



Judges Notes for spring 2016

Category 1A: Small Village

Ledston

Introduction

Ledston is a charming village and civil parish 3 miles north of Castleford and 10 miles east of Leeds. The origins of Ledston Hall date back to the 13th century and the hall was the home of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, daughter of the 7th Earl of Huntingdon, known to everyone as "Lady Betty", who inherited the house in 1704. Under her will, the Church of England, educational foundations, and many other charitable causes benefited, and continue to benefit to this day. Ledston Hall is now owned by the Wheler Foundation, a charity run by trustees and named after the last owner.

Many of the properties in the village itself are owned by the Foundation and reflect different building styles over these years and contributed to the truly timeless and appealing ambiance we experienced during our tour of the village.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The residential gardens were a delight with many different styles of planting including a garden devoted to tulips. Both formal and natural areas are well planted with daffodils in the community spaces along the main street of the village. The newly planted rockery behind the seat near the telephone box, has greatly benefitted by the addition of dwarf shrubs. The naturalised daffodils on either side of Hall Lane give a wonderful vista on the road up to the hall.

Areas for Improvement

Consider planting snowdrops, English bluebells and hellebores in the naturalised areas and for summer, wild flowers to provide pollinators for bees. Consider relocating

the barrels under the trees in Hall Lane to a different location such as the Main Street to maintain the natural woodland at either side of the lane. Consider planting more dwarf shrubs or perennials at the Ledston signs, in the pump troughs and in the planters and borders on the main street to minimise the number of annual bedding plants. Encourage the new landlords of the White Horse pub to participate with the group.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The street furniture on main road is well maintained and the addition of the two water pumps certainly adds interest along with the little stone bridge under the Ledston sign. The beck along with the improvised collecting ladle provides a natural source for water harvesting. The compost bins are discretely placed to allow easy access.

Areas for Improvement

The group are to be congratulated for obtaining a grant for the new wooden planter but maybe the position is not ideal particularly for young mums with pushchairs. There are plans to move the post box to the opposite side of the road and to restore and find a useful function for the K6 telephone box. The village notice board might benefit from refurbishment

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Residents assist at two working parties per year when a skip is provided. The group works every Sunday morning and most residents are happy to maintain the area around their gardens. The school children are involved with a poster competition to advertise the dates of the skip in the village. The group is supported each year with a grant from the Parish council.

Areas for Improvement

More use could be made of the notice board to advertise working parties and contact details for Ledston in Bloom and to recruit new members. The group plan further engagement with the primary school especially with the prospect of a new playground.

Mill Bank Village

Introduction

The Judges were welcomed by a friendly group of residents who obviously took pride in their village. Best use was made of the limited space available, with displays of spring bulbs and perennials. A strong community spirit was evident with a keen interest in local history.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The area "behind the stone" impressed the judges with the use of mixed planting, design and maintenance. The adaptation of the local graveyard for a sunny quiet sitting space was much appreciated. The evidence of business support, especially for the calendar, was noted.

Areas for Improvement

It was disappointing that the grass bank managed by the Housing Association was such a mono culture. Planting of bulbs would be an improvement, but if this is not possible, development as a wildflower meadow could be an option. The daffodils at the school seemed thinly spaced. Restocking in the autumn could address this. The path edges were untidy and in need of attention.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The Judges saw no litter or graffiti. Pooh bags on the communal notice board were a nice touch. The use of self-filling water butts is an excellent solution to a difficult watering problem. Evidence of bird boxes is to be commended. Proposals for the local heritage boards are impressive.

Areas for Improvement

The bench in the graveyard could be renovated. The possibility of a history trail to link the siting of the history boards, was flagged up by the Judges on the walk. The group could use the Newsletter to encourage local residents to fill the bird feeders in evidence on communal locations.eg the triangle of land by the old chapel. The Judges would like to visit the "bug haven" and more examples of environmental action.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Posters around the village undertaken by the school and the Newsletter impressed the Judges. The communal herb barrels were a lovely addition to the village landscape. Planters in the field, for common use to grow vegetables and the "allotment" on the steep bank, showed good use of space and communal ownership. The Judges look forward to see the development of the school Sensory Garden.

Areas for Improvement

The Judges saw no sign of sponsors names or acknowledgement of support on their walk. Though touched on in the report, the Judges would like more evidence of year

round activity. Lottery funding from the "Awards for All" could assist in producing long lasting history boards and a more permanent community notice board. Has the group been in the local press? Examples of press coverage would be welcome.

Category 1B: Village

Grassington

Introduction

The weather stayed fine for an enjoyable spring judging in Grassington. The village was resplendent with daffodils at their peak and numerous impressively tended tubs, troughs and containers. The pride in the village and horticultural excellence is there for all to see. Huge credit must go to the Grassington in bloom group for the work they have done to date. The achievements of the group have been a catalyst for even wider benefits to the village.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Grassington had an impressive amount of spring colour at almost every turn. The "Tete a Tete" daffodils on the verges near the National Park centre were a delight. The garden belonging to Rory and Sarah and also the residential garden on the corner of Scar Street were both highly impressive. The square is the focal point of the shopping area and was well-kept. The overall business support across the village by way of containers and baskets is commendable. The display outside the Foresters Arms was stunning.

Areas for Improvement

Carefully check the route beforehand for any evidence of weeds. There are some very good residential gardens on the route - it would be beneficial to perhaps meet the winning entry from the garden competition or have a little more emphasis placed on this aspect on judging day as it is a strength of the entry.

Although the area near the National Park centre and main car park is tidy there is scope for the creation of a low maintenance perennial bed to provide all year round interest and colour for visitors and residents alike.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The village is impressively litter-free and the streets were clean and tidy. There is good networking with local businesses to water their own containers thus sharing the work around for the Bloom group. Well done for the work in removing the ill-fated compost area and making it look presentable.

Areas for Improvement

Consider creating a mini wildlife haven in the churchyard with a small hedgehog house, bird boxes and insect hotels. It would be beneficial to see more evidence of recycling on the route such as the small recycling centre near the bus station. Consider meeting someone from the museum to talk about the very interesting local heritage in the village. There are a vast number of tubs and containers in the village the majority of which are in good condition. However some would benefit from a staining or painting to further enhance the display.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group produces newsletters that are delivered through residents doors. The group also has almost monthly meetings to keep up momentum. It is good to see the group has a small social media presence. The group has a good relationship with most businesses as typified by the permission given by Royal Mail to tend the beds there. The group is impressively self-funded through fundraising events such as coffee mornings.

Areas for Improvement

The Grassington in bloom notice board would be an ideal location to publicise judging day by way of a poster. For our return visit in summer it would be good to see the school garden and perhaps meet some green-fingered pupils. Is there any grow your own taking place at the school?

It was disappointing to note that there appears to be no direct monetary funding given to the In Bloom group from either the Parish or District Council. The group should consider making a written approach for better co-operation or indeed invite them to a meeting.

Kirkby Malzeard, North Yorkshire

Introduction

Kirkby Malzeard is a very pretty dales village with a lovely display of daffodils on well-kept verges. The welcoming committee was a dedicated group with an impressive total of twenty seven years of entries. The extremely strong wind blowing off the moors emphasised how difficult it must be to garden in those conditions yet there were many attractive front gardens down the Main Street.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The walk along the Main Street showed many well-kept small gardens with many small areas along wall edges and corners filled with sustainable planting. The Pinfold of historical interest was a beautifully tended allotment - it will be even more exciting in the summer. The Queens Head public house looked cared for and well done to the group for tending to the frontage of the empty pub to help eliminate an eyesore. All the residential gardens on the route were good - lots of short daffs to cope with the wind! The Methodist church tubs being deliberately low planted showed an understanding of gardening with the weather conditions. Jubilee Rose Garden had been redesigned and was very well maintained. The playing fields were in excellent condition and the groups work on verge damage restoration is to be commended. A lovely feature of the Pump

Areas for Improvement

We look forward to seeing the new herb planters and good luck with the search for land for allotments. Encouraging residents to 'share' garden space is a good scheme. Could the shops make a more visible contribution to the floral aspect? As most of bulbs are several years old a plan to extend and replace might be worth considering

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The butterfly garden on the Main Street was lovely and may spread to others. A good partnership with Ripon Walled Garden with tree waste being turned into chippings and compost and help with delivering to village was good. Great educational project with school about composting, soil science - we look forward to seeing school children. The village was completely litter free, no dog fouling and well swept. New entrance sign was impressive

Areas for Improvement

The proposed new Heritage Board will help to strengthen the history of Kirkby. Looking forward to seeing the woodland area and to see development of bird boxes and bughouses. Free posters available from Tidy Britain might help with your campaign against dog fouling. West end barrels would benefit from some repair work - would it be possible to make more of a feature of that area?

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

New leaflet delivered to all the village was excellent and hopefully encouraging with new volunteers coming forward. Village Show, good support with Open Gardens,

plant swaps, and displaying posters it is a great testament to villagers that the group can work on such a small budget

Areas for Improvement

Work on increasing the size of the group and hopefully your new village handyman will help with the workload. Continue to work on your Action Plan in portfolio, maybe a presentation of photos at start will emphasise this?

Upper Hopton

Introduction

We were delighted to come to Upper Hopton on such a lovely spring day. It is always a pleasure to meet a group of such dedicated and enthusiastic people. The group obviously take a real pride in their Village and the community is really benefitting from their efforts. It is good to see so many people coming together to support the group's efforts. Upper Hopton is a really vibrant community with so many events to celebrate together, this is a lovely place.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The daffodils all around the village and in the churchyard really filled the community with the spirit of spring. The spring bedding was a blaze of colour and we were impressed by the quality of all the planting. Obviously the groups work in splitting and overwintering many plants is paying off. The way the group work to mow grassy areas around the communities is of great credit to them. The churchyard with its wildlife provision, mass of daffodils and flower beds is well maintained. The garden and wild flower planting around the car park at Croft House really enhances the area.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps it might be possible to plant native bluebells around the carpark. Replace grasses around the tulip beds which are tending to gap with fresh ones. Other possible edgings could be dwarf cat mint or heucheras. Perhaps it might be possible to put information boards in the wild life area to give visitors an idea of what they might see. The area around the phone box which is already a village focal point could be used to give information on the history of the village. If space allows in the wildlife area add early nectar sources such as witchhazel. Perhaps also native berrying shrubs. Consider planting lavender near the church to bring butterflies fluttering round the church door.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

It was good to see that wildlife is valued and protected, with wildlife areas and corridors round the village. It was good to see so many bird boxes and log and habitat piles provided for wildlife. The heritage of the village is obviously valued and all the research done on village members lost in WW1 is very impressive. We were pleased to see the efforts made to use the group's own compost and to harvest rainwater. The area was free from litter and graffiti. Planting around the bus stop areas must be appreciated by residents.

Areas for Improvement

In the woodland and wood edge areas perhaps wildlife friendly planting would be appropriate. Some plants suitable for shady areas might include, more foxgloves, bugles, single columbines, cranesbills, deadnettles, red campion, wild strawberries, wood violets, wood sage or wood forget me not. Perhaps it might be possible to have heritage interpretation boards around the village. Perhaps by the phone box, which is already a focal point. Mention of the tenter stones in the boundary marker might be a good idea. Planting tubs or herbs in places where people sit might be an idea and this would bring insects, especially butterflies into the town.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group is an important and valuable part of the community and we are confident it will continue far into the future. The group have made great efforts to involve the community and it is pleasing to see all the support they rightly receive. We were impressed by the group's year round activities and with the amount of community events the group are involved with. Clearly great efforts are being made to obtain funding and support. The range of skills which the group have is impressive.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps get an A board with the group's logo or details to put out at work parties, perhaps with the hope of getting more volunteers. A board with the latest news of the groups projects might be of interest to residents and again perhaps attract volunteers. To get younger people interested in gardening consider a young gardener award for the village. Consider community outings to gardens of interest locally.

Category 1C: Large Village

Boroughbridge

Introduction

Brighter Boroughbridge and District was formed only 3 years ago with the key aim of improving the appearance of the town and from its small beginnings has grown. It is clear this group have gathered momentum, and volunteers with a range of skills are reaping rewards. The judges were impressed with the amount of community work that has been done since the inception, residents and visitors alike benefit from the many improvements. Various projects have transformed neglected corners and there is a good liaison with other groups and businesses including the allotment society. Sponsors and supporters must be delighted to see the improvements they are helping to fund. Thank you all and congratulations as you are at the upper end of this award.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Roundabouts leading into the town were tidy and well planted with interesting sustainable displays. Stump Cross roundabout in particular is eye-catching and well maintained with even the edging to the path cleared. The "Poppies" supplied by Jenny Ruth workshops adds to the overall impression making a bold statement. Chatsworth Grove and the rockery corner at the car park are good examples of the horticultural achievements made to neglected areas. The residential gardens shown were, in the main, well cared for with a mix of spring displays and in the town planted troughs were enhanced with one or two spring hanging baskets on businesses.

Areas for Improvement

An increase in spring planting by businesses would extend the display as would some bulb planting in grass verges near the large supermarket further adding to the verge tidying already taken place. Raised flower beds are also a possible addition. There are a number of opportunities to improve the area to the front of the primary school garden (Millennium garden) again working with the school. As the project gets more well-deserved publicity more householders may add to their own displays and join in with caring for areas beyond their garden walls giving enjoyment to all.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The mini museum at the Butter Market was a delight to see showing local pride in the town's history. The consideration of the environmental impact at the allotment site was inspirational with willows planted to remove nitrates washing from the site before entering the nearby water course and many other measures, well thought out and

executed. Water collection and composting also take place on the site with the addition of a composting toilet. Co-operation with the Brighter Boroughbridge group is encouraging and experiences can be shared.

The effects of "Clean for the Queen" litter awareness campaign worked together with High School students is demonstrated throughout the town. Inclusion of a bug hotel and wood pile shows awareness of providing habitats and there are good recycling measures in place.

Areas for Improvement

Consider display boards to give information on wildlife, which may be observed, in appropriate areas. Perhaps students could be included in the research. It would be good to have a display at Chatsworth Grove to celebrate the difference made. Could young people be involved in monitoring the wildlife in a site to be developed before proposed work then on completion monitor it again, possibly as part of a school project? Further encouraging a love of the environment and enriching experiences.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

It is so heartening to hear of the number of local groups and businesses who are already supporting the group and there are good and exciting plans in place for future projects. The Secret Gardens project planned for 14th August is full of promise and we wish you every success. The involvement of many local businesses and projects including "Plot to Plate" and the support of local organisations e.g. Lions, WI, Chamber of Trade etc. all show the community have quickly joined in support of the ethos of in bloom. Congratulations to all.

Areas for Improvement

Proclaim and shout about your successes and let the whole town and visitors know. It is important to keep the community informed of this group's work with notices and bulletins to encourage people to support the town entry by caring for their own gardens and areas. Will the High School get involved in "Twittering" the good news? Perhaps a combined plant sale/exchange or Gardeners Question Time could be planned with the Allotment Society making a fun event into an opportunity to raise awareness and funds. Have displays of before and after whenever and wherever the opportunities arise.

Burncross

Introduction

It was a pleasure to visit such a dedicated group of people who are working so hard to benefit their community. It was lovely to see the amount of support which they get from the local community and rightly so. We are confident that the group will go far on into the future. The judges would also like to comment on the excellent and very comprehensive portfolio.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The planters placed throughout the area were full of spring colour and we were impressed by the quality of the plants. The beds at the village boundaries make a lovely colourful welcome to Burncross. We were impressed by the selection of plants which harmonised so well with their rural surroundings. The choice of plants in these beds was very sustainable and using plants which could cope without regular watering was a sensible one. The standard of grass cutting at the village entrances was very good and really complemented the excellent beds. The involvement of the three village pubs is very pleasing. The recreation ground is a lovely green place for the community to enjoy. We saw lovely residential gardens throughout the village and were impressed by the variety of gardens.

Areas for Improvement

Consider developing more herb planting in the village that people can cut and use. Perhaps if these were near where people like to linger and sit they would benefit from the lovely scents and it would bring in butterflies. Consider mulching the outlying beds which are not watered regularly. Perhaps include some trailing plants in containers, to cascade over the edges and consider possible use of dwarf conifers to give height. Keep working on and extending areas of wildlife planting around the village.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The creation of a wildlife area on the Acorn Recreation Ground is a good idea and we were pleased to hear of the involvement of school children in the project. Great efforts are being made to keep the area litter free. Working with children to add bird tables and more bird boxes in Foxfield Spring Wood is a good idea, and if possible we would look forward to seeing these efforts in the summer. We were impressed to see the history boards provided by the group and the history evenings sound well attended. The group are clearly making great efforts to see that the street furniture is well looked after. We were pleased to see that recycled materials were used where possible and

that compost is reduced peat. It was very pleasing to hear of the group targeting 'grot spots' in the unmanaged areas.

Areas for Improvement

Keep working on the recreation ground wildlife area with the children. Perhaps some native berrying shrubs planted on the recreation ground would bring in insects and birds, consider leaving the area around the pond unplanted to give some cover to wildlife using it. Consider buddleias on the recreation ground to bring in insects and birds. Perhaps the various pubs might consider planting herb tubs near their premises. Perhaps consider putting an information board by the wildlife garden with information on the types of wildlife which might be seen. Perhaps consider building a 'mini-beast hotel' with the local school. This could be small and situated either in the wildlife area of the recreation ground or in Fox Spring Wood, however, the judges appreciate the often laborious, though necessary, risk assessments that have to be completed whilst working with schools. If possible, in summer, the judges would be very interested to see the efforts at Fox Spring Wood with regards to the feeders and bird boxes.

Section C: Community Participation Areas of Achievement

It is good that the group are working with so many others in the community and are involved with the school. The Beer Festival and Scarecrow project sound exciting. The support given by McDonalds is very valuable. The Website used by the group is a really valuable tool and is obviously helping to gain so much support for the group. Distributing flyers and newsletters is keeping up community awareness of the group. There is a good relationship with the press. Involvement with the school's website will really help. Sponsorships from residents and local businesses are really helping the group.

Areas for Improvement

Continue working with the school on their website. Perhaps the various pubs would allow a little board giving details of the group's latest projects and upcoming events. Perhaps consider actually helping Costcutter establish a good flower bed, if group numbers and time permit. Consider the idea of a garden competition in the village, perhaps with a category for young gardeners.

Harthill with Woodall

Introduction

After an absence of 9 years it was great to see Harthill with Woodall entering YIB again! On a pleasant spring day the judges were welcomed by the committee and volunteers who were keen to showcase their village. A brief but concise portfolio was given that included relevant information about the entry.

The judges sensed a large element of pride shown by the group and wider community which reflected in the standard and cleanliness of the village.

The work being put into the school gardening club was evident from the enthusiasm of Lorna and the volunteers who shared their knowledge and experience to the benefit of the children

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The spring bedding displays around the village were of good quality and generally weed free. The standard of maintenance by volunteers was again good especially the church & school grounds. Harthill Primary School gardening club led by Lorna and the volunteers had so much planned with the children!, the judges would love to see the results during the summer visit.

Areas for Improvement

A more planned approach to design & implementation would be beneficial on some beds notably the bus terminus where there is scope for a variation of sustainable planting. A co-ordinated approach to maintenance especially grass cutting if being undertaken from volunteers is often difficult, although all grass plots were cut for judging there were a few areas most notably Street Farm Close where strimming around obstacles would have aesthetically been beneficial. It was noted a couple of entrance stones bearing the name of the village had ivy growing over the top which had become woody, consider removing to improve these important 'entrances'. An opportunity for more kerbside planters with the correct authorisation can be explored to offer more colour and attract volunteers.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The ongoing work on Jubilee Meadow is great to see and the judges look forward to visiting the meadow during summer judging. The village identity still holds strong today with lots of community events such as the well dressing, carnival, scarecrow completion. The engagement and communication with Rotherham BC works very effectively with repairs being carried out quickly. The community skip days are a great idea which helps fuel community spirit as well as keeping the village tidy.

Areas for Improvement

An historic timeline or short presentation would be beneficial for the judges to understand the history of the village and the many changes to the local area over the years. Whilst the judges were delighted to be shown the horticultural work being undertaken at Harthill Primary School it may be beneficial during summer judging to

be also shown the conservation / bio diversity work carried out within the school grounds.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The on-going Jubilee Meadow project is a fine example of a sustainable initiative that the group continues to develop. The engagement with Harthill Primary School has certainly brought rewards in the form of an environment to nurture & develop young horticultural skills. The use of social media and other information streams is to be commended and will hopefully bear fruition in the form of the next generation of volunteers. The schedule of events throughout the year ensures community spirit and participation.

Areas for Improvement

Perhaps approach the school to design posters for future In Bloom efforts. Spread the word about 'In Bloom' campaign through posters in commercial & residential properties in the village. A small presentation of events and activities through a picture board or similar to evidence past / on-going projects / fundraising initiatives would be beneficial to the judges, there's so much happening!! Keep pressing local businesses for support to aid the campaign.

Scholes

Introduction

Scholes is a village south of Leeds, and is part of the Barwick in Elmet and Scholes Parish Council, in the City of Leeds. In the 1800s, Colonel Frederick Trench-Gascoigne (of Parlington Hall, Aberford), owned and rented out a large number of houses, mines, woodlands and farming land in the areas of Scholes. In the mid-1880s, a previous occupant of the Seacroft Windmill, Isaac Chippindale, started the Scholes Brick and Tile Works on Wood Lane with the company's quarry producing high quality bricks with which many houses in the surrounding area were built.

The Scholes in Bloom Team was formed in 2003 by members of the Parish Council and has blossomed to a flourishing group with the regular planting sessions on a Monday morning to tend the 30 flower beds around the village. The village was a blaze of colour when we were welcomed by the chairman Ben and members of this enthusiastic team.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The judges appreciated having the informative portfolio in advance and although the weather was rather damp and dismal, a warm welcome awaited us. Great innovation has been displayed with the 30 beds around the village ranging from a Japanese

garden at the side of the Manor House to the striking more formal planting with red polyanthus, yellow pansies and tulips fitting in neatly with the nearby wild flower garden; the Garden around the Jubilee Seat is well planted with shrubs, perennials and yellow polyanthus. The war memorial and surrounding beds are tended by a neighbour and both are neat and colourful.

Areas for Improvement

While lots of areas are a blaze of colour, consider planting crocuses and daffodils to naturalise in the grass verges in other places e.g. along Rake Hill Road. The group are considering replacing the grass around the Jubilee Seat with flags and it might be another opportunity to involve the school children in the design. Perhaps permanent planting of miniature daffodils and tulips in the beds around the war memorial would add height and structure to enhance the area. Some of the beds might well be planted with perennials or miniature shrubs to reduce the number of bedding plants needed for Spring and Summer planting.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The judges were pleased to see how the local environment has been enhanced for all residents to enjoy. Polyanthus are overwintered in the allotments over the summer to be reused in the beds for winter flowering. The judges were pleased to see evidence of recycling and composting at a convenient corner of the Sports ground. The Buffers Bed is an ingenious idea to promote the heritage of the former Railway Station. The interpretation boards in the Wild Flower Garden must be a great asset with their displays being changed regularly to reflect the seasons.

Areas for Improvement

The school children might be encouraged to build their own bug hotels at sites where they can explore the mini beasts in it. Another idea to involve the school children might be to run a competition to design a heritage bed to surround the donated ploughs in the wild flower garden to reflect the former farming community. Encourage further projects such as the metal sculpture at the sports ground to provide art in the landscape.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Over the years the SiB team have built strong links within the community with involvement from the schools, cubs and scouts, church and sports groups including the local bowling club. The group are adventurous in their funding initiatives with sponsorship for all but two of the beds; by holding events, (Open Gardens and twice yearly coffee mornings); running a door to door collection, and then a direct appeal for funding for a ride-on lawn mower when one was needed.

In gratitude to the support the team have received from Ann Castle, their retiring representative on Leeds City Council, Ann was invited to join with the extended group and judges for afternoon tea and a presentation from Ben, chairman of Scholes in Bloom.

Areas for Improvement

Further encourage families and young people to be involved in specific projects to ensure the long term future of the group.

Category 2A: Urban Community

Beeston

Introduction

Beeston in Bloom is a well-established group who have been improving and developing the green spaces in their community for nearly 20 years. Beeston is an urban inner city area of South Leeds and the group works on a wide range of projects, big and small, across the whole of the area, including in collaboration with other community organisations. The judges were made very welcome by the enthusiastic and dedicated team of volunteers.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The planters along Beeston Road were well maintained and had a good variety of plants. The grounds at both Evans and at The White Rose Centre were very clean and well maintained. The garden and churchyard at St. Mary's Church were good, with lots of bulbs giving cheerful spring colour. The barrier planters at the Tommy Wass junction create a great impact at a busy road junction. The judges were shown some lovely residential gardens, as well as the Millennium Garden in Cross Flatts Park, which was very clean, tidy and colourful, with some lovely planting.

Areas for Improvement

The addition of the wildflower area in the churchyard will add to the area, and will be interesting to see. The development of the bus turning circle is a priority to the group and was commented on during the tour. We look forward to the changes planned on our Summer tour of the area when more development will have taken place.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Encouraging to hear work around the pond at the White Rose Centre had been halted to avoid disturbing the Kingfishers. The whole entry was clean and tidy, and the group makes good use of all resources by recycling old compost, old plants and old planters! Wildflowers have been planted in appropriate areas to attract wildlife. The medieval garden at Stank Hall Barn is an exciting project, which the Friends group is working hard to develop with great sensitivity to the important historical building and surroundings.

Areas for Improvement

Keep working to develop and improve the Cardinal Triangle bed. Continue to find appropriate sites for bird, bat and bug boxes.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The In Bloom group has very good support from local business, with sponsorship of the planters and hanging baskets. The group has a good relationship with Intsaplanta, who have also been successful in attracting sponsorship. The use of volunteers from the NCS and M&S alongside the dedicated In Bloom members is very useful and effective for the group. The plant sales not only provide income, but also help raise awareness of the group's activities.

Areas for Improvement

Are there scouts/guide groups that the In Bloom group could work with? The judges look forward to seeing some of the activities in the schools in the summer. Consider producing a 3 - 5 year plan for the group.

Calverley

Introduction

Calverley is a village in the City of Leeds with a long history being listed in the Domesday Book as Caverleia. The church of St Wilfrid dates back to 1154 although the tower and parts of the church were added in the 13th to 15th centuries. The census of 2011 gave Calverley with Farsley a population of 22954. Calverley Old Hall is a medieval manor house previously the home of the Calverley family and is a grade 1 listed building. A village with an enthusiastic In Bloom group and this was reflected in the tour taken by the judges.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Much daffodil planting by the group and the move to mix with tulips is giving greater impact and more continuity. Barrier baskets by the group were good. At the churchyard the shrub planting gives a lift and is sustainable planting. The "Angel" is an eye-catching feature. There was a good tower planter and tubs at Town Wells Drive. Grass verges throughout were neat and tidy. All domestic gardens seen were well maintained and had numerous winners within the Leeds in Bloom competition. Good allotments and the raised beds for the disabled were a nice feature. Good borders at St Wilfrid's Church planted by the congregation and the gardens at Brookleigh sheltered housing were well maintained and Vince is to be commended for his work here. Good planters

at the library and Post Office. The displays of polyanthus at Victoria Park were eye-catching.

Areas for Improvement

The judges look forward to seeing further improvements to the rock face on Carr Road and future development of the edible garden project. The W.I. border should be a feature in the summer judging and the features proposed for the celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

Very good wild-life work with the schools at St Wilfrid's churchyard. Bird boxes and bat boxes were seen around Calverley and at the churchyard the information boards should educate not only the children but adults as well!! The enthusiasm and work of David is to be commended. Plants used by the Parks Department are recycled by the group. Compost bins and water collection was seen around the village. There was a complete lack of litter, graffiti, fly posting and dog fouling in the area illustrating a definite pride of place.

Areas for Improvement

The judges look forward to seeing further evidence of the school competitions and the new seats at Victoria Park

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

New signage at the entry to Calverley by the In Bloom group and numerous posters seen displayed in business premises and private houses advertising Calverley in Bloom. The In Bloom group are involved with schools and supervised tree planting and bulb planting undertaken. In Bloom meetings are well attended. Businesses volunteer their staff to assist with projects. Working with Creative Calverley broadens contacts as does the use of Twitter and Facebook. There was a good range of photographs showing year round work at the presentation and presence at Calverley Festival and Christmas Tree Festival can only further raise the profile of the group. Monies raised from grants and from local businesses and the Rotary Club as well as from sales and displays.

Areas for Improvement

The judges would like to see further details of how funds are raised to provide continuity of the In Bloom group.

Holbeck

Introduction

Holbeck is an urban community, close to Leeds city centre, where there has been, and continues to be, much regeneration work. The small but very enthusiastic In Bloom group were keen to show the judges the variety of projects they have been involved with, and how they are working hard to develop greater community spirit and encourage involvement from the diverse population. There is great potential for this entry. Holbeck benefits from some generous and well maintained green spaces in the community, which were looking lovely on the sunny spring day of judging. The whole area was clean and tidy.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The green spaces were excellent, well maintained with spring colour provided over a long period by a number of different daffodil and spring bulb varieties. The grounds of St Matthews's community centre were well maintained and the planters had an interesting selection of plants, including fruit and herbs, which could be picked and used by the centres users. The carved tree is eye catching. It was encouraging to see new trees being planted.

Areas for Improvement

The plans and proposals for the Tilburys are good and will help improve the area. The planters containing bedding opposite Holbeck Community Centre need more plants to create more impact.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The development of the Matthew Murray Trail and the walk into Leeds are excellent projects developing awareness and pride in the heritage of Holbeck. The finger posts, information boards and leaflets are clear, clean and informative. The new bench at St Matthews to commemorate WW1 is lovely. Generally the whole entry was clean and litter free, an achievement in such a busy environment.

Areas for Improvement

The plan to change the planting alongside the motorway, at the top of the Tilburys will help to prevent litter building collecting in this area. Look for places where further wildflower planting schemes can be introduced. Consider trying to collect water at Holbeck Community Centre to be used on the raised beds. Identify suitable places to install bird, bat and bug boxes.

Section C: Community Participation Areas of Achievement

The In Bloom group is working well with many different agencies and has developed plans to continue to improve the area over the coming few years, including being involved with the development of the old railway line. The group has good support from local businesses and is using social media to try and increase community awareness.

Areas for Improvement

The In Bloom group is small and has achieved a great deal, but increasing the number of active members can only help to maintain and continue to develop the good work. The completion of the new housing development may offer an opportunity for the group to recruit new members.

Starbeck

Introduction

Starbeck in Bloom (SIB) is a well-developed entry, having been operating for over 15 years, and has a strong, well-motivated team of workers. It is quite a widespread area, dominated in some areas by rows of terrace houses, with more modern properties in outlying districts. The team appear to concentrate mainly on areas adjacent to the main thoroughfares, also strengthened by the presence of Taylor's factory which is landscaped and maintained to a very high standard. With many community groups involved with the bloom group it is very clear how "In Bloom" is integrated throughout the community.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement Areas of Achievement

An excellent range of landscaping at Taylor's factory and Cookery School. The SIB group have continued to work hard with their displays in front of Belmont Field and the library which show a good variety and sustainability of planting. Young people from a range of groups have, for several years, been involved in bulb planting. The Methodist Church group have made many improvements resulting in a very good display in front of their High Street premises. As always the parks and open spaces and border wheels are well maintained with a good mix of spring colour and the use of winter flowering heathers on a roundabout not only gives insects an early nectar source but offers a different colour palette.

Areas for Improvement

It would be good to visit the railway station in the summer and to see more businesses adding to the floral impact. Although gardens passed on the route were in good order no "jewels" were highlighted, it may be good to also see a wider range of home gardens and some allotments. Barrier baskets and some planters possibly could have had more impact.

Please consider whether your time balance is correct - Taylor's are excellent as are the improvements made at Springwater School but is the time spent there, on the tour, balanced with the larger area of Starbeck as there is limited access for the general public to enjoy these areas?

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

What an enthusiastic Waste and Recycling Manager - excellent presentation! Also good to see the recycled seats, noticeboard and planters, and the Taylors Cone Exchange all evidencing the commitment to the environment. So much of the work is done with the young and disabled people in mind. Everywhere was litter and graffiti free. The display boards not only highlight community involvement but also the importance of quality products. Good local art and sculptures were utilised to enhance public enjoyment.

Areas for Improvement

As the hotel is converted it would be good to see the new owners improve the environmental quality of its surroundings.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The gathering for tea demonstrated the impact SIB is having on the community - the Mayor and Mayoress, County and District Councillors and a host of people were enthusiastically gathered. The group embraces many forms of communicating their work from banners, displays and noticeboard to a website, Twitter and Facebook.

Areas for Improvement

A difficult one - keep on trying to gain new recruits for those who have to do less in the future due to age and less energy. Continue to maintain the sense of fun and further the two way exchange of skills between age groups.

Swillington

Introduction

Colourful, clean and friendly, was the overall impression of the village. Good to see that all elements of the community are getting involved in improving their environment. This enthusiastic group are encouraging businesses and young people to get involved in all manner of projects across the area.

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

Spring bulb displays are a welcome site as you enter the village via the busy main road. Bright planters, tubs and hanging baskets throughout, sponsored by the Parish Council and local businesses enhance the entry. Residential gardens throughout are well kept, and roadside verges and green spaces well maintained. Nice to see the tubs and containers at Primrose complex. The sustainable planting in the Church grounds, the new feature at Tesco's corner, Rectory flower beds, the Village Green, the perennial beds at Astley Way industrial units, and the Bus stop, just to name a few. Good to see local businesses such as the Indian Restaurant, Room 8, Post Office, and garage with cheerful displays.

Areas for Improvement

Will be interesting to see how the "Grot spot" on the main road, sponsored by the post office, matures when we return in the summer. Consider continuing talks with the car wash to try to improve their frontage as it's such a prominent site.

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

Lovely to see the work going on in the church yard, how different maintenance regimes are helping to creating a wider biodiversity on the site. Active composting, and recycling. Provision of habitat piles, bird boxes, hedgehog and bug hotels and provision of interpretation boards in the church yard. Boundary features, a reminder of the village's mining heritage. The village was spotless, litter and graffiti free.

Areas for Improvement

Good to see the group have a programme of refurbishment of the many barrels and planters around the village.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Great to see the group have made in roads with the Primary School, getting the children to help with planting outside the school and helping create habitats in the church yard. Members of the group also help with the School Gardening Club, passing on their skills and knowledge. The Group have made good use of Community Payback on projects around the area. They are maintaining sponsorship from the Parish Council and local business's which is good to hear in the current climate. Newsletters, notices, banners and the new website help to promote in Bloom to the wider community.

Areas for Improvement

Looking forward to hearing from the children at the primary school about their involvement with Swillington in Bloom on our summer visit. Continue to seek new members, the website may help, and keep up talks with Tesco, the group have done wonders to improve this corner and Tesco's will only benefit from the improvements made.

Woodlesford

Introduction

On entering Woodlesford you immediately know this is a community that cares. The In Bloom group have over the year's transformed, encouraged and supported projects in all corners of this large village. It was nice to see earlier projects being sustained, alongside lots of new initiatives, and that the group have encouraged new members.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Where to start? Every nook and cranny, every road corner you turn, you'll find colourful spring displays of quality planting, and well maintained, be it road side planters, small landscape features or large public open spaces. Retail areas provided welcoming colourful displays along the main high street. The Canal side, orchards, community gardens, the simple transformation at Eshald Lane, the estates at Langdale and Pymont with some wonderfully planted and maintained open spaces. Residential gardens throughout the route were full of spring colour and well maintained.

Areas for Improvement

It will be interesting to see how the Midland Street Grey to Green projects of 2015 mature through the year when we return in the summer.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The partnership working at the Canal and Lock with CRT, habitat creation, the new bug hotels and composting areas. The provision of interpretation boards around the village, the Maltings, Canal and Village Green, giving visitors and locals the history of the village. The "Hooping stones" linking to the entrance to Rothwell Country Park, interesting feature in Woodlesfords history. Pride of place.... the route was spotless, public spaces were clean, no evidence of litter and street furniture were well maintained.

Areas for Improvement

Look forward to seeing more evidence of biodiversity on our return in the summer, such as the wildflower meadows and seeing how the orchards develop.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

All groups across the community seem to be involved in one way or another in projects around the village, from Jolly Giraffes nursery school children, residents at Langdale estate, to Midland house, to name a few all playing their part in the community. Great to see new members like Sam, who's double digging expertise and enthusiasm is reaping benefits for the team, and Michaela and the group of helpers on Pymont estate. The positive way in which the Community came together to create the gabion wall feature near the church and village green. The extensive calendar of events, showing year round activity across the entry. Great business support and sponsorship, donations and fund raising from various sources. Posters in homes around the village showing support for the work the group are doing. Lots of individuals doing their small corners, pulling together to create this stunning entry.

Areas for Improvement

Looking forward to meeting the children from Woodlesford Primary in the summer to see how they are getting involved with In Bloom, and how they are improving their school environment.

Category 2B: Small Town

Upper and Nether Poppleton

Introduction

The well maintained villages of Upper and Nether Poppleton are located on the bank of the River Ouse, an area which had been hit with the recent flooding. From the onset the judges were impressed with the team's positive attitude and 'can do' approach dealing with the aftermath of the flooding, the development of projects within the village and the partnership working with the various organisations, clubs, committees and trusts.

The picturesque village green is the heart of the village with the maypole at the centre hosting many village events and commend Poppleton in Bloom for reviving the annual horticultural show preserving the community spirit and village identity. It was good to meet so many of the Poppleton in Bloom group and see their on-going commitment, hard work and effort to keeping Poppleton an attractive place to reside, and we look forward to visiting in the summer.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

We particularly liked the innovative raised planters placed behind the road signs and the new covered barrow, the box planter celebrating the year of the English garden, making a feature of the village pump, all the barrels and boxes with the combination of spring and sustainable planting had excellent impact and brought cohesion throughout the village. There was obvious pride in the village as many of the residential gardens were well tended, Barry's garden was a delight and the forthcoming front garden competition. The verges and green areas around the village were well maintained. The sports ground and play areas were of a very high standard especially the junior football ground due to Jim's expertise. The Tithe Barn garden is a jewel and look forward to visiting it in more detail in the summer with the Tudor heritage planting.

Areas for Improvement

Looking forward to seeing the progress in the garden area at the junior football ground. Consider reviewing the weeding schedule in some of the community car parks. Recommend reviewing the contracted weed killing around the base of trees as current practice is not advocated as it could damage the trees health.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

All is kept clean, tidy and litter free, the village green was immaculate thanks to the volunteer who regularly patrols the area. Warren Lea and surrounding area has been

challenging after the floods and is a credit to all the volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to maintaining this area as a haven for birds, bats, hedgehogs and insects with several log piles, hides & bird and bat boxes, the new drainage system, the new bark covered path has made this locality more accessible for the many dog walkers who use this area and the recent tree and hedge planting throughout is extensive and knowledgeable. The well maintained Tithe Barn Pond and Millennium Garden are great resources for the diverse wildlife. The strategically placed recycling centres were evident at community locations with proceeds being put back into the community. The wind turbine providing electricity to the football club. All the benches and barrels were well maintained. The collaboration between Poppleton in Bloom and the railway nursery supplying plants & linking with local heritage.

Areas for Improvement

Looking forward to seeing the progress of the fencing to protect the grass verges from parked cars, and progress with further planting suitable for the area prone to flooding. Consider using free Keep Britain Tidy posters to reinforce the message re - dog waste. Consider permanent information boards at the Tithe Barn, Pondsides and Warren Lea.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The judges were impressed with the several future plans for the village such as the new cricket ground and re-siting of an improved adventure playground, involvement in the 3 year plan to improve and transform the Millennium Garden. The planned programme of events including the Railway Nursery's 75th Anniversary celebrations, village show, sports day and the many other fundraising activities. The involvement with the effective large scale tree landscaping at the Poppleton Park and Ride.

Areas for Improvement

As mentioned it would be useful for the judges to have a pruned down version of the excellent portfolio before their visit and perhaps consider having photos/information on display, and take the opportunity for a short presentation for the judges, also consider a more permanent display board e.g. at the Poppleton Centre to further promote/publicise Poppleton in Bloom.

Category 2C: Town Garforth

Introduction

Garforth, a former mining town, is situated seven miles to the east of Leeds. The Garforth in Bloom Group was started in 2008 and now has approximately 25 members who turn up regularly to the monthly meetings and twice monthly working mornings. The judges were taken on a tour of the town by members Fiona, Tony and Phil, meeting many of the others involved along the way. A wet April day did nothing to dampen the obvious enthusiasm of this active group. Ninety-seven displays (beds, baskets etc.) are tended by the group and the judges enjoyed seeing many of these with the lovely colours of Polyanthus and daffodils brightening an otherwise dismal day.

The group are much involved with the local community and the townspeople of Garforth clearly appreciate their work. A well-subscribed 'Friends of' in Bloom group contributes financially and local ward councillor Mark Dobson met with the judges to express his thanks on behalf of the town.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement Areas of Achievement

The judges were very impressed by the range and number of beds throughout the town. Plantings were varied with Polyanthus and daffodils providing bright Spring colours in some beds. Others were either partly or entirely planted with perennial plants providing year round colour, form and structure. The group have sensibly realised their limitations in terms of upkeep and maintenance, but have been able to increase the number of floral displays in the town by working with, and supporting groups of residents (e.g. Meadow Road) or individuals (e.g. Elaine and Len on Aberford Road).

On main roads into the town, ribbons of daffodils enhanced the verges for the benefit of motorists and pedestrians alike. Of particular note were the Jubilee Garden with much of the colour in this area coming from spring blossom. Susan's Garden on Marshall Street enhanced an otherwise dull area adjacent to a Sheltered Housing complex giving the effect of a walled garden. This bed had the added bonus of including some fruit, vegetables and herbs for the benefit of the adjacent residents.

Areas for Improvement

It was noted that in the Jubilee Garden a couple of cherry trees were planted rather close to the telephone exchange with the potential for the roots to affect this structure. Consideration should therefore be given to moving them to a more suitable location.

Signage/interpretation in Susan's garden would help local residents to identify edible plants in the border and guidance on harvesting would be of benefit to those perhaps less familiar with 'growing your own'.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The town in general had a 'cared for' feel to it with neat verges, little visible litter or graffiti and the urban environment enhanced by the many displays referred to in the previous section. It was clear also from the visit that the group are keen, where possible, to provide opportunities for food, shelter and appropriate habitats for wildlife at various locations through the town. At Town End we met Marjorie and Carol who are gradually 'revamping' a couple of large beds in this area and including bee-friendly plants in their planting scheme. A wildflower verge created along a roadside will provide both colour and food for insects later in the year. Although not seen on this visit a couple of wildlife areas in the town have also been created.

Recycling and reusing is also embedded within the group's practices with, for example, an allotment which is used to 'recycle' plants such as the Polyanthus seen in the Spring beds. Outside the secondary school a bed with a replica coal cart had been created to recognise the industrial heritage of Garforth as a former mining town and an adjacent interpretation board including graphics created by a local art group.

Areas for Improvement

It would be good to see the local heritage celebrated at additional locations in the town, perhaps also providing the opportunity to include some 'art in the landscape'. The group would like to replace their replica coal cart with a genuine cart and have been looking to see if they can find one. It was suggested that the National Coal Mining Museum in Wakefield might be able to offer assistance with such a search.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

Garforth in Bloom is a highly active group, with a core of 25 regular members. In addition to their 'hands on' sessions they organise visits and talks and are extremely effective at raising money by a number of methods including a highly successful sponsorship scheme, a 'Friends' group and various social functions such as coffee mornings and brass band concerts.

Community engagement is excellent with the involvement of schools, youth groups, residents groups etc. On the visit the judges also had the opportunity to visit Aspire at the Garforth Leisure Centre. Here the group have provided raised beds for adults with learning difficulties. Claire from Aspire explained how these could be used by clients in wheelchairs and provided on-site opportunities for them to engage in gardening activities.

The group make effective use of a dedicated website, Facebook, Twitter and the more conventional newsletters and noticeboards to communicate with their members, supporters and the wider community

Areas for Improvement

While appreciating that Spring judging is not an appropriate time for looking at the engagement of young people (particularly as it was still the school holidays!), the judges look forward to the opportunity to visit some of the projects involving the younger generation in the summer months.

The key message here, however, is 'Keep up the good work'!

Horsforth

Introduction

The village of Horsforth covers a large area, with a major road running through it. There have been some major road works and the recently planted bulbs have enhanced the area. There is a hardworking and enthusiastic "In Bloom" group.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

Over the years there has been a lot of bulb planting which has resulted in some spectacular daffodil displays and it was good to see so many different varieties. Hall Park was good with some eye catching floral beds. It looked well maintained and well utilised by the community, who appreciated all the facilities. The burial ground looked after by Peter was a credit to all concerned. This included the involvement of children, the wildlife and flora and good information boards. It was lovely. The new bed next to William H Brown was well done with sustainable planting and should look good for years to come. Good planting at Finkle Hill Car Park

Areas for Improvement

Some good planting schemes of sustainable plants were evident and many of these were geared towards the summer so we will look forward to seeing them then. There were some areas where the standard of weeding and general maintenance could be improved. Planters in some area would have benefited by having more impact, which could be achieved by a few more brightly coloured plants. We expect this to be the case in summer. The sloping planters, if still in use, would benefit from some tall plants which could be seen from the back. It would have been good to have heard about the allotments and we hope to see some residential gardens in the summer.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The area was clean and tidy with little evidence of litter etc. The planters made by volunteers of recycled materials Hall Park is an important part of the local heritage and a good asset to the community. The leaf composting and consideration of wildlife are an important aspect of the park. The hornbeam tree was an interesting and well displayed memorial.

Areas for Improvement

Some of the street furniture would benefit from some attention. There is evidently a lot of history attached to the "village" and it would be a good project to consider making more of it readily visible, in the future. We saw some evidence of water conservation, composting. Re-cycling and general awareness of the environment but would like to see more on our next visit

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

There are good working relationships with many groups including, Parks and Countryside, the Local Council, the Civic Society, the British Legion and many local businesses. The communication within the group is excellent with good arrangements for meeting on Saturday mornings and the Wednesday working parties. The litter picks are a good example of community working. There is good interaction with schools with tree and bulb planting, insect hotels at St Margaret's and organisation of competitions.

Areas for Improvement

We didn't see any information promoting Yorkshire in Bloom or Judging Day although the Autumn Newsletter was good. We saw no evidence of any press coverage. Both of these help to raise the profile of the group which can only help when seeking sponsorship, funding and support. More funds are always beneficial and this may be achieved through more fund raising events, sponsorship and support from local businesses.

The judges will look forward to seeing the work with schools, meeting some children and also more of those who contribute to Horsforth in Bloom. More evidence of future plans and year round working would be of benefit. Future working with Creatives will further raise the In Bloom profile

Pudsey

Introduction

Pudsey's entry is led by twelve very enthusiastic community members who get support from other groups around the area. Their efforts are very much appreciated by people within the community as it showed on the day. The group are very committed to improving the centre of Pudsey particularly areas around the bus station, Pudsey Park, Sparrow Park and library gardens.

Good to see new initiatives being taken up by the group and bringing colour into what is a busy town centre. Pudsey can only benefit from the work that the group do along with their many supporters. Well worth a visit and we look forward to judging in summer.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement.

Areas of achievement

Work and planting around the community centre was excellent with a good choice of plants to give interest all year round. Library garden a major improvement, now a good vibrant square with interesting and colourful planting pleasant area for visitors to sit around.

Local businesses have to be pleased with work carried out here. Loved the sign post. Planters around bus station also well maintained. Good to meet children involved with improving community bed in Sparrow Park. Mixed planting has improved what used to be an overgrown Shrub bed.

Areas of improvement

The new bed by community centre needs planting, some thought needed over what plants should go in the bed. Pudsey Park; due to wet winter weather and improvements being carried out in the park some grass areas have become very worn. Look forward to seeing progress of wild flower garden in the park. Planters around war memorial need more soil in them so plants can be seen by passers-by.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of achievement

To say Pudsey town centre is a very busy place there was very little litter and if seen was very quickly picked up by the volunteers who have regular litter picks. A very clean entry all round and we could not fault the efforts of the volunteers. Good signage throughout the visit particularly in Pudsey Park and around the war memorial.

Areas of Improvement

There was little evidence of composting, recycling and water conservation during the visit. The judges would hope to see what/how you deal with this area when they visit in the summer.

Section C: Community Achievement

Areas of achievement

We could not fault the community spirit of this group and their involvements with other groups and individuals along the route and throughout the year.

They have public support and are getting support and back up either in clean ups, planting new areas. Individual streets or housing areas as well as support from the council's parks department.

Funding is difficult to find at times for any group but this group have managed to achieve it. We could not fault the group's enthusiasm.

Areas of Improvement

This is a well-motivated and organised team who work with their community. Perhaps you could consider recruiting further to enhance your entry.

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

Beverley

Introduction

Making a Difference, is the motto of Beverley Town Council and their actions are evident in the council lead In Bloom incentive. The tour was conducted by Helen Watson (The Town Clerk) and Dr Clive Waddington (the In Bloom Co-ordinator) and started at the Old Town, by Syntan, demonstrating the pride in Beverley's industrial heritage. A comprehensive portfolio demonstrated all year round activity and the support from sections of the Beverley community, non-more so than the forth coming Tour de Yorkshire event.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The new Flemingate development and choice of landscaping fitted in with the 'feel' of the town. The clean classic impact of the planting, with tree and shrub choice very appropriate for the setting. The work started at the Railway Station herbaceous borders, and looked after by Tony, together with the many barrier planters and hayracks around the Town at strategic points. Beverley Minster Quiet Garden – an oasis of tranquillity affording a place and opportunity to awaken your senses.

Areas for Improvement

A consistency in planting or planting themes would unify the horticultural practise. The Blue and Yellow pansy planting for the Tour de Yorkshire was an excellent project but planting was sparse and inconsistent around the town. An active liaison with East Riding of Yorkshire Council may overcome this. The judges understand the difficulties experienced with the growing conditions of this season's weather, however the containers and hayracks this spring would benefit from planting with some height and softened with trailing plants.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

A medieval town with many good projects demonstrating the towns heritage, The Elwell, The Georgian Quarter, the Town Trail of Guilds & Crafts, just some of many. Good environmental quality with a noticeable absence of litter and graffiti.

Areas for Improvement

The group is aware of the 'tiredness' and state of maintenance of many of its larger planters and barrels. A scheme of replacement is good to hear, and the judges look

forward to see some new replacement barrels this summer. More recognition of resource management included in the summer tour would enhance the entry, together with more demonstration of the biodiversity and conservation activities that are in action in Beverly

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The group is to be commended in its activity in upgrading and developing its activity and in bloom initiative with several ongoing projects. Achieving a good level of support and sponsorship from the businesses and retail sector to help with funding and improvement to allow the team to attain its ethos of Making Beverley A Brighter Place. Good use of local media demonstrated and all year round publicity of local community based events.

Areas for Improvement

The portfolio showed sections of the community taking part in In Bloom activities. In the summer it would be good for the judges to meet such community groups, schools and children etc. and hear at first hand of their voluntary endeavours

Pontefract

Introduction

On a beautiful spring morning the judges were greeted by Brian & Colin and were taken on a tour of the judging route. The judges were impressed by the general cleanliness of public spaces around the town and racecourse. Positive steps are being made with the amalgamation of the Civic Society into the Bloom group which can only bring forward thinking and benefits for the future.

The Judges welcomed the enthusiasm of the gardening club at Larks Hill School where children were keen to learn and grow seasonal produce.

The well maintained grounds of the Prince of Wales Hospice were noted and the use of space to accommodate a small allotment and greenhouse was innovative.

There is still work to do on taking the entry forward in terms of attracting sponsorship, publicity and getting more people actively involved in the campaign especially given that local authority maintenance and funding has been greatly reduced.

All in all an enjoyable visit with the judges looking forward to coming back for summer judging.

Section A: Horticultural Achievement

Areas of Achievement

The bulb planting in Pontefract Park with local schools is a good initiative and should be continued given the space and scope offered within the park. The standard of maintenance at the Prince of Wales Hospice was commendable as was the commitment of the core volunteers who ensure the gardens are kept to a high standard. The formation of a gardening club at Larks Hill School where the children were very enthusiastic about 'growing' and the many benefits that home grown produce can bring.

Areas for Improvement

Some flower beds around the judging route were not planted with Spring bedding, whilst these beds were weed free and tidy future all year round planting would be beneficial either in the form of bedding or alternatively some sustainable planting, or a combination of the two. The Cattle/horse troughs are an excellent feature which could be enhanced by bolder planting, again consider some structured/sustainable planting to compliment seasonal bedding.

The condition and Health & Safety concerns regarding some sections of the perimeter track around the park/racecourse, there appears to be a shared responsibility between the local authority and racecourse regarding maintenance, investment is needed to make the path safe for park users. The path is very well used by walkers and runners and every avenue should be explored in attracting funding given the obvious link to healthy living.

Section B: Environmental Responsibility

Areas of Achievement

The grassland management in Pontefract Park, allowing large areas of grassland to be cut once per year for hay. Planting of over 400 native trees in Pontefract Park with the help of schoolchildren. Given the racecourse hosted a race meeting the day before judging there were little signs of litter around the course. The very informative Jade from Shanks explained the recycling initiatives operating in Pontefract for both business and residential users.

Areas for Improvement

Litter was evident in large amounts just out of sight on Ratten Row close to businesses. The judges questioned why litter bins were situated halfway around the perimeter track at Pontefract Park, a bin at the main entrance could be sufficient and negate the need for refuse vehicles to use the track. More information boards / signage would be a welcome addition to Pontefract Park highlighting the bio-diversity and historical interest.

Section C: Community Participation

Areas of Achievement

The formation of a designated committee is a step in the right direction allowing new ideas and plans to be formulated. There are obviously good links with Larks Hill School who have the scope to expand their 'horticultural space'.

Areas for Improvement

There are lots of major and independent retailers within the centre of Pontefract, every effort should be made to attract sponsorship to take the entry forward. Whilst the makeover of the 'in bloom' group has evolved it is clear that more volunteers are required for future projects. A recruitment campaign via leaflets/social media could be successful if the vision is sold in the correct manner. A simple portfolio would have been beneficial to the judges giving an insight on the development of the group, achievements to date, future projects etc.