along with an outdoor table tennis table. Public events are held in the park throughout the year.
2. The landscape includes an interesting Victorian mound used for visitors to enjoy the views over the landscape. And Spouting Stones once used to stand on when someone wanted to pass on their point of view. An avenue of recently planted trees is establishing ready to re-place older trees which will eventually die out.
3. In spring there are many bulbs planted near to the bowling green's to enable them to be viewed by visitors. A record is kept of the variety and extent of the planting so that extra bulbs of the same type can be added if needed.
4. The East End Park friends group meet once a month to assist in various tasks.

5. A Wild flower bed has been created in place of redundant rose beds, seeds from the present years crops will be re sown next year. Many of the fallen leaves are shredded on the shrubberies to allow them to be incorporated in the soil by worms. Many common sense methods are used to manage the park without too much labour input.

Areas for Consideration

1. Continue to manage trees and shrubs on the mound to give clear views of the landscape.
2. Think carefully about the design rose bed area whether it should be roses or wild flowers. Consult and involve the friends group to see if they can look after a specific area.
3. Create an information leaflet or website giving the history of the park and events.
4. For future years make up a small portfolio to show judges seasonal displays and before and after pictures of improvements carried out. This may be time consuming and officer's assistance may be needed.
5. Designate more areas of the park for wildlife.

Foxwood Residents Association Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Good links with other groups and partners such as community payback and access to various grants to help support the group with projects
2. Great communication via social media, newsletters and notice boards to publicise the activities and events
3. Good range of facilities with the open space and raised planters for vegetables & herbs etc.
4. Site is well used for a number of activities from football to community galas and is complimented by the facilities of the community centre
5. The plans for joining in with the crocus planting in autumn organised by the Rotary Club will be great to get the local young people/school involved

Areas for Consideration

1. It will be useful to hear the experiences of the plant swap/sale in the autumn
2. Consider some labelling or perhaps an interpretation board for the herb bed so the public can learn to identify the herbs and their uses
3. The plans for a community orchard would be a useful addition, consider using local heritage apples. There may also be grants available for a community orchard
4. Following discussions with the Local Authority there may be other opportunities to leave areas of grass slightly longer to help encourage more wildlife

Friends of Dean Rd Manor Rd Cemetery

Platinum Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Strong and effective contribution from the wider community and an excellent use of twitter, Facebook and web site featuring successes, future projects & activities.
2. The success of the Mortuary Project and the progressing Chapel project designed for increased community use.
3. Gravestone realignment, repair and re-securing activities by the Payback Team, making a striking difference to the appearance of the cemetery.
4. The WWI project and on site interpretation boards.
5. The development and now maturing Secret Garden scheme, the culmination of much dedication work and enthusiasm.

Areas for Consideration

1. The success of the group's information leaflets and posters could be further developed with more, specifically directed at walks of seasonal interests throughout the cemeteries which include the diverse flora and fauna.
2. Installation of either smaller cemetery plan interpretation boards or discreet direction signs at entrances or key locations.
3. The existing tree list needs to be linked with a cemetery layout plan or labels to help visitors identify and locate the many mature trees of interest sited in both cemeteries.

Friends of Filey Parks Platinum Award

Areas of Commendation

1. An extremely enthusiastic group where members are involved in supporting the local authority team in producing a real quality standard in a much visited park.
2. The special features such as the Filey Gardener, the memorial to the litter picker, the wooden sculpture of the Plesiosaur (connecting the Jurassic coast), the lobster fisherman and the giant bee and bee meadow adding variety and local interest to the park.
3. The excellent information leaflet produced by the group for visitors to Glen and Crescent Gardens.
4. The overall standard of maintenance was high and the whole park was exceptionally clean and free from litter. Highly commendable when considering the large number of visitors the park experiences.

Areas for Consideration

1. The recruitment of additional members to the Friends group would support the groups' activities both in the short and long term.
2. The Wishing Well and sponsored island bed both generate much needed funds for the group. Consideration needs to be given to additional commercial sponsorship and raising awareness of this opportunity.

3. The "help yourself" herb garden was an innovative feature which deserved a higher profile. This could be expanded and additional interpretation signage added indicating culinary and medicinal uses and that they were "free to sample".

Friends of Locke Park Gold Award

Areas of Commendation.

- 1 The park is very well maintained and a credit to Parks Staff, Friends and volunteers.
- 2 A well established and productive relationship between the management group and visitors to the park ensure that there are always plans to further enhance and improve the whole site and its facilities.
- 3 Carefully considered and well managed events and activities provide a wide range of opportunities to both enjoy and generate income for future projects.
- 4 The recently refurbished tea rooms and new Multi Use Games Area are a great addition, further improving the offer and visitor experience.
- 5 The bowling club have taken on the management and maintenance of the greens ensuring that this activity continues to be part of the range of uses the park is intended for.

Areas for Consideration.

- 1 Plans to develop a plan to record and restore elements of the original planting will bring a valuable insight into how elements of the park's past can be in tune with the needs of today's visitor.
- 2 Proposed improvements to access and parking for people with disabilities, is most encouraging.
- 3 The addition of a tree trail will add another activity for visitors to enjoy.
- 4 Although there are areas for wildlife the introduction of some more natural areas, with longer grass would give wildlife more opportunity to share the site.

Friends of Monk Bretton Memorial Garden Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The refurbished identical pillars placed in a setting to create a memorial garden. All dedications on the pillars clearly identifiable and lettering refurbished.
2. The achievement created using the breadth of community involvement, and the fundraising these groups have individually done to bring the project together.
3. Using the school children to plant up the borders and maintain the site. Fostering the sense of ownership and pride within their community
4. The individually dedicated poppies attached to the railings all-round the site, including the new sculpture poppies project from school, and the excellent arch entrance to the site
5. The dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers in clearing the site replanting, keeping this garden weed and litter free, together with the excellent grass cutting.

Areas for Consideration:

1. Carry on encouraging local residents to volunteer and continue links with schools and community groups.
2. Consider information boards displaying and informing the public the wonderful work that the group does, what has been done, and with more information of the soldiers names.

Friends of Monk Bretton Park Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Approaching 10 years of a Friends group, this 10 volunteer strong group work with such dedication and hard work helping maintain this public park to a high standard.
2. The achievement of creating such a welcoming entrance to the park. The superbly kept, swept and planted borders as one approaching through the entrance into the field.
3. The ongoing sustainable planting and maintenance, graffiti and litter free circumference to the site.
4. The fundraising required to create events in the park like the 'Brass in the Park' occasion. Organising this event, using the park to its potential and for the benefit of the whole community.

Areas for Consideration:

1. Work with the local authority to reinstate the accessibility of the pond.
2. Consider information boards at the pond showing what wildlife both flora and fauna is present.
3. Carry on encouraging local residents to volunteer and continue links with schools and community groups.
4. Continue with the excellent leaflet drop informing residents of the Friends group.

Friends of Sandringham Park Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Sandringham Park has only been in the making for 6 years and under the very cable guidance of Kazia leading the Friends of Sandringham Park the park has gone from strength to strength and has achieved notable awards in Open Space Award, and a Green Flag Award, and a Sandringham Park Gold Big Garden Certificate
2. It is an inviting place for all to go, and recently with a grant installed some outdoor gym equipment has been added.
3. The Park is constantly monitored and is a credit to the committee who have met any anti-social behaviour head on and stopped it making the Park safe and clean for all to use for so many purposes.

Areas for Consideration:

1. They are hopeful of adding more equipment this year

Friends of South Cliff Gardens Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Excellent map and information leaflets produced by the friends group, for both the Rose Garden and South Cliff Gardens.
2. The Rose Garden restoration project and its high standard of ongoing maintenance.
3. The successful restoration of the Prince of Wales Gardens and the continuing improvements being carried out.
4. The restoration of the miniature garden and shelter in Shuttleworth Gardens.
5. The development of the £5m HLF bid "Parks for People", for the restoration of the South Cliff Gardens.

Areas for Consideration:

1. The friend's excellent website could be further enhanced with additional information relating to the flora and fauna being encouraged in St Martin's Square Gardens and throughout the South Cliff Gardens.
2. Increasing the all year round range of voluntary activities for the involvement of young people would potentially forge greater links with the younger age group to support the future of South Cliff Gardens.
3. To continue the progress the friends have achieved over the last 10 years, an interim development programme of activities and future projects is needed. This to ensure forward momentum of the group before the HLF bid work programme starts or a potential delay in the work commencing.

Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. A well organised and committed group which has been successful in attracting grant funding for various projects and has produced some great events particularly for the 175 weekend
2. An excellent heritage project provides a real insight into Sowerby Bridge's history including details of prominent local people from industrialists and inventors to politicians and sportsmen. This project is a tremendous resource not only for the passengers but for all the local people and schools
3. Good work with troughs/tubs and the sponsorship packages. No doubt this is so successful due to the updates provided throughout the year with newsletters and Christmas cards etc.
4. A great composting system at the rear of the perennial area must provide a source of good compost for other areas
5. The relationship between the other local companies is admirable, organising to collect their grey water for extra water to water containers etc.

Areas for Consideration:

1. Consider reviewing the planting in the Bronte garden and establishing some further plants
2. There are plastic barrels made with reservoirs which may help with watering which could be considered e.g. Amberol

3. Good to hear that the heritage project may be turned into a book which will then be even more accessible to the public
4. Always useful to hear about future projects such as the tool store. Other possible grant funding can be obtained from Awards for All which is up to £10,000 and notification is received within 8 weeks

Friends of Thurnscoe Park Silver Gilt Award

Areas for Commendation

- 1 The Friends are well organised and have a clear vision for the park, improving maintenance, restoring features and encouraging a wider use of the site.
- 2 The effective use of the Community Payback Scheme means that costs can be kept to a minimum, and the wider community can benefit from the scheme.
- 3 The re-use of spring bedding plants (Polyanthus) in beds and borders will both enhance future displays and make use of redundant spring bedding.
- 4 Taking on some of the more demanding maintenance issues such as shrub pruning has meant that the natural habit and flowering of these plants can be better appreciated.
- 5 Involving the local community and schools in both maintenance and planting is to be commended, indeed the floral meadow and rose beds are particularly attractive.

Areas for Consideration

- 1 The delivery of the maintenance store cabin is eagerly awaited and will provide secure storage and a base for maintenance and events equipment.
- 2 Plans to seek funding to improve path surfacing and weed growth in the galleys will improve the overall appearance of the site.
- 3 Introducing more perennial planting will ease maintenance and replace less cost effective seasonal bedding.
- 4 Plans to install new gates at the main entrance will both improve security and give the site a clear identity.
- 5 Refurbishing the composting and recycling area will help improve the appearance of the site and provide valuable compost for soil improvement.

Friends of Wilthorpe Park Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation

- 1 A relatively new group formed in 2014 with incredible enthusiasm and passion to improve both the condition and wider use of the park.
- 2 The 'Saturday Gardening Club' are a great introduction encouraging friends and users to get more involved with the hands on maintenance and development of the park and its facilities.
- 3 The introduction of a new interpretation sign board gives the site an identity promoting its value to the community.

4 The adaptation of the site previously a lake into a 'Bike Park' where children can practice and hone their cycling skills in a fun and safe space is brilliant.

5 A clear vision and plan is in place that will guide future developments and engage users in fundraising, refurbishing and re-designing areas to improve the parks visual appearance and encourage wider use

Areas for Consideration

1 There are several entrances to the park and it would be good to have interpretation boards at each of them, accepting that one has recently been installed at the Huddersfield Road entrance.

2 Continue to improve the diversity of planted areas introducing perennials to add colour and interest throughout the year.

3 The sensory bed is a great addition and could be expanded with additional planters as funding becomes available

4 Redesign areas to accommodate wildlife through both replanting with appropriate species and designating areas for grass meadows.

5 Continue to build on the range of activities and opportunities to make use of the park and its facilities.

Golden Acre Park, Bramhope

Platinum Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The park held lots of unexpected areas for us, national collections, society display trials, adopt a tree scheme.

2. Evidence of close working with many societies and organisations giving a mutual benefit to all of the park's appearance.

3. Continuing the ethos and experience started with the Which magazine trials.

4. Retaining all the memorable heritage, incorporating it into the park and keeping records of planting.

5. Exceptional quality in all areas, attention to detail, especially against rabbit infestation. Well done.

Areas for Consideration

1. All areas are constantly under review and progress is constantly taking place. We would support this and look forward to seeing this continue in the park.

2. It would be interesting to meet some users of the park if possible.

Harold Park

Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The park is thriving and is a credit to the Friends' Group and Council workers. It is pleasing to see it being so well used by schoolchildren and residents alike.

2. The sensory garden is one of the best examples of its type you will see anyway. Well done to all involved.
3. There is a pleasing emphasis on wildlife with a healthy range of plants and habitats created for this.
4. The interpretation panels were interesting and along with the heritage helped to create further interest.
5. Overall the park is an absolute joy -a delightful green lung in an urban area. A big well done to all involved.

Areas for Consideration

1. Unfortunately and due to circumstances beyond the control of anyone the park has suffered several recent spates of vandalism. However the group is determined to ride through this and we acknowledge their attempt to paint over graffiti.
2. Moving forward, some planters and seating will benefit from painting.
3. Some litter bins are also looking a little tired.
4. Although some weeds are inevitable in a park this size, special attention need to be paid to weeds in particular around the children's play park and the pond.

Horsforth Hall Park Platinum Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Despite the park being used extensively by the public and for events there was a complete lack of litter, graffiti, dog fouling etc.
2. There have been nine cherry trees planted in park by pupils of schools and the number reflect the nine schools in the area. Herbaceous borders were excellent with a wide variety of cultivars, plants healthy and al totally weed free.
3. The Japanese Garden was again excellent and added a further dimension to the park.
4. Annual bedding supplemented the sustainable planting and added eye-catching colour and all annuals had been regularly dead headed.
5. All grassland is well maintained and there were good information boards in the park. Volunteers work in the park, there are bird boxes and bat boxes made by Horsforth in Bloom and the recycling area was built by Horsforth in Bloom.

Areas for Consideration

1. The lake in the Japanese Garden would be more attractive if a little more clarity of water could be obtained (although as pointed out to the judges this could mean the loss of fish to the local heron)!!

Peasholm Park Friends Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The Friends of Peasholme Park are a very enthusiastic group who carry out a sterling job in helping to keep the park clean and inviting for the many visitors.
2. The Friends contribution to the reinstatement of the Pagoda and island features and their continued upkeep.
3. A programme of bench re-instatement is taking place working with the Payback Team.
4. The success of the Lily Pond project and its continued improvement with the proposal to replace the centre statue with the original "Dancing Girl".
5. The introduction of the Tree Trail in The Glen and the wood carving sculptures adding interest for park visitors of all ages.

Areas for Consideration

1. As with all such groups some consideration needs to be given to encouraging increased membership to continue the successes to date.
2. The Friends excellent web site would benefit from being updated and inclusion of details of the wildlife to be found in the park.
3. A review of the Tree Trail features such as individual markers or notices and introduction of additional general tree trail notices needs to be considered.

Peat Garden, Old Magnesia Well Pump Room Platinum Award

Areas of Commendation

1. Incredible work in a very short time by a group of volunteers, Friends of Valley Gardens in conjunction with Harrogate Borough Council.
2. The Pump Room, Old Magnesia Well, Peat Garden and rockery have all been restored with a sympathetic and very extensive choice of plants to give colour, height, foliage, and year round flowering. Work continues to improve soil quality and the boggy area, plants are propagated or recycled for compost.
3. As much reclaimed stone as possible has been used for the re building of the Pump Room, restoring it to its former glory and additionally used on the rock garden and paths. Bird boxes have been obtained from Horticap and Bug mansions, log piles built – all using logs and twigs from the garden including a lovely display board of great interest to all, including visiting parties of children.
4. Inside the Pump Room the history and renovation is extremely well documented for all to see. Drinking cups are provided so water can be tasted using the hand pump, which is restored to working order.
5. The group work with Harrogate Borough Council and a group of volunteers and funds applied for from numerous organisations and fundraising with coffee mornings, heritage days and the 1940's days all ensure community involvement. Very well done to everyone -a fantastic achievement - keep up the good work.

Areas for Consideration

1. Very little to say – the group are aware the dry area under the trees near the well heads needs more ground cover – otherwise a fantastic achievement incorporating planting, forward planning, funding, publicity and community involvement.

Potternewton Park, Chapeltown

Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation.

1. A well maintained park with excellent bedding displays and collection of old and unusual varieties of mature trees.
2. Home to the very popular Leeds Carnival and many other public events.
3. The nearby school uses the park facilities for their outdoor activities and there is a compost heap used mainly for fallen leaves and a wormery nearby.
4. There are many facilities for keeping fit in Potternewton Park including a trim trail, Summer and Winter bowling greens, skate board park and play area. There is also a graffiti board which cuts down on the amount of unwanted graffiti
5. There is a well maintained fruit and edible garden at the top of the park in which people can sit and relax during the day.

Areas for Consideration.

1. Try to establish a small friends group to assist with some of the herbaceous areas which have got out of hand. With guidance they may be able to re design and plant the area. The staff who take care of the park do a great job and are trying their best to keep up with the huge amount of work necessary to achieve a high quality public space. Good communication and encouragement between the workforce and senior officers may help
2. Publish a leaflet or website with the park history and facilities including a tree trail of historic trees in the park as many of these are very old and interesting specimens.
3. Ear mark small areas of the park for growing bee and butterfly friendly plants which could be added to the leaflet and be of interest to school children.
4. Some of the paths are looking slightly worse for wear which is understandable in a long established large park some renovation may be needed to get them back up to standard.
5. If being judged next year a small portfolio could be made for the judge showing before and after photographs of improvement work as it occurs.

Pudsey Park

Gold Award

Areas of Commendation.

1. Pudsey Park had much improved from spring when it had been severely hit by winter flooding and maintenance works.
2. Good floral displays by the bandstand.

3. Edible planting bed at top of park very effective.
4. New wildflower planting beginning to establish and has a very well used play area.
5. Situated in the centre of Pudsey it makes a very good visitor attraction. Good signage and notice boards throughout the park.

Areas for Consideration.

1. Woodland area could be improved and make a good educational space.
2. Some shrub beds at lower end of park could be removed to ease maintenance and make area safer for park users.
3. A well-used park with many attractions and events in the centre of Pudsey.

Royston Canal Club Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The dedication and enthusiasm of the group Secretary John Clare and his small team of 5 volunteers working all year round to enhance and develop the canal.
2. The achievement of reinstating this length of canal back to an original outstanding environment.
3. The increased number of new fishing pegs and refurbished old ones using recycled composite plastics.
4. The natural wildlife and clear water evident in the canal that is a result of the hard work carried out so as to reinstate fish stocks.
5. The consideration taken place to allow wheelchair users access and created fishing pegs to accommodate comfortably.

Areas for Consideration:

1. Liaise with the Town Council to install dog bins at the entrance / Main road to the canals towpaths.
2. Consider information boards displaying and informing public the wonderful work that the group does.
3. Working with the Town Council and In Bloom group consider other ways to promote the canal group and angling club maybe a newsletter or leaflet or social media

Springhead Park Rothwell Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation.

1. A well laid out park with a good a range of facilities for all types and ages of park users including a well-equipped cafe, skate board park, table tennis table and other sporting facilities.
2. Park staff and apprentices are encouraged to plan, design and plant seasonal flowerbeds and perennial borders as well as colour co-ordinated planters which were greatly admired by the judge.
3. There is a well-stocked aviary containing parrots finches and budgerigars which are easily viewed by all ages.

4. The beck which runs through the park is marked by longer grass at each side which encourages wild life and warns people of the water. Interpretive signs with a map and types of wildlife found in the area are spread around the park.
5. A valuable friends group assists the staff with the upkeep of the park.

Areas for Consideration.

1. Continue to encourage parks staff and apprentices to design planting areas and keep up to date with modern trends.
2. Encourage expansion of the friends group.
3. Progress the design and installation of the alzimers garden near the aviary.
4. Continue with community events in the park throughout the year.
5. Consider producing a website with park information etc.

StreetWize Community Association Silver Gilt Award

Areas of Commendation.

- 1 The range of tasks undertaken by the group, from a gardening club to large scale event organising.
- 2 The drive and initiative to make it a community driven range of projects, benefiting a densely populated area and already seeing spin offs with new projects being started because of the work this group has done.
3. Bringing practical solutions to problems be it encouraging reading or promoting re cycling the group are involved and often initiating the projects.
4. I am not sure if this is in the right part of your project s but when you split up the strawberry bed you could give children one to take home or organise a potato growing competition or sun flower one. The idea being to spread that high level of involvement you have with some fun.

Areas for Consideration

1. I suspect you will have done this in the past but you could launch the project in the park and raised beds by having a clean-up day.
2. Continue to pursue the grant for the raised bed area and park.
3. Continue the projects and enjoy the developing community cohesion you are developing.

The Pinewoods Gold Award

Areas of Commendation.

1. This site on the outskirts of Harrogate is well used by the local community. It encompasses woodland (native and plantation), hedgerows, open areas, and newly planted wild flower areas. A network of paths go through the site and the recently resurfaced Memorial path completes an accessible route traversing the original woodland area.

2. The Pinewoods Conservation Group are a well-established and well-supported group with around 150 members. They have a good programme of both 'working party' and social activities and events open to the public.

3. The group communicate well with the local community via Social Media, the local press etc. They have developed links with other local groups/charities/businesses such as youth groups (including schools), Horticap, Open Country, RHS Garden Harlow Carr, in support of their site maintenance and project development work. They also work closely with Harrogate Borough Council (who own the land) in regard to forward planning.

4. A key focus of their work is to conserve the woodland and other areas and to encourage wildlife by the provision of appropriate habitats, bird and bat boxes and a bird feeding station. Interpretation board at various locations across the site provide relevant information for visitors.

5. In support of this work, the group have been highly successful at fundraising in a number of ways including grants, income from events, in kind donations and other support from local businesses etc.

Areas for Consideration

1. Keep up the pressure on Harrogate Borough Council to provide a bin for dog waste on Irongate Field
2. Continue to work with Harrogate Borough Council to resolve the issue in regard to cyclists using the main pathway (Memorial Path) across the site (NB: PCG support use by cyclists)
3. It would be useful to have a good map of the Pinewoods on the website - showing areas and features of interest. The current link to HBC website is not particularly useful.
4. Improved signage to the Memorial Woods both from the Pinewood itself and Irongate Field would raise awareness of this area for visitors less familiar with the site.

The Rose Garden, High Green Gold Award

Areas of Commendation

1. The signage for the site was excellent and informative
2. The community commitment with 200 hours this year towards for match funding was good to see
3. The spring bulbs planted along the side of the path as well as the fruit trees planted add to the four season interest in the garden

Areas for Consideration

1. Consider taking on the rose garden from the local council as a community to increase the likelihood of grants to develop the site in the future for community use.
2. Look into developing a corner of the garden/site to improve the biodiversity of the site and improve composting of green waste.
3. Look into interdicting old rose varieties into the borders surrounding the garden to improve further the appeal to the community

Category 10: RHS It's Your Neighbourhood

Boothtown Partnership Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

Douglas and Vicky are at the heart of the Boothtown Partnership which is at the heart of the community in Boothtown. Together with other members supporting them they have enabled the Partnership to make a real difference in Boothtown. The Community Shop plays a vital community role in so many ways. The new allotments are a great success and certainly enhance the area through gardening. The care taken at the cemetery (not an easy task), including looking after the war graves by Douglas, is indicative of the work and influence of the Boothtown Partnership. Your work is a true example of community in action. Fund raising is outstanding and you have really made a difference to your neighbourhood. It was a pleasure meeting you. The Partnership is an inspiration to neighbourhood working and development. Well done to you all.

Areas for Improvement

All I can say is to encourage your excellent work and determination to keep going. You know the importance of succession planning and are working on this.

Cottingley Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

The ongoing work in the Community Orchard is a credit to the team. The Orchard is the longest Community Orchard in the Country. The Heineken Foundation and Bulmers cider have provided 66 trees; apples, pears, plums, olives, sascadoo and apricots. The team work in partnership with Instaplant, Costa, Mears, McDonalds, Goundworks and local councillors. The planters at the Church and Community Centre has been a complete community endeavour with a good choice of plants. The wildflower beds are developing really well. This is a credit to Neil who has raised the funds for the beds. The Dulverton Court sheltered housing roof garden and seating area is a credit to the hard work by Margaret. Cottingley in Bloom have raised funds for three notice boards. It was good to see the team are looking at sustainable planting as well as annual planting. This is a real community endeavour from the play school right through to the residents of the sheltered housing as well as young people from the National Citizenship Scheme. Congratulations to all the community for their hard work.

Areas for Improvement

At Dulverton Court, continue to press for the raised beds to further aid the resident's social interaction. Consider some fruit bushes in the area and seating. Some of your beds would benefit from further perennial planting such as ladies mantle and cranesbill geraniums and added groundcover with plants such as bugle. We know the team are already looking into these areas and would just like to

encourage them further. We believe Cottingley in Bloom may, in the near future, be ready to move into the main competition.

Cudworth Environmental Group Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

The pocket peace garden looks amazing and the artwork and sculpture enhance the garden. The various hanging baskets and planters show local business are getting involved. The numerous events in the park and the securing of funding is to be commended.

Areas for Improvement

Consider painting the railings near the new gates at the park. Continue to encourage local business to support the group.

Earswick Scented Garden Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

The Scented Garden at Earswick has been created on the site of a former bowling green. Having kept the initial square shape of the green, the chosen design with its symmetrical layout fits well within this area. The entirely voluntary group who have successfully developed and maintained the garden over the last eight years have been faced with the challenge of a site consisting of sand over hard-core. They have learnt what does (and does not) flourish in the beds, and the result is a wonderful garden, pleasing to the eye and full of scent.

Paved areas with chairs, benches, tables and pergolas provide pleasant spots to sit and enjoy this tranquil place. In the last year additional covered seating has been provided following a consultation with village residents. The recent addition of a noticeboard has provided not only for the promotion of group events but also included a good array of wildlife identification sheets for the benefit of visitors of all ages. A twice yearly plant sale has become not only a regular fund raiser but an important date in the calendar of local (and some not so local!) gardeners. The group are to be commended on their dedication and commitment in providing a wonderful garden for use of villagers.

Areas for Improvement

Now that the garden and its plantings are well-established, it would be good to see a move to more sustainable gardening practices. For example, composting takes place off-site, but even if some material was composted on-site it could be used to enhance the soil structure of the beds. If the group were perhaps to have occasional social visits to other gardens in the area, this would not only provide them with the opportunity to pick up ideas for further development, but would be a nice way of rewarding themselves for all their hard work!

East Ardsley Level 2 Improving

Areas of Achievement

The planting along Main Street very good, and makes a colourful display which can be seen from a distance. There are well-spaced seats. The group should be congratulated for their efforts both in maintaining areas around East Ardsley to a good standard but also fund raising and making people aware of the group. This group are making a difference in a small community. Encourage more members of small working parties to help you.

Areas for Improvement

The shrub beds behind the housing complex. Consider reducing them to one. With the size of your group only look after what you can manage. May be worth trying to develop a wild flower area in one of the wide expanses of grass land for the future.

Elland & District Partnership Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

We met Jo, Bryan and Vicky who were very enthusiastic about their area. The partnership has 43 members and formal meetings are held. Hanging baskets and troughs have been bought which are filled by the council. A large area had been planted up by a local school and litter picks are carried out from time to time. A Christmas tree has become a permanent fixture and Barclays Bank and the Wellington pub have provided cheerful displays. The Cartwheel Club, used by various youth and community groups, has a perennial garden. The partnership has successfully applied for funding from various sources. Surplus from the local allotment is donated to the food bank and used for the Monday luncheon club. The area is now using LED lighting.

Areas for Improvement

It will be interesting to learn how the ex-swimming bath land is developed. It would have been helpful to have details of activities and fundraising to June 2016 rather than to June 2015. Encourage the owners of the business opposite the former Co-Op to clear the steps of weeds and broken glass. The group might consider proving ownership of the very dilapidated K6 telephone box and then hopefully it can be properly restored and become a feature rather than a target for vandalism. Consider using more social media to your advantage by using the youth groups and involving more local businesses. Publicising in Bloom activities and perhaps a competition for the best poster or tub could attract further support.

Friends of Brighthouse Station Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

We were greeted at Brighthouse Station by David and an enthusiastic group of volunteers in the litter-free car park with posters welcoming our visit. The attractive beds at the entrance to the car park are being developed with seasonal planting and plants which were previously in display tubs by volunteers including the Air Training Corps.

Beulah showed us an impressive wildlife area which she had well researched to provide habitats for insects and butterflies where she had constructed bug hotels and seeded with wild flowers. There are currently 48 volunteers who have transformed the station into a delightful area to wait for the train or pass through and they have received many compliments from railway staff and passengers. Volunteers will even check the area for litter on their way home! The numerous planters are all sponsored by local businesses and the trims on the barrels were painted to match the station colours. Watering is a challenge but large water containers and watering cans are positioned at strategic places and a rota is in place. There is also a composter. The Friends of Brighthouse Station work closely with the railway authorities, local businesses and community groups, produce a newsletter and hold a competition for children. Their efforts are commendable.

Areas for Improvement

The Friends are always seeking ways to develop and improve. The scouts are planning to work on an adjacent plot. Continue to find a solution for collecting rain water. Consider low maintenance plants for shade and succulents such as sedum for the tricky areas under the concrete ramps

Friends of Crow Wood Park Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

In a relatively short space of time the Friends of Crow Wood Park have achieved their initial aim 'to have a nice park' and have gone further. The appearance and the use of the park by local residents is a credit to all the Friends. This is a park where people want to come and is a great community asset. It is obvious that residents feel safer using the park now due to your efforts - it is a place they want to be. The park has a mix of green spaces, bedding borders, wilder woodland, recreation areas and all are well maintained. Your plans for future development are realistic and will enhance the park further. Fund raising and publicity are excellent as is your work with other groups and organisations. Well done - keep going you are well on your way to Level 5. Many thanks to Bob, Pam, Gwen, Peter and Valerie for showing me your park.

Areas for Improvement

Your plan to provide more information in the park by installing trail posts is excellent. You could incorporate this into a small leaflet about the park with a map outlining possible walks round it (perhaps with an added exercise/health benefit emphasis.

Friends of Sandringham Park- Wetherby

Level 5

Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

The area is designated a Park so does not purport to be a gardening club but it make use of the open space for all to enjoy safely with enough planting to enhance the area. There are plans in the future for environmentally friendly schemes to be put in place. The new outdoor gym is used by all with plans to increase it this year, well done .Signage is now well done with achievements listed at both the entrance and rear of the Park with good clear welcoming signs. The committee ably led by Kazia meet local residents, produce a newsletter and keep the local youth club informed of any problems. The Park is regularly monitored, litter and dog fouling free, is used by all and new planting done for the future.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps the new Nicky place memorial bog garden could have a plaque explaining what it is about.

Friends of Western Library, Hull

Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

The garden serves as a vehicle to engage the community in a range of activities including gardening. Linked to the library, children are engaged in reading projects and story time takes place in the garden. The planters at the front of the library provide a colourful entrance and enhance the urban scene. The energy and enthusiasm of everyone involved in the project and the large number of groups actively supporting it is impressive.

Areas for Improvement

Some consideration will need to be given to the maintenance of the planted areas as plants are starting to encroach on to the main path. Consideration could be given to planting a suitable climber on to the steel dome to provide further shade and to balance the existing planting. Continue to develop plans for uses of the wall.

From Field to Table Community Allotment Champions

Level 2

Improving

Areas of Achievement

The area at the side of an allotment site was cleared by Beverly Town Council in 2014 with funding from Field to Table, from a completely overgrown area. Raised beds were made with paths around for disabled access, together with the creation of a ramp and steps down to the site from the road side which gives a view of Sparkmill windmill. Day students from the local charity Find 2, work on the plot with support workers on a 1 to 1 basis. A wooden gazebo gives shelter and the new shed houses tools,

with a polytunnel available. Funding is difficult but one volunteer has come forward with an offer of help.

Areas for Improvement

Encouragement of other community groups to have access to the site will benefit both the site as well as the ease for the users. Consider more planting by more usage of the site and possibly enlist the help of other allotment holders with maintenance, advice, and more vegetable planting. If further developed, the allotment is a great resource for Find 2 and its students.

Halton Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

Halton is lucky to have such a hard working group of volunteers who work tirelessly within the community and with local Businesses to brighten up the area with specially designed planted beds and colourful seasonal planters which are sponsored by local businesses. The planters have brightly coloured modern sponsorship signs which greatly assists with the funding. They are regularly watered pruned by volunteers who keep them in good shape despite the harsh conditions of being on a main road with heavy traffic passing through all day.

The judge was particularly impressed by a perennial bed designed and planted by Alison, one of the volunteers and at the other end of the street by a group of specially designed and planted beds by the newly cleaned stone Halton sign maintained by the local funeral directors who were in the process of adding to the display. There are several large schools in the area which the group is in contact with to ensure the pupils respect the plants and appreciate the hard work of these volunteers.

Many of the shops donate funds to the group and are very appreciative of their work. The grassed area behind the bus stop is constantly been cleared of litter and looked very smart at the time of judging. It was suggested that a small part of this area could be marked off and not cleared of litter while the rest could be cleared. This could show people what it could be like if no litter picking took place and a temporary sign asking which area the local people preferred. The group are currently engaged in establishing a wild flower area beneath a tree and are looking into the possibility of putting in raised beds and planting with edible plants and flowers.

Areas for Improvement

The pavements were showing signs of wear and tear and in some cases were uneven due to different boundaries of local premises. The green and gold Halton sign on the way into the district looks well. If this is going to be the local colour scheme the rest of the street furniture could be painted to match. This may be a matter for the group to speak to the local authority to see if improvements can be made over the coming years. Although money may be tight cosmetic improvements would greatly enhance the area which could in turn encourage more businesses into the area. The area beneath the tree could have some raised beds fitted while still leaving room for a small wild flower area.

The judge was concerned that if edible plants were used in this area the contamination from traffic pollution may not be good for the consumers. Instead flowering alpines could be planted which will trail down the sides of the raised beds. These should be plants which could provide colour most of the year round and stand dry conditions alpine plants should still be of benefit to the area. Schools or local groups could be involved in choosing and planting the alpines and the beds could be designed so that people in wheelchairs can help to maintain them.

High Green in Bloom Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

High green in bloom have managed to galvanise sections of the community to raise trowels and other gardening tools to improve the environment of the entire community. The entrances to the village are welcoming and thanks to the in bloom team draw you in to the village. The rose garden is a credit to the group's determination to improve the green space within the village and take on council managed spaces.

Areas for Improvement

The planters at the main roundabout would benefit replacement with planters containing reservoirs to reduce watering and risk for the group crossing the road. More signage around the village to promote High Green in Bloom. A push on local business for sponsorship encouraging local environmental responsibility in partnership with the local council.

Hirstwood Regeneration Group Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

In a very short time, the group have transformed a derelict canal site area into a delightful community amenity. The children's playground, free library and teenager 'pod' ensure that all age groups are catered for, including the outdoor classroom, bug huts, bird hide and involvement with Saltaire Primary School. This even covers canal boat trips for the house bound. Links to local councils, charities and organisations plus extensive publicity and leafleting households, continue to bring support for the groups work. They have also recently received the Duke of York Initiative Award. Diverse planting has been carried out very successfully and the stone walls and seat enhance this project. The staging to the newly formed wildlife pond is impressive and a duck house has been floated out into the middle for nesting. Many willow screens are being grown which will look fantastic when mature. Teenage offenders have been encouraged to help the project, making it inclusive to the whole community.

Areas for Improvement

Just continue as you are especially your maturing wildlife pond. Also, your planned display boards of the local history in collaboration with Saltaire Primary School will be a real asset. The information

boards for the canal side of Hirst Locks, celebrating its bi centenary and your development of sustainable planting near the quite area will be wonderful. This is a beautiful area which will be of great benefit to young and old in the community-a great credit to you all.

Incredible Edible Todmorden Community Team Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

It was both amazing and impressive to hear about the achievements of this group. No wonder their fame has spread to such an amazing extent. Just a little thing but the clear labelling of plants in the group's beds was pleasing and not found everywhere. The fact that the group are developing a strategy to help local people in the event of future flooding is impressive. The amount of community activity the group are involved with is exciting. We were pleased to hear of the free workshops the group runs. The amount of well-deserved support the group gets is impressive.

Areas for Improvement

Extend the cookery demonstrations to work with local schools and give children an idea what should go into good food. It is moving further away but bearing in mind the many chemicals which find their way into much of the bread we eat, a demonstration of good, honest bread making might be very valuable.

Kirkstall Level 3 Advancing

Areas of Achievement

This is a relatively new In Bloom group having been formed in 2012 and it is a delight to see the young age profile of the group who are all intent upon making Kirkstall an improved environment. The group are liaising well with other organisations in the area and the planting and mosaic in the Drink and be Grateful Fountain Garden is to be commended as is the work to clear and tidy the Kirkstall Abbey Park nature trail. Attending the Kirkstall Festival will raise public awareness of the group.

Areas for Improvement

The judges hope the enthusiasm and aims of the group continue and that they are able to recruit more volunteers from the University with their presence at the Kirkstall Festival. This is a group that is to be admired and the judges wish them all the very best for the future and look forward to seeing their plans reach fruition. Maybe a newsletter or flyer circulated locally would help.

Langdale, Woodlesford Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

Pat Yates drives this community initiative, her passion for community is easy to hear and see. Pat has encouraged residents over the past 2 to 3 years to help with the open areas which were once anti-social places and now are planted to a level the whole community can be proud of. Children on the estate are actively involved in growing some of the plants and helping to plant out. We met many of the community who have worked with Pat; Claire and Jamie on Esedale Mews saw the work being done on the estate and this year have cleared an area near their homes that once was prone to anti-social behaviour. They had the help of families in the cul de sac and also were involved with fund raising to help. The end result is an area they are proud of and which lifts the whole community.

There are a number of 'hidden' bird and bat boxes as well as log piles and hedgehog houses to encourage wildlife. The spin off, of the works being done by Pat and her team, means more residents in the estate are taking a pride in their own patch, and window boxes, hanging baskets are appearing across the area and two to note are Barry & Harry's, a blaze of colour in a relatively small space.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to encourage the community to become involved, it is clearly paying dividends. Continue to increase the number of perennial plants to reduce the cost of annuals. At times of very dry weather consider temporarily heightening the cut on the grass verges, this will aid water loss and brown areas.

Low Moor Community Kids' Allotment Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

This children's gardening project was set up some 14 years ago and has evolved over time into its current effective format of 'delivery'. Weekly two hour sessions are held on a Saturday morning and around 12 children (age 7-12) from in and around York attend on a regular basis. The project is well-known in the area through their links with local schools and by word of mouth so that a waiting list is maintained for new members. Within the allotment are raised beds with the larger beds being used for 'shared' crops e.g. potatoes and the smaller plots operated on a 'square foot' basis being the responsibility of 2-3 children. The sense of ownership that the children obtain from this approach not only is highly motivational, but contributes to the development of their knowledge and skills. The judge enjoyed a series of mini tours (e.g. fruit, herb, recycling/composting) each led by 2-3 children whose enthusiasm and knowledge was wonderful to see. Talking to some of the parents who were present as helpers it was clear that this project extends beyond the allotment boundaries – some parents commented on how their own gardening skills and knowledge were benefitting and the produce being taken home was obviously engendering an interest in cooking. The judge greatly enjoyed some mint tea accompanied by rosemary and chive scones!

The allotment is very much run on sound and varied environmental practices and the children are very much involved and aware of the benefits of these. Over the years, the allotment has been used as an

example to others e.g. schools and the organisers are always happy to share their expertise with others. The group also take part in a number of shows and events with great success. Great credit must go to Angela, one of the initial project members and who now takes on the main responsibility for its' running. Her inclusive and adaptable approach in listening to the children and taking on board their views, has ensured the success of this project. It was a pleasure also to meet volunteer Robina who recently came to the project through a Pension company initiative.

Areas for Improvement

This project operates so successfully, that it is difficult to think of anything that has not already been thought of, or embraced. The judge, however, would encourage the group to give serious consideration to some 'succession' planning. A pro-active approach to engaging volunteers would ensure the long - term future of this wonderful project.

Mytholmroyd Station and Neighbourhood

Level 5

Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

The work which is being done by the group is very impressive in many ways. The enthusiasm shown by the group has spilled out over the local neighbourhood and been a source of inspiration to those around. The work of the group in supporting local people at a time of great need during the recent floods is wonderful. The group show a great love of the station where they work and have taken pride in the planting around it. We were pleased to hear of their work with local children. The interpretation boards around the station were a good idea. We were pleased to hear that much well deserved support is given to the group by those around.

Areas for Improvement

Keep developing planting around the station platforms for the benefit of travellers. Consider installing scented planting, more herbs for passengers to brush against and flowering herbs to bring in butterflies and other insects. Consider developing the planting on the sloping banks around the station with bee friendly planting if possible.

Northowram in Bloom

Level 1

Establishing

Areas of Achievement

We were pleased to visit the group and to find people who have such commitment to improving their community. We were impressed with the amount of work which had been carried out in such a short time. The environment of the village has already been improved by the group's work. We were pleased to see that work has begun with the local school and we hope that this will grow and flourish. The plants we saw were in good condition and the choices were attractive. The planters the group have made were impressive.

Areas for Improvement

Obviously this is very early days. Be careful not to take on too much to begin with. Perhaps it might be a good idea to really concentrate on the area around the war memorial. You will find it helps in finding funding if you have a constitution in place for the group, open a bank account and begin keeping clear accounts for the group. As soon as you are able form a committee with named officials. Try to bring the other groups in the village into your organisation, working together will benefit all of you.

Rainbow Garden Northern Hull Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

This long standing and outstanding project continues to set a high standard for a community garden. They are also keen to tackle new projects the largest is to create a nature trail in Oppy Woods. This being a memorial to the men of the area lost on the Somme. They have planted over 1,000 whips around the area, including in school grounds. A spectacular development this year is the sowing of a roadside bed with a floral mix, which was at its best on the day of the visit.

Areas for Improvement

To continue to develop the new area of land adjacent to the existing site. Celebrate the award of the green flag, the Rank funding agreement and all the efforts made by volunteers to make this a successful project. Should the opportunity occur thought could be given to some information boards on food production in from the garden, this is only for consideration to increase the offer from the site and far from essential.

Rawdon Level 3 Advancing

Areas of Achievement

Rawdon group all appeared to be very eager to make a difference to their community. The group are working actively in engaging with the local community especially the local businesses and the scouts group. Rawdon Village has some difficult areas to maintain and plant but the group are trying to overcome this by choosing the right plants for the right locations. Numerous amounts of bulbs have been planted within the grassed verges found at the entrances to some of the elderly people's complexes. The memorial garden is well maintained with plans to enhance the small rockery sourcing suitable plants. The Somme Memorial was planted with great appreciation of the local history and area and created a sense of Pride for the local area. This area especially is well maintained and presented. It was good to hear that dog fouling has been less of an issue over the last twelve months since the group was formed.

Areas for Improvement

Suggestions were given to the group by the judges as to how to source funding in various ways and the group appeared to be very eager to pursue a number of the suggestions.

Ripon Workhouse Garden Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

The Workhouse Garden is part of the visitor attraction of Museums in Ripon- Police - Law courts - and this Workhouse. This garden is an educational resource for schools, students and gardeners alike. The labelling of all crops and interpretation boards. The growing of heritage varieties and saving of their own seed. Self-sustaining in terms of composting and green manuring - growing hazel for coppicing to provide crop supports. The lovely wildflower meadow and orchard with heritage varieties. Generating funds through sale of produce to local restaurants (400 yard 'food miles'). The involvement in the RHS Hedgehog Awareness scheme.

Areas for Improvement

It is hoped that Nick and his enthusiastic team will be able to generate further interest in this worthwhile project and in turn produce additional volunteers to assist in developing the garden and help to keep on top of the maintenance. It would be interesting to see progress with the extension to the wild flower area. I'm sure your future plans for a greenhouse will be very worthwhile. Some solution to your pest control, especially slugs!

Robert Street Community Allotments Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

The construction of the raised planters and the paving. The hard work undertaken by Mick White and colleagues. The excellent fundraising and securing of funding is to be commended

Areas for Improvement

Continue to encourage all allotment holders to contribute to this entry.

Royston in Bloom Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

Royston, although being a suburban village of Barnsley, has retained many areas of character to try to maintain the village 'feel'. Royston in Bloom, a small but dedicated group of volunteers are steadily making changes, and their endeavours are for all to see. Having an excellent working relationship with

the Town Council they are able to access Ward Alliance finances. This together with their own fund raising enables the group to fund the floral projects and initiatives.

Steered by John & Sylvia, the 'Adopt a Planter Project' encompasses all that is good in community engagement. Giving ownership to volunteers, allowing them to decide their own choice of planting is a great achievement in encouraging residents to build new skills and become involved with the group, and local community.

Having 22 volunteers, looking after dedicated areas, together with: High School work at Midland Road; the Pocket Park on Church Street and the colourful area, The Wells - (to name but a few) are all evidence that this group is making a big difference to its community in the two years they have been formed.

Areas for Improvement

Royston in Bloom are aware of areas they need to work on and have highlighted work in progress, and positively are planning projects for future years. These projects need to be supported and encouraged to help develop this group, and allow them to see out their goals.

This can partly be achieved by more working in partnership with other organisations, and private businesses. Promote Royston in Bloom as a separate entity from the Ward Alliance to enhance your profile. Where possible use the 'In Bloom' initiative to act as a mentor to help develop the group to the merits you deserve.

Shadwell Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

It is clear that the vast majority of this lovely village have all bought in to the 'In Bloom' effort, and everybody is clearly doing their bit. The group have done particularly well to establish the large list of sponsors they have. It was a pleasure to walk around the village with not a drop of litter in sight! All the grassed areas, by and large, are excellently maintained by the group, residents and the Council. The efforts of the group to tidy up the 'daffodil verges' entering the village are exemplary! The Summer bedding was of a high standard, particularly by the 'bus terminus' and the Shadwell sign.

Areas for Improvement

If possible, the shrub beds in Holywell Park could do with a tidy up. Could the group consider Community Payback/Probation Services? The group mentioned introducing more sustainable planting, and this would be good to see in some of the more difficult to maintain beds. Consider recycling more leaves if possible (those from the large tree by the village hall), to reduce the need to buy in compost. Consider treating the odd bench, particularly the one on the village green, which would complement well the work already done here.

StreetWize Community Association, Hull Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

The success of the group is demonstrated by the fact that they originally set up a gardening club for children aged 5 to 11. However parents and siblings wanted to join so the gardening club is a real family affair. The group has seen small spin off projects establish across the community, improving the overall environment of the area. They have some great challenges, but undertake them with enthusiasm, and are always looking for solutions and do not walk away because things are too difficult.

Areas for Improvement

Continue to develop and bring in more members of the community, to your events and projects. When funding is secured, consider how footfall can be increased around the park as this will help with security. Consider how to tackle the litter problem, do big clean ups work and help?

Tempest Road, Beeston Level 3 Advancing

Areas of Achievement

The Holy Spirit Church project was certainly very challenging, and involved a tremendous amount of very hard work and sometimes not very pleasant tasks. However the result is splendid and has only been possible thanks to the contributions and support from so many organisations, all working together. There is a good variety of planting which should mature with time. It is good that the war memorial has now been uncovered and can be used for what it was intended. The new flower bed in Maud Road has improved the entrance to the park.

Areas for Improvement

A lot has been achieved by the Tempest Road Neighbourhood Scheme, and a lot of work, and support will be needed to keep it all going and it sounds as if this will be forthcoming. The area has certainly benefited and is appreciated by the community. It is disappointing at this stage that the future of Holy Spirit Church is uncertain but you have all made a statement indicating that it should be maintained for the benefit of the community. Keep going as you have achieved so much and always show the judges all that has been done.

The Royal Halifax Infirmary Apartments Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

It was a pleasure to visit the Royal Halifax Infirmary Apartments and to learn of the fascinating history of the site. It is clear that the apartments are loved by those who live there. We were impressed by the high standard of cultivation of the site as a whole. There is clearly a lot of dedication and skill given to

it by the garden team there. The zig-zag path at the end of the site with planting for insects was an interesting feature. The use of perennial sweet peas to climb up various trees on the site was also a good idea. We saw many examples of lovely private gardens throughout the area and the residents should be very proud of what they have achieved.

Areas for Improvement

Consider developing the herb bed by the main entrance further, perhaps consider more scented planting in the area for people to enjoy going in and out. A lot of the planting in communal areas is structural evergreens, where space permits introduce low maintenance flowering shrubs to bring colour into the apartments for as much of the year as possible.

The Secret Garden, Northallerton United Reformed Church Level 2 Improving

Areas of Achievement

Congratulations to all involved in this very new project to provide a community garden in a neglected area behind high street shops. Great strides have been taken in a short time and there are interesting plans for the future and greater involvement of the public. Already support from the local businesses has enabled the placement of raised beds and funding has been granted by a housing association. Co-operation has been gained from the local council and neighbouring property for tree surgery to open the site to more light.

A handful of hard working volunteers have cleared the site of brambles and weeds, aided by donations of tools and plants which has resulted in a vast improvement. Local groups and individuals, including the church congregation and three guide troops, have also been involved in the planting and are encouraged to reap the produce already available in the raised beds.

Positioning blackboards by the entrance gives opportunity to identify wildlife species to be seen and also notify of jobs to be done and crops available for harvest. Although in early stages there are exciting plans for the future and opportunities for more public involvement. Well done to all.

Areas for Improvement

Now is a good time to consider the siting of water butts and composting areas and incorporating sites to encourage diversity of wildlife as this has been an area formerly left to itself. The area between the patio and air raid shelter lends itself to incorporating a pond and wildlife garden leading to the shelter which when checked for safety, would be a wonderful adventure hill. The existing tree stumps and logs could be utilised for seating carving.

Perhaps some of the younger people involved could look at creating a website or utilising other media such as a Twitter account. Cutting the heavy growth of ivy (once died back) and removing it from the trees around the site would also open the area to more light. Hopefully permission to remove some of the poorer specimens would also help.

A lean too greenhouse would be a huge benefit with the plans for the future. Look to include other volunteers who are not gardeners but who may help with fund raising, publicity or who would keep a record of what the site was like and the steps along the way. Above all have fun and celebrate your achievement.

The Shay Garden Project Level 4 Thriving

Areas of Achievement

John showed us round the area which has the support of the Rotary club and more than 60 volunteers and grants from various sources. This formerly overgrown and neglected roadside area is in the process of being transformed into a very pleasant kerbside area. The fence has been renewed and painted with the help of students from the college and a path has been created from recycled stone found nearby. Spring bulbs including purple crocuses are planned for Spring.

Areas for Improvement

The area will need less maintenance as the present planting knits together. Consider plants which give good ground cover and shade lovers such as Vinca, Ajuga and Brunnera. An information board and perhaps a low hedge of Hebe or similar to stop the soil spilling over on the pavement may enhance the plot further.

Tidy Gardens Services Level 3 Advancing

Areas of Achievement

This is a specific project which gives work experience for adults with learning difficulties and offers a basic garden maintenance service to a number of elderly residents and communities in the Harrogate area and also maintains its home premises and surrounding garden.

The enthusiasm for recycling is clear to see with many projects and handicrafts which utilise a variety of materials from different sources. They can also use and recycle unwanted plants and shrubs as well as garden tools and furniture, plant pots and hanging baskets along with other materials used in handicrafts. Magazines are used for decoration of furniture and wool, CDs and other materials are turned into various articles including garden ornaments.

The home site has raised beds filled with a wonderful range of plants as chosen by the individuals and providing a range of produce. This year many sweet peas are being grown for wedding decorations. Wildlife is encouraged with a bug hotel, log piles and a small pond. There is composting and some water recycling. Fund raising is carried out in many ways and there is good support and liaison with other groups throughout the area. A really good job done by all.

Areas for Improvement

The recruitment of willing volunteers is severely hampered by the council's restrictions which seems to sadly restrict additional input and ideas for development. Some expertise in pruning and management of vines and fruit trees would be useful. A further pond or bog garden would provide additional habitat and provide a different experience. Consider the possibility of Flower Clubs or festival/wedding planners becoming users of recycled materials. Thank you for an interesting visit.

Woodkirk, Morley Level 1 Establishing

Areas of Achievement

The planters on the central reservation of the major roadway leading into Leeds adds some colour where there was no greenery at all. Two new planters are improving one entrance into Woodkirk and acting as barriers for traffic taking unnecessary short cuts. Planting of a community Christmas tree.

Areas for Improvement

Consider further tree planting along large verges into Woodkirk and community bulb planting, particularly in areas around Christmas tree.

Woodlands Community Garden Level 5 Outstanding

Areas of Achievement

Woodlands Community Garden is situated to the rear of the Woodlands Methodist Church in an area which previously was simply an open grassy area mowed twice yearly, with a damaged concrete path adjacent to the building.

In the 2 plus years since development of this garden started, the space has been completely transformed to include a kitchen garden with raised beds, small orchard and a well-designed and planted formal garden area incorporating benches, decorative hard paving, and a water feature under development at the time of the assessment. An open mown grassed area provides space for play for children (and adults!). Alongside the boundary hedges, a strip of wildflower 'meadow' is being established, with pupils from a nearby secondary school being involved in an experiment to determine the best method carrying this out. A recent addition to the garden has been a cob pizza oven aimed at families and in particular teenage users of the space.

The garden is open to anyone to use, but in particular strong links have been established with the local primary school, SureStart Centre, Community Centre and a nearby residential Care Centre. The Church itself is hugely supportive of this project and is funding the installation of French doors from their hall, allowing not only a view onto the garden from the rear of the building, but also easier access.

The group have been extremely successful in fundraising, not only in obtaining grants from the likes of the RHS, Engage Mutual and Bettys/Taylor's, but running a range of social/fundraising events throughout the year – a particular highlight being the Harvest Festival when the produce of the fruit and vegetable gardens are enjoyed by all those attending!

Sustainability is also at the core of this project with a wide variety of practices supporting this aim e.g. composting, rainwater harvesting, re-use of materials (e.g. many of the flagstones in the formal garden had been acquired from other developments in the area), growing from seed and division. The group are members of Team Harrogate run by Harrogate in Bloom providing a forum for local groups to meet and exchange ideas.

Areas for Improvement

A couple of 'spoil heaps' remain within the garden following the development of the formal garden. These have been planted with wild flower seed, one an autumn sowing and the other a spring sowing. The latter has been less effective so an autumn sowing later this year is planned to rectify this matter. Graffiti on one of the walls to the rear of the building (pre-dating the garden) is proving difficult to remove so consideration is being given to covering this to provide a large notice board. Given the size of the area to be covered this might provide an opportunity to make a mural display. A big well done to all those involved in the inception, development and running of this project. Keep up the good work and make sure systems are in place to ensure its longevity!

Woodside Flats **Level 5** **Outstanding**

Areas of Achievement

Woodside Flats gardens are a delight and congratulations must go to Douglas and also to those who work with him or have been inspired by his work to develop their gardens, yards, window boxes or hanging baskets in the local area. Horticultural achievement is outstanding and Douglas is innovative, working within and with the local community and other organisations. Nothing goes to waste. The gardens obviously provide great joy to the residents of Woodside Flats. It was a privilege to visit the gardens. Thank you for showing them to me.

Areas for Improvement

There is very little I can add except to keep encouraging Douglas in his aims and in passing his experience, knowledge and drive to others.

Category 11: Harrogate Flower Show Young Peoples Award

Birkwood Primary School

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

It was a real education visiting Birkwood School! The pupils and staff are very much involved in this entry .The whole project can only grow and grow! Well done to all who contribute.

Areas of Achievement

All areas of the garden deserve credit , the vegetable plots, wildlife area, bed planted for the great Yorkshire Show, bee house, bench and cold frame and the knowledge of the pupils including Morgan , Paris, Olivia , Fay and Bobbi .

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Continue to expand on the sensory garden. Maybe look to provide facilities to collect rainwater / water storage

Flanderwell Gardening Club

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Upon arrival the judge was welcomed by Kevin & Mary Johnson, 2 very knowledgeable and committed volunteers who have led the gardening club from inception. Further volunteers, teaching staff and students were introduced during the visit. The entry encapsulates the desire to provide a welcoming and colourful entrance to the school, providing an educational resource and most importantly maintaining the interest and commitment of the students. The inroads made through horticulture to engage with the children and wider community is to be commended and coupled with the school's support the entry can only go from strength to strength!

Areas of Achievement

The students are given the opportunity to design, select and plant hanging baskets & containers which are then nurtured and sold before the end of term to raise funds, an excellent self-funding initiative! The relationship with the Sitwell Rotary Club who provide assistance and materials in various projects. Lots of future plans and ideas on taking the project forward from Kevin capturing a range of horticultural skills. The school has obviously bought into the project and can foresee the long term benefits that horticulture can bring. The addition of sustainable and some sensory planting has added interest and structural variation. The planting of small whips around the perimeter fence should in time provide a welcome screen to mask the metal fencing. The application of a weed membrane and bark chippings around the vegetable plot has solved the bindweed problem thus allowing more time to be spent on specific horticultural tasks.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Plans for a 'bug / bee station' should be explored and implemented at relatively low cost. There is scope for the creation of a larger wildflower bed to increase bio-diversity and impact. A 'Poly Tunnel' or glasshouse is essential in the long term to increase student interest and allow horticultural tasks such as seed sowing and taking cuttings. Such a facility would also reduce expenditure on plants and provide shelter during inclement weather for the students. Try to encourage more volunteers to come forward via newsletters highlighting if possible indicating tasks and future plans. Re –location of the project to the grounds of the autism unit could be explored depending on the long term vision of the unit.

Friarage School Garden

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Winning "muck and magic", and other awards reinforces the brochure's "growing successfully", and deserves the support from local businesses. Enthusiasm is clearly evident. As is the impressive rapport between children and staff. The judges were given an excellent tour of the children's various gardens. Recycling was explained, and the benefits from the eco-committee and the after-school gardening club. In the Fairy Garden, children are encouraged to read. It is 'an education' to come to the 'Friarage School Garden' to witness such enthusiasm by everyone.

Areas of Achievement

Litter seemed non-existent. Children are chosen to be 'guardians of the green' to protect plants and fruit as they develop. There is even a waiting list for the Garden Club. The Eco-Club regularly go on trips. A high percentage of children belong to the Children's University

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Future ideas were spelt out to the judges - such as 'run a mile a day' within the school, or the making of lavender bags. Generous funding has enabled the purchase of new storage unit for gardening tools, and the 'mud kitchen for' little ones. The willow dome is well used.

Haworth Primary School Gardening Club

Gold Award

Introduction

On a lovely sunny day we were welcomed by Steve the head gardener and a group of children from the gardening club. Their enthusiasm was outstanding and all classes in the school are involved with gardening each week, with all the floral planting, vegetables beds and feeding some egg laying hens. Certificates are awarded for Gardener of the Week in Assembly and there is a ceremony for the Gardener of the Year award. Plants grown in the polytunnels and greenhouses are shared with other schools, old people's homes, the local hospice, the local church for Harvest Festival and the children

help to plant at the cenotaph, Fire Station and Police Station. Steve's dedication to the school and its various projects deserves a great big thank you, as do the gardening group and Libby, their group leader, who organises the rota and keeps meticulous records of all the work done, and a brochure for us.

Areas of Achievement

All children are really involved, aided and encouraged by Steve (a gardener in a million) plus staff and parents - known as "Ground Force" always there to help. The school ethos of growing plants, using vegetables for meals and cookery lessons, the many displays around the school (including Yorkshire in Bloom posters), and their brochure clearly show this school to be outstanding. The safe play area for pupils who need a little extra help is excellent. It is very impressive that the school is so involved with sharing with other schools and organisations and charities - Fantastic Paths have been formed into the wooded area and pond life being monitored. All the grounds round the school are very sloping so great use of timber beds has been made with the children and parents helping form and build them. Even the dining room has posters and displays encouraging eco and environmental awareness.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Difficult to suggest anything! The pond will be safer when the decking area is completed, this being an ongoing project. Recycling, bat and bird boxes as well as bug houses were all in place. Very well done. Keep Up The Good Work

Hutton Cranswick Playgroup

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

What finer weather could not be had for the judges to visit Hutton Cranswick playgroup. Attached to the Methodist Chapel, with use of the Hall and grounds the children's work and presence could not be missed. Laniey and her team, Elaine and Erica, do a splendid job of hosting the playgroup for all ages. When we visited we had the privilege of being accompanied by the pre-school group, who were a delight to be with and whose enthusiasm was infectious.

Areas of Achievement

It was a pleasure to be shown the many projects on the environment that the children had done this year. Dig, Sow, Water, and Grow – what better way to learn how gardening can be fun! One will never forget the enthusiasm the children showed towards the bugs they could identify. This included learning about the lifecycle of a butterfly, even with rearing their own caterpillars, and what a great surprise it was to the judges to be present when these said caterpillars were released as fully grown butterflies. Through the various art work inside it could be seen that this playgroup has great emphasis on the environment and what a splendid job the teaching staff have done, since each child wished to show us and explain all about the different plantings they had been part of. The planting done in the troughs by these children on the main street show how these budding volunteers have been incorporated into their community. As a charity playgroup funding is always an issue, but with

ever inventive fund raising and the Santa Sleigh through the village (£7500 raised on average) bring in much appreciated revenue.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The judges understand that with the restriction of space and available land the activities of the group have restraints. That said the staff do a fantastic job of trying to incorporate as much outdoor activity as possible. Keep fostering relations with the 'In Bloom' group and where possible encourage parents to continue with all your hard work to take these gardening experiences to the next level.

Hutton Cranswick School Garden Project

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

As one enters Hutton Cranswick Community Primary School, it is apparent that from the Head down all staff play a part in the development of the pupil's environmental and horticultural awareness. The judges were given a presentation through the excellent Year Book, showing all the activities that the group had done this year. An interclass competition was on the go with each class having three tomato plants to grow, to see which group can produce the heaviest crop.

Areas of Achievement

A wonderful and comprehensive tour around the school was given by the gardening club members, with assistance from Jane the coordinator, also Sandy and Zoe as volunteers. Some excellent projects were seen, with some of the activities being: bird feeding; daily weather recording and measuring; excellent vegetable garden with superb onions! pond dipping and information on the resident common and crested newts. The assistance with parents in clearing the pond of weed, so the pupils could learn more about the diving beetles, newts, tadpoles and life cycle of a frog. The club members relished in the activity of composting and using their own made compost on the raised beds in the school garden.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Continue with the work around the pond for this will further enhance the children's environmental education. Consider introducing more floral features or planters within the side and rear of the school to add to the tomato competition, perhaps including parents to assist. Continue with the excellent work done with the great variety of projects that the children clearly enjoy.

Moorside Infant School

Gold Award

Introduction

The sign at the entrance to the school 'Moorside Infants in Bloom', created by the children, announces what the ethos of this school is. The dedication of the staff and governors to stimulate interest and

knowledge of all aspects of the environment in the children is a credit to this Eco School, and that is for all pupils and not just for those children expressing an interest. So much is going on at this school.

Areas of Achievement

The Eco Team monitoring and caring for the environment in its widest sense, reducing waste and recycling. Involvement throughout the seasons, autumn through to summer, planning, planting, monitoring, and harvesting the different elements of their projects. The outdoor seasonal display boards, and those within the school. The involvement in the RHS Rocket Science and the 'Rocket Seeds' project. Having fun building dens with a huge quantity of recycled materials and the Reading Den day. The best willow arch I have ever seen! Impressive curriculum based activities through the Eco Club - Outdoor Learning - Star Pupils. Links with a host of outside organisations- RSPB, Green Flag, RHS Rocket Science, Woodland Trust, Clean for the Queen and many more.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

We wish you success in the Green Flag Eco Schools awards in the future. You have a great opportunity when your two schools merge to extend what you have already achieved. Increase in wildlife species and aspects of growing and enjoying the harvest.

Newington Academy after School Gardening Club

Gold Award

Introduction

The school continues to develop the garden and gardening and offer both in the grounds and at an adjacent site. There is an excellent mix of garden types ranging from fruit and vegetables, through to extensive areas of bedding displays. The work of the gardening group ensures that the grounds offer a warm welcome to pupils and visitors.

Areas of Achievement

Growing the majority of plants from seed or cuttings on site. The garden work is a twelve month program as illustrated by the pictures of the extensive bulb displays. The pupils are involved at every stage, from planning new areas, producing the plants, planting the plants and then maintaining them.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Continue with the ongoing work to develop more of the grounds with the caution of not over extending beyond the available resource for maintenance. Thinning of the new area on the side of the playing field, it would provide the opportunity to involve new pupil entrants by say planting a daffodil to mark the start of school life this could then be carried out each year hopefully developing ownership.

Old Earth School

Gold Award

Category Winner

Introduction

Under the wonderful guidance of Michael, each year group, starting from the early years, have participated in various projects. The pupils were all enthusiastic in naming the plants, how they were grown and explaining the benefits to the environment. Gardening is seamlessly integrated into the curriculum, there is an after school Club and the harvested crops are used in the school kitchen.

Areas of Achievement

The judges were impressed by the knowledge of the pupils and the innovative projects such as the information posters on the bee-friendly beds, the tomatoes grown in a greenhouse made from plastic bottles, companion planting, recycling and the environmentally friendly ethos of the school.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

We look forward to hearing of the success of your future plans including trialling growing in straw bales.

Oxspring School

Gold Award

Introduction

On arrival at Oxspring School I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of Emily and the pupils that made up the gardening club. The school grounds are a perfect environmental learning environment that is capable of not only supplying the school kitchen with seasonal produce, but selling surplus plants to the community.

Areas of Achievement

The many fund raising events during the year such as: duck race/open gardens/plant sales etc Reaching out to the wider community with edible planters in the village (help yourself Oxspring). The childrens knowledge and enthusiasm about gardening was really good to see and a credit to them all.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Look into more information boards in the garden to encourage the wider school into the gardening club and make it more inclusive.

Pudsey Lowtown School

Gold Award

Introduction

The children at Pudsey Lowtown School should be proud of their efforts and have excellent facilities to grow plants and learn about their natural habitat. Despite financial cut backs the judges were treated to an excellent visit. From prairie garden to reduce costs to fruit and veg growing. Water conservation composting and recycling before going into a wildlife area which had everything for insect's, birds and pond life. The children had an excellent knowledge of plants and different animal species and needed no prompting from the judges. Their enthusiasm was infectious. All classes get involved and previous awards can be clearly seen. Thank you for the food boxes the strawberries were delicious.

Areas of Achievement

Good use of space available no areas of the school grounds were left without some type of planting. Good use of recycled materials for planting in or habitats. Children's knowledge of their surroundings and habitats exceptional. All the school are involved. A very good example of how schools encourage children to get involved and see what's around them in their local environment.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Aim to get more parents involved to assist in improving and maintaining areas for children. General upkeep of fruit trees and habitats.

Queens Road Academy

Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Queens Road Academy (Primary School) has embraced the value of gardening in the community, engaging students, parents and friends in exploring and developing their understanding of the environment and the value of gardens as a source of health, enjoyment through growing flowers, fruit and vegetables. Successful projects need a driving force and Teaching Assistant Mrs Sefton provides support and enthusiasm in barrow loads, organising fundraising and activities both in school and across the community. A really brilliant example of how to harness the potential that gardening can offer.

Areas of Achievement

The sensory garden area is well used and has benefited from the introduction of donate plants and a cherry tree, identification cards provide a guide to what could be seen in the garden. Activities and events are used to raise funds, the most recent purchase being a Poly-tunnel, as yet to be erected it will provide a valuable resource for teaching and gardening activity during inclement weather. Promoting adult involvement through 'Get your grownups growing' and parents after school gardening club is bearing fruit through wider engagement and developing an understanding of the benefits of

gardening. Peer to peer learning is evident in the knowledge and responses from children, a beautifully painted banner promotes the allotment garden and shows how engaged pupils are in all the garden activities. Hanging basket planting service and call for donations of plants works well.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Press on with the completion of the poly-tunnel project, continue to explore the possibility of access to the allotment for people with disabilities. Introduce parents and friends to the maintenance plan followed by the pupils, and include them on some of the tasks. Continue to introduce compost into the planting beds in the allotment, as this will help improve crops and make it easier to remove weeds.

Sensory Sensations - Molescroft Primary School Gold Award

Introduction

The sun shone almost as warmly as our welcome to Molescroft School. The green team leaders, together with the Eco Co-ordinator Deta, Linda and Debbie, and the head Mr Loncaster all showed us around this lovely school. The school has a wild life area with pond, its own vegetable garden on raised beds, from which the vegetables are used in the school kitchens. Each class gardens a large planter, with this year's delightful theme of - the 5 senses. Awards are given to the ones deemed by the Judges to be the best. There is a fair-trade shop each week run by the green team leaders. Children bring potted bulbs for the Easter Gardens which are replanted around the school. The grounds are very well planted with sun flowers and lots of outdoor art, and the grounds are used extensively as outdoor classrooms, plus recycled water is used for watering plants and vegetables.

Areas of Achievement

An Eco School, with a great emphasis on the environment, with all children, in all classes having the opportunity to be involved in gardening. The enthusiasm of the staff and the knowledge and eloquence of the children is infectious - such a happy atmosphere. This was evident in the wonderful slide show and presentation given at the start of the visit demonstrating a pride in what the school does with evidence backed up by photographs taken throughout the year. Classroom projects undertaken were, Keeping a bird calendar, pond dipping in which they had followed the life cycle of a frog, understanding the actions of worms, bee keeping talks about pollination and honey production, together with various arts project throughout the seasons. The children in all the year groups have an excellent knowledge of plants, their usage and what benefits they have for the environment, bee and insect life and sustainability. Their planted tubs were extremely imaginative and thoughtful, a delight to judge and a delight for all the senses.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

It would be very difficult to suggest any improvements, a delightful school with inspiring staff and enthusiastic knowledgeable children.

StreetWize Community Association (Kids) Silver Award

Introduction

The project uses gardening as a vehicle to achieve a number of objectives within the community to great effect. Success is demonstrated with the increasing number of people attending events and the range of events that are organized and held. Working in conjunction with the library young people are encouraged to undertake gardening and reading activities in the same place. This is a very positive developing group with plans for the future that will make a great impact in the area.

Areas of Achievement

The ability to do a lot with very little, often in the form of re-cycling and voluntary labour. The use of the garden and gardening to achieve community cohesion and ownership of public open space.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Continue to develop and bring in more members of the community, to your events and projects. When funding is secured, consider how footfall can be increased around the park as this will help with security. Consider how to tackle the litter problem, do big clean ups work and help?

Willerby Carr Lane Primary School Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

The judges were greeted by Andrew and the 'Muddy Boots' club which consisted of a highly enthusiastic mix of children. The judges were shown a portfolio of achievements from the construction of raised beds to. It is clear to see the children get great satisfaction from the resource and it is no surprise that there is a waiting list to join the club. The range of vegetables and fruit being grown is wide and the children who the judges spoke to were knowledgeable in most of aspects of their cultivation from soil requirements to pests and diseases. Most pleasing was almost all of the children spoken to have taken what they had learned in the club home to their own gardens! The aspect and layout of the garden gives scope for future development which will only benefit the students of the school in the long term. The parent helpers were also knowledgeable and are obviously enjoying their time spent with the children. All in all a wonderful project which will only get bigger and better, just more volunteers needed!!!

Areas of Achievement

Good use of sustainable planting (including vegetables) in front of the school with the children having grown and planted some of the plants. The project being self-funded with funds being raised from various school events including plant sales. The planning and construction of a 'Bottle' greenhouse made from spent plastic drink bottles collected by the children. Collection of rainwater into water butts for watering purposes. The donation of recycled soil from the local Environmental Centre and manure from a local farmer. The use of recycled materials – Bottles for the creation of a greenhouse.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Formulate a plan of action to eradicate the Mare's Tail which is prevalent on site. A more chemical based approach may be beneficial in the long term eradication of the weed which can be started outside term time.

Finding a use for the splendid domed glasshouse outside term time (Summer) is difficult, a raised 'Hot' bed consisting of succulents and Cacti may be a welcome addition that would require little watering and could be linked in some way to the curriculum. Thought could be given to creating an 'Outside Classroom' given the space available, creating shade through a 'pergola' structure or by the planting of trees

Wisewood School and pre-school Gold Award

Introduction

It was a pleasure to visit Wisewood School and to meet the enthusiastic staff and children. The school are very lucky to have such an informed and enthusiastic volunteer working with the children. The efforts of those involved have had a big impact on the environment of the school. It was very encouraging to see horticulture playing such a big part in the children's education here.

Areas of Achievement

The many containers planted with a variety of perennials was impressive and really benefitted the children using playing areas. The amount and quality of fruit grown on the site was impressive. It is good that so many children were involved. The interior courtyard is a lovely oasis in the middle of the school. The knowledge of the children we met was impressive and they are clearly very motivated. It is good that composting is being done and recycled materials used in beds.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Keep trying to get more staff involved to ensure the sustainability of the project. The beds of the wildlife area near the pond are very dark. It might be better to plant ivy and vinca major which will spread to fill the space and be trouble free. If possible, consider the removal of a few of the larger branches shading out the pond. The branches could be cut up and be left on site to rot down to benefit invertebrates for future 'bug hunts'. Also consider a 'Bug Hotel' which can be constructed very cheaply with an old pallet, a few house bricks and twigs, for example. There are many different wooden containers around the school, it might be an idea not to construct any further containers at all but to consider and redevelop the existing planting in these beds.

Category 12: Universities, Colleges and Further Education Establishments

Harrogate Ladies' College Silver Gilt Award

Introduction

Harrogate Ladies' College is a family of three independent schools providing education in the heart of Harrogate for boys aged 2-11 and girls aged 2-18 years. Younger pupils attend on a day school basis. While at secondary level both day and boarding provision is available. The schools incorporate a range of buildings and the grounds encompass formal and less formal areas as well as provision for sport and recreation. Maintenance and development of the grounds are substantially the remit of the groundsmen, both by name of Paul. It is a credit to this team that the well-maintained grounds have been developed to encompass the various uses demanded of them, from providing a pleasant environment for pupils, staff and parents, to offering a welcoming approach for visitors.

Areas of Achievement

A good mix of well-maintained and appropriate perennial plantings can be found around the site with formal areas (such as around the pond), and less formal areas bordering lawns etc. Two new beds adjacent to the Assembly Hall were effectively designed and well-established after one year. The Memorial Garden adjacent to the Chapel (Church) had also been successfully designed and planted in keeping with the memorial stone situated there. Bedding in planters, hanging baskets and in the main beds provided splashes of colour around the site. All bedding had been grown from seed on-site or 'recycled' from Harrogate council beds within the town, all of this done with the comparatively limited resources of a small greenhouse and adjacent polytunnel. The two Pauls have been able to contribute to the design of car parking at the school with angled bays providing the opportunity to 'soften' these areas with adjacent beds or lawns. They have also created opportunities for the grounds to be used by the school pupils in a number of ways. In addition to providing a lovely tranquil setting for the many buildings encompassing the school, they have also created a 'secret' woodland walk, a Willow Classroom and raised beds which were initially used by a school gardening club. The gardening team are clearly very committed to their work and are constantly looking at ways to develop and improve the site. Keep up the good work, gentlemen!

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Although some sustainable practices are in operation (e.g. recycling wood into bark chippings, reuse of bedding plants), these could be developed further, for example by giving consideration to water recycling where practical. Bug houses, bird boxes etc. would not only help attract wildlife, but would also provide study opportunities for pupils. The gardening team has done very well in providing opportunities for the school to use their grounds as a teaching/recreation resource, and it would be good to see the school itself embrace these more fully and make them work effectively for the benefit of pupils. Many helpful resources can be found on-line supporting gardening and the creative use of gardens in schools e.g. RHS Campaign for School Gardening, Garden Organic, and Woodland Trust Nature Detectives.

Introduction

The University of Bradford celebrates its 50th anniversary, having been granted a Royal Charter in 1966 (previously it was the Bradford Institute of Technology). It first entered Yorkshire in Bloom in 2006 with its Heaton Mount Site. Following success with this location, the decision was made a few years later to enter the main City Campus as well. The 'in Bloom' work of the estates and gardens team sits within a programme of embedding sustainable development across the University, known as Ecoversity, and which includes in its remit 'involving staff, students and visitors' alike, and 'fostering a sense of community and engendering wellbeing'. One of the results of this initiative is the creation of multiple green spaces in an otherwise inner-city environment, which benefits both the university and local community. The judge was taken on a fascinating tour led by Chris, Richard and Andy and was able to witness the grounds being enjoyed by students and their families on the last day of the graduation ceremonies.

Areas of Achievement

The vision of the Estates and Facilities department and the hard work of the five strong gardens team have created an environment of which they should be very proud. The site not only incorporates open grassed areas as one might expect, but goes beyond this to include areas of edible plantings – from blackcurrant bushes lining a road onto the site, fruit trees in numerous locations, strawberries in hanging baskets, a permaculture garden as well as the more traditional 'allotments' for use by students and staff. A variety of herbs are also found in many locations across the site. Students, staff, and indeed the local community are encouraged to harvest produce from any of the communal growing areas with an interactive website page showing locations of edible crops and giving information on their usage.

The grounds also incorporate areas and features encouraging wildflowers and wildlife, including a small wooded area managed to encourage wildlife and full of birdsong at the time of the visit. Sustainable practices are implemented across the site, including a 'Rocket' composter which breaks down food waste, the resulting material being added to the garden compost which is also dealt with on-site. The Department has created strong links with the nearby community. Local residents are encouraged to come on site to enjoy the garden spaces or to pick edible crops. Students from nearby Shipley College attend for work experience and the gardens team mentor a local primary school with projects both on the campus and back in the school grounds. Over the years they have also taken long-term unemployed adults on work experience with the aim of giving them the confidence and life skills to go in to the world of work.

Of special mention, should be the recently constructed Bright Building, which has achieved one of the highest BREEAM ratings in the country. The building with its glass façade not only incorporates plantings within the entrance space but also has a roof space with well-established wild flower plantings, seating and even a bee-hive! A very well done to the Estates and Facilities team for all their work in developing such a wonderful site and to the University as a whole for supporting their approach.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Having established so many edible areas around the campus, it would be good to make the information in regard to use and harvesting more accessible. Currently the page on the edible campus is difficult to find (e.g. there are no links across from the main Ecoversity page, which in itself does not appear on the main website menu). It is noted, however, that there are plans to upgrade the web 'offer' to include more information on crops, harvesting and even recipes, so hopefully this will address the issue. In addition to the above it would be good to see more crop information on campus, such as the poster seen at Heaton Mount. Additionally, simple chalkboards or similar in relevant locations can be a very useful way of advising what is ready for harvesting, and how this is best done.

Beds provided outside the student accommodation are not being used effectively. While the current proposal is to remove these, consideration might be given to reducing them in size (allowing extension of the patio areas) and planting with perennial herbs.

University of Hull Gold Award

Introduction

Viewing the estate from the seventh floor of the library building demonstrates how green the campus is and the importance of the green space for the appearance of the University. The view also showed the scale of building work going on as part of the development and re development of the site. The initiatives such as the use of old rowing boats ensures a connection to local heritage, and works very well in the car park bed.

Areas of Achievement

The seasonal floral displays were well designed and maintained to a high standard, being effective and in the right quantity. The nature area gives a good contrast in maintenance to an area of heavy shade. The policy of actively managing the tree stock and importantly re-planting trees is a commendable one. Developing an area that enables trees to be donated, in memory of people connected to the University in a controlled manner is a positive development.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

Given the scale of construction re-gaining and landscaping areas is going to be a large task. Continue as and when possible with the seat replacement program the newer style ones looked very good. When possible a guide or information board for the medicinal plant bed would be of great value and add interest to the site.

York St John University Gold Award Category Winner

Introduction

Set in the heart of the city, literally a stones throw away from the city walls, York St John University is crammed with a wealth of traditional and modern architecture that sits sympathetically within a tapestry of charming gardens and green spaces. Access is well planned and easy to navigate, and whilst this is a site whose primary objective is to support students the public and volunteers are equally welcomed. The vision and development of the site is sensitively carried out with input from all departments. Green roofs have been introduced to new buildings and students are encouraged to use the gardens both in their studies and for relaxation.

Areas of Achievement

Standards of maintenance and upkeep are exceptional, no evidence of litter, recycling bins are provided in discrete yet appropriate locations. A very nice balance of permanent perennial planting and seasonal bedding features. Signs are clear and easy to follow. The newly planted garden in front of the new dining hall is very attractive and nicely designed. Softening the myriad of buildings and hard landscaping with sensitive planted areas makes this site a pleasure to wander around and the small community garden is ideal for students/residents to cultivate edible crops. The site has achieved 0% waste to landfill, an incredible achievement, with green waste recycling providing composted soil conditioner and mulch for both new and existing planting areas.

Further Development – Constructive/Helpful Remarks

The site is managed and maintained to a high standard despite the disruption from building development works, and as areas have been completed the gardens team quickly restore the soft landscaping elements. There is inevitably disruption and re ordering of features and whilst the wild flower area may need to be repositioned the value of the site to wildlife is still apparent, maybe the addition of habitat piles or bug houses in the rear of some of the deeper borders will further enhance provision.

Continue to encourage students to understand, engage and appreciate the sites green spaces, maybe add some questions to the questionnaire to outgoing students specifically around the use and value of green spaces. Proposals to replace aged lime trees will improve the view of the University from the road and the reintroduction of railings to the wall will add character and will be in keeping with the architecture of the site.