

Judges Notes for Summer 2026



YORKSHIRE

Category C1a: - Small Village/Village

Gold

Firbeck Village

Overall Impression

It was clear to see that Firbeck Village is proudly cared for and respected by all who reside there, with all residents clearly contributing to the upkeep of the village. There is an obvious desire from the local residents to make the village a wonderful welcoming place, with all getting involved in some way to raise money, host activities and events, or to make sure their gardens cater for wildlife with the addition of bird and bat boxes, water butts and ponds, and appropriate pollinator-attracting plants.

Some residents offer honesty boxes with a wide range of things such as eggs, plants, etc., all of which are well-kept, successful, and highlight the level of trust and good-will in the area. Everything within the village was well maintained, clean, tidy, and reflected the villagers' mindsets and involvement.

Not one bit of litter, graffiti, etc., was present, with all grass verges neatly cut, with the exception of a 'no mow' area for the protection of Bee Orchids on the grass verge. Sincere care for the village was present through the hand-painted village sign by one local resident household, including the original village sign being displayed in the church, and through the successful restoration of the Village Hall Garden.

The selection of plants chosen for this garden has been carefully considered and is appropriate for the area, and to attract wildlife. The seed exchange in the restored phone box, and the multiple planted areas within the communal spaces are great features to welcome visitors into the village.

It was wonderful to hear that seeds for the exchange are mainly collected from gardens and reused across the village. Judges also noted that the local pub gives a bright and colourful welcome, with hanging baskets and planters outside. This, along with the Village Hall Garden, makes entering the village a real delight.

The sculptures of the racehorses and intent to get the ha-ha listed all shows the desire of the village to continue to promote its famous historical past and links to the St Ledger estate.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider additional planting to the Village Hall community garden to provide all year-round interest.
- The installation of historical interpretation boards at key locations throughout the village would provide great insight into the village's significant historical past.
- Getting the gardening group constitutionalised could help with accessing more funding from places like the wildlife trust or the RHS. Also, utilise the varying age groups and skill sets within the gardening group to maximise the clearance of the ha-ha back to restore it to its original condition.

Grassington in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Grassington is a tiny village set in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Although it is a small community, the villagers have shown that they can roll up their sleeves and work hard to give visitors and residents a wonderful floral welcome.

Despite sometimes being overwhelmed by tourists, the village was clean, tidy and litter free. Grassington Primary School has a small garden very ably run by Issy and Fiona, helped enormously by "handyman" Tony!

The paintings destined for the shed wall were particularly beautiful. The work undertaken by The Mens Shed at various points around the village is to be commended. The many planters around the village were very well maintained despite the dry weather that has been encountered recently. Grassington in Bloom volunteers are to be congratulated on an excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue to progress the new wildflower meadow. Perhaps you could continue to investigate who owns the land and negotiate a new mowing regime when they know of your proposals for the area.
- The notice board at this area could perhaps benefit from some fresh interpretation – perhaps letting visitors know what your plans are for this site.
- Some of the street furniture and traffic bollards could, perhaps, benefit from a regular programme of maintenance. This may not be the responsibility of Grassington in Bloom volunteers to carry this maintenance out, but could you, perhaps, bring some pressure to bear on those who can!

Category C1b: - Village

Roberttown in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Roberttown; a village with a fascinating history, and the 'In Bloom' group along with all the residents are obviously very proud of their lovely village and the history attached to it. It was a pleasure to meet the various groups; residents, school children, along with the Knitting group, who have created a wealth of beautiful knitted objects scattered around the village. Lampposts, are decorated with knitted baskets, post boxes are beautifully decorated with the knitting groups handiwork. The lovely knitted 'Hungry Caterpillar' clambering along the railings was an inspiration. A lovely addition for residents and visitors alike.

The Hungry Caterpillar theme was evident throughout the village when the Judges were greeted by a group of very excited young school children who could not wait to show us their handiwork with the lovely painted, recycled oil drum tubs full of flowers and their very talented egg box caterpillar creations.

The numerous, very colourful and eye catching planters throughout the village are sponsored by either residents or local businesses and it was interesting to hear that the majority of plants in them were grown and propagated by one of the 'In Bloom' members. A 'plant swop' box, the 'Little Free Library', bug hotels, bird and bat boxes and the lovely herb boxes outside of the local butchers were some of the highlights on our walk around the village. The area outside of the cricket ground is an inspiration and a member of the group proudly showed the judges that nothing is wasted in the village. With cricket memorabilia used as focal points and very colourful telephone bird feeders. Recycling is obviously high on the groups agenda.

The highlight of the visit and a major achievement for the group is the long planned for creation of the community orchard. An area of land has been cleared and planted with a selection of fruit trees. This includes at the far side of the orchard an area for wildlife and a lovely viewing platform which has taken into consideration easy level access for all the residents. It was lovely to see the younger generation also being involved in this area, being very proud to indicate to the judges which of the fruit trees they had planted. The group now have plans to create a new entrance to the orchard by building a 'living' wall,

There were planters just outside the community orchard again following the theme of the Hungry Caterpillar. A few of the local nursery school children greeted us with enthusiasm for the colourful Caterpillar planters.

There is obviously a huge amount of dedication by the Roberttown 'In Bloom' group, their community are obviously very proud of where they live.

Well done!

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Whilst we understand the desire to avoid the use of plastic planters, the wooden ones in use have a limited amount of growing space. This is of note at the Child Lane junction where the weather effects the growth and for such a prominent location it may be worth considering some alternative planters to make the best of the location and the work put into the planters
- Commendable that a lot of plants are home grown including some 1000 begonias and plants for the 40 planters

Scholes in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Overall impression Scholes in bloom is a well-established village group that work together to maintain the beds and sponsored hanging baskets, they deliver a good range of planting schemes, environmental improvements and community projects across the Village. Name stone beds with mixed annual and perennials and it was such a shame that we missed the spectacle of the daffodil corridor.

Scholes in bloom work closely with Scholes primary school by running planting projects and design competitions which allow children to contribute directly to the village floral displays. This year's winner Ebonie had a brilliant design full of colour and brightness to lighten up the village.

A few areas around the village have a theme to the planted-out areas such as the Japanese garden with its bright Red Bridge That attracts the children's eyes and encourages them to explore. Other areas such as the Peace flame garden, coronation corner, W.I. Garden and a few more offer interest and variety. Good use of various social media helps the group raise money and gain new volunteers and help with watering when needed. This is a constant strength of the group, and the evidence of constant community involvement has enhanced the public spaces.

Congratulations to you all on your work keeping the village clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider reducing the number of hanging baskets to one per post but offer a double sponsorship (two plaques) to possibly reduce costs long term.
- Reduce the need for annual bedding as the perennials grown and spread.
- The Beck bed area to consider replacing with a variety of shade loving perennials.

The Villages of Kirkburton and Highburton

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Burton in Bloom cover Highburton and Kirkburton a large area. Sheila, Peter and Deirdre were able to each explain each of the areas and introduce other members on route. The team are to be commended for the work they had to take on re the grass cutting of the verges and public areas which the local authority had neglected for some time. The team have worked hard to cut back brambles, grass and restore the areas.

The old town quarry, an historical site, is now a lovely naturalising woodland with a tarmac walk way which the team clear when it becomes overgrown. There are information boards and seating. The pathway leads down to the road where many of the litter bins have been adopted, painted and now emptied by the team.

Burton Dean Park Community Fields and Orchards is a large meadow area – this is a fabulous biodiverse site with wildflower areas, many varieties of grasses and a natural damp area. Walkways have been cut through making this a popular site for people to walk or run around or through.

The team has drawn in all elements of the community, recognising and rejoicing in the heritage. They work with community groups and businesses that support the village in their endeavours. Businesses are enhancing the area with lovely floral displays that can be seen while walking through the high street.

Great care has been taken in the memorial garden. The planting scheme is appropriate. There is a composting area and a water collection area. Anna described the work to create the World War 1 and 2 displays, which are tasteful and impressive.

All Hallows Church Cemetery is well tended, trees have been lifted and a dead hedge has been created. Ken and Mike volunteer as part of the churchyard team. Fiona, one of the two church wardens described how they have created an 'adopt' a grave scheme, so far 60 graves have been adopted. At the top of the newer cemetery a contemplation area has been created with oval wooden seating and planting to give a peaceful space for people to come, sit and reflect.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Combining both villages make this a large entry and it is understandable while you do. In future consider the route and whether condensing some of the elements may help give you extra time for the main areas.
- Some of the planting area at the bottom of the quarry walk could benefit from a refresh. Consider using more drought tolerant plants in this area.
- The planting at the Burton Cross will benefit from adding drought tolerant plants.

- The newly created bed at the side of Morrisons will also benefit from perennial plants. As this is a very newly created bed it is good to see that the plants placed here and are establishing.

Swaine Bloomers

GOLD

Overall Impression

It was an absolute pleasure to meet such a dedicated team of Volunteers and judge Hoylandswaine this year. We were greeted with an introduction to village and given a very impressive booklet of all the projects, events and activities that the group had run or contributed to in some way over the past 12 months which was full of photos, statistical data and narrative describing who they are, where they started, what they have achieved as a community. The group reported they started with just three volunteers and now have over 20 who get stuck in when and where they can across the year and you could, feel the enthusiasm, pride and passion they all held for their village.

The village was full of Vibrant and colourful, annuals and perennial plants, shrubs and trees. There were a number of hanging baskets (sponsored by local individuals and business), planted wheelbarrows, wildflower and fruit garden, Rockeries, Tulip alley, Bulbs, Picua Glauce, Nordmann Fir and a dressed Clay display that had been made by applying petals and other natural materials to form colourful tiles with a 'Countries of the world cup' theme. This was to celebrate the traditional customs of 'well dressing' a Derbyshire church custom.

Celebrating heritage and history was a prominent theme throughout the village with Nail forge, a 19th Century Grade II listed building donated to the village by a local resident, a war memorial, Village Hall, St John the evangelist church also a grade II listed building. The types of plants & shrubs used throughout the village had been well thought out in terms of environmental impact, encouraging biodiversity and wildlife with much evidence of birdhouse, hedgehog homes, log piles, dead hedges and much more. Cotoneaster was planted to absorb petrol fumes near the entrance and exit of village near to the busy A628. Reusing and Recycling was also something they were keen on implementing and repurposing as much as possible.

What really shone through was the ability the 'Bloomers' had to really work and engage together as a community and with many other groups and school children. Together they produced and contributed to many excellent projects and sites for all to use and access the events and attractions throughout the year showed imagination, creativity and a big splash of Fun! Considering this is their first year of entering they have done a really great job and should be immensely proud of what they have achieved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Interpretation boards on all sites of interest e.g. Nails Forge, Community Garden etc would be a great added additional to these spaces and help
- Look at year-round planting for sites & beds to ensure continuity of vibrancy, colour and interest
- Consider promoting the groups fantastic work and projects on Social media and share best practice

Hutton Cranswick in Bloom

GOLD

Overall Impression

Hutton Cranswick is a village of two distinct parts in the heart of East Yorkshire. Hutton lies to the north and is home to the beautiful Grade II listed parish church, while Cranswick sits to the south, where the local primary school is based.

Formed in 1995, the Village in Bloom Group has a strong record of success. Today, its fifteen enthusiastic volunteers, supported by the Parish Council and local businesses, deliver a range of environmental projects across the village.

On arrival, the village immediately conveys a strong sense of pride and ownership. Many residential front gardens are beautifully maintained and thoughtfully planted with seasonal displays, while the village entrances and communal areas feature sustainable planting and opportunities to reuse plants. Special mention should go to Dave, who maintains the entrance bed at the junction of Main Street and the six colourful half barrels at the junction of Hutton Road.

Moving through the village, the overall impression is WOW. The Village Green in Cranswick, with its immaculate floral displays and neatly cut grass, forms an attractive focal point and meeting place for the community. The long border maintained by Jess and her husband creates a beautiful frontage to the village pond, while the more natural area behind it provides a wildlife refuge and supports local biodiversity. The war memorial and memorial seat offer a fitting tribute to families who lost loved ones during the war, and the village map with its sedum container provides useful information for residents and visitors alike.

Across the Village Green is the local primary school, part of the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) scheme. The school uses its grounds effectively as an educational resource, growing fruit and vegetables, recycling, and supporting biodiversity through bird boxes, insect hotels, and a dipping pond. Nearby businesses, including the pub and local shops, also contribute through colourful floral displays. Fund raising continues to be a challenge but grants from the Parish Council and Northern Rail help, alongside general fundraising, and good will.

In Hutton, the focus is the train station, which is part of the Northern Rail Station Adopters Scheme and is lovingly maintained by Elaine. The succulent-planted gravel bed is an attractive addition at the front of the former station building, while the model train filled with seasonal bedding on platform one provides a welcoming focal point for passengers arriving in the village. The plants in both platform borders are well suited to their location and appear drought resilient, with a particularly attractive Callistemon bottlebrush plant on platform two.

The Sport and Recreation Association ground is well managed, with an attractive entrance planted with roses, salvias and sedums. At the southern end is the Queen Elizabeth Canopy Woodland, funded by the Humber Forest Fund, which provides a natural wildlife refuge between the immaculate sports ground and Gatehouse Fishing Lake. The lake supports a variety of habitats for native flora and fauna, clearly explained on the excellent interpretation board.

In recent years, the group has worked hard to refresh, renew and improve the quality of its displays, with plans focused on the continued renewal of sustainable planting. Gravel and slate mulches have proved effective in reducing watering needs, while partnership working has helped ease maintenance demands.

Communication is excellent, supported by the village website, local press, events, branded workwear, and clearly placed Village in Bloom signage.

Well done to the whole team for their hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment, and a big thank you to Gina and Heather for guiding the judges during the visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The group should be commended for its significant efforts to reduce watering throughout the year. It may now be worth developing a cohesive irrigation and water-saving strategy that builds on the existing good practice of mulching, appropriate plant selection, and water harvesting.
- As suggested by the judges in 2025, an interpretation board at the village pond could enhance the area by highlighting local wildlife, such as dragonflies and pond skaters, and building on the excellent work already completed. Also the temporary Village in Bloom signs used to identify locations could be made from recyclable materials, allowing them to become semi-permanent and reusable.
- As workloads increase and volunteers' time becomes more limited, better use of social media could help engage younger people and attract additional volunteers.
- The proposal to improve the area around the Airfield Memorial is welcome. Slate, ornamental stones or a small selection of drought-tolerant perennials would help present the memorial at its best over time.

Category C2: - Urban Communities

Rawdon in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Firstly the judges would like to thank, Ken, Cathy and Phil for a very well planned and pleasant visit to Rawdon, thank you for making us welcome. The Rawdon in Bloom team are a small core of members that originally started in 2015 and through their hard work and determination have recruited over 20 extra volunteers and are now established within the community and this was evident from the visit from various members of the public and business' that support the group are very grateful for the work they continue to do and the judges can only see this support growing over the next few years with more and more business' wanting to get involved, one example of the work the group are achieving is at Billing View, sheltered housing who approached Rawdon in Bloom to help transform their communal area into a colourful peaceful area which is now well used by the residents bringing people together to socialise.

The group continue to grow their own plants from seeds along with volunteers donating various plants which then are planted within the beds within Rawdon, The beds on Highfield Drive, Highfield Ginnel and the rockery at the Emmott's Arms are a mix of perennials and annuals providing sustainability, all planted with great care for the maximum impact of colour and plant choice and maintained to a very high standard, the residents opposite these beds now take great pride in what the group have achieved and contribute to watering when needed.

One stand out aspect of the beds is the inclusion of QR Codes which provide information on the plants within the beds and the judges believe this will generate interest for future volunteers in an age where technology can help generate interest in the work the group do, well done and certainly an idea that more groups could incorporate.

The team actively work with various age groups within Rawdon including the Rainbows, Cubs and Scouts and local churches, an example is at the Trinity Church who are actively involved with the Incredible Edibles. Other examples of partnerships are the Rawdon Knitters with the fabulous post box tops, Men in Sheds and their contribution with the handmade wheel barrows planted by the Rawdon in Bloom volunteers, working partnerships with the local business's through sponsorships or donations and St Peters C of E school eager to help with planting the planters and wheel barrows at the entrance of the school.

A special mention for the WW1 and WW2 memorial which has transformed a plain piece of grassed open space into a bed with 99 white roses and Normandy poppies for added colour and visual impact, along with a lasting stone memorial in memory for the residents of Rawdon who died in the two world wars.

Excellent evidence of all year round events, plant sales, Christmas fayre and good use of social media maximising the work Rawdon in Bloom are achieving alongside reaching out for more volunteers. Excellent sustainability efforts through 95% of plants grown from

propagating and sowing their own seeds. A big mention for Phil who tirelessly makes the wooden planters with Rawdon in Bloom signage and are seen throughout the village.

This is an excellent established group that requires very little feedback and has captured every ethos of what Yorkshire in Bloom is about, transforming its communities, bringing all ages together creating wonderful open spaces and will continue to grow year on year.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue to be mindful not to take too many projects on, which is testament to the groups success that many residents now approach them to help improve other areas within the village.
- With the success of the group, continue to push all social media and events to recruit new members and volunteers with leaflet drops to houses and business's.
- Expand on your current work with the schools and Scouts to actively help on future projects
- Explore further ways to help with watering during drought conditions, use of shredded leaf mulch on beds

Starbeck in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

It was very impressive to visit Starbeck in Bloom and see what a tremendous difference this dedicated group are making to their community. They have made Starbeck such a flowery place with so many beautiful tubs and baskets and everywhere the quality and maintenance of the planting is very high.

The use of interpretation boards was a really good idea everywhere and the map of Belmont Park, with copies available to the public in the library, was a lovely idea. It was pleasing to see how well the various groups in the town work together and the high level of support from the public.

The Golf Club, with its lovely planting is to be greatly commended for its efforts around conservation. The station is made a very welcoming place by the groups efforts and the Library Garden is a lovely, peaceful haven. It was lovely to see the efforts made to include wildlife friendly planting where possible.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The planters of the streets have trailing plants to soften them, which is lovely. Perhaps trailing plants could be added to the station tubs.
- Perhaps an interpretation board on plants for pollinators where appropriate might encourage people to grow them at home.
- In areas where people often sit perhaps tubs of lavender would add perfume and encourage insects.
- Perhaps it might be possible one or two buddleia bushes might be added to Belmont Park for wildlife.
- The hazel bushes are a lovely feature of the park. Perhaps another small area might be found for native shrubs which would be valuable for wildlife.
- Perhaps it might encourage children to garden and be interested in wildlife if it was possible to have a competition for the best wildlife planted tub by a school.

Beeston in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

The Beeston in Bloom team have clearly worked very hard over a number of years to produce an entry that they should feel rightly proud of. The entry was well presented for the judges, virtually litter free, a well planned route and an informative and early presented portfolio.

A large number of containers, planters, planted borders, and a variety of art forms have all been introduced to the streets and park areas of Beeston. These together with the painting of seats, utility boxes and street furniture have made a significant and colourful and positive impact on the general environment.

Raising funds through plant sales, grants and generous donations and support from local council park staff and other community groups, as well as their own considerable efforts the changes the group have made should not be underestimated.

Of special note was the establishment of the Cardinal triangle borders sited in what is a difficult location to manage and maintain. The newly developed Waincliffe Garage border, a challenge on such a busy road but a success deserving mention, the Millennium garden being established from a neglected site and now an inviting garden area with mature borders, a mural and seating.

Throughout the entry it was clear that sustainability, whether it be plants selected, or the use of recycled materials is at the forefront of all work and projects undertaken. This has given longevity to a number of the displays that need to be robust and hardy in what can be a challenging environment.

The judges congratulate the team members on their considerable and sustained efforts and trust that they continue into next year when they celebrate thirty years of Beeston in Bloom

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The entry supports wildlife in a number of ways, with pollinator plants, bird boxes etc, could consideration be given to establishing a bug hotel in the Millennium Garden. Raising awareness of the natural environment is important, the garden is visited by all age groups and would support this objective.
- Cross Flatts Park is often visited by all in the local community, to better support access to wheelchair users could a hard standing be placed in line with the two benches at the entrance to Millennium Garden. These could then be used either by wheelchair users or for pushchairs.
- Limited evidence of water capture was seen during the visit by the judges. Consideration to installing water barrels to catch rainwater would further enhance the team's already significant contribution to sustainability, and support plant watering during too frequent drought periods.
- It is appreciated that much of Cross Flatts Park is under a relaxed mowing regime and helps promote pollinators and other wild life. However there may still be the opportunity to promote wider awareness of the variety of flora in nature, with the development of a wild flower area. As the Beeston in Bloom team have a working relationship with the Sunnyview House Care Home, could an area next to the boundary in the gardens be used for this purpose?

Category C3a: - Small Town/Town

Shipley in Bloom

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Despite the recent scorching temperatures around the period of our visit to this historic market town, the volunteers had clearly done a stellar job maintaining and watering, and we were met with a riot of colour. Standouts were the superb memorial garden tended to by Syd and commendably supported by ASDA, and the Baptist Church where Colin and Nicky's team have created a gem. Hirst Wood Nature Reserve was a revelation to the

judges and is well worth an entry on its own. It is an unusual mix of native and naturalised garden plants, but it works and brings a multitude of wildlife to the site. The small number of volunteers at this site should be proud of what they have created.

It was pleasing to see a forgotten part of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal being transformed into a valuable wildlife resource by the Canal and rivers Trust. The plans for this relatively new project sound promising, and judges look forward to seeing this progress. Northcliffe Community Garden is a tremendous local resource and, again, would be well worth its own entry.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Moving forward, it was encouraging to hear the Town Council and In Bloom group intend to engage with local businesses who will be hugely beneficial to the town's In Bloom initiative in the future. These have a key role to play in improving the town street scene and providing sponsorship and support.
- The newly planted areas on Moor Lane and Well Croft are well thought out, and some consideration should be given to their future maintenance in case this cannot be adequately undertaken by the council.
- Shorter term, perhaps consider painting the Police station planters and the Baptist Church fence to further enhance these. The Dandelion Café planters could benefit from a paint refresh, but the plants are a great way to uplift an otherwise grey tarmacked area.
- Consider drought tolerant and shade resistant plants for the Reading Tree area such as hardy geraniums, Russian Sage, Rose Campion, Epimediums or Sedums or ferns.

Filey in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Filey in Bloom has been established for many years and has approximately twelve enthusiastic volunteers. On the day of judging the team planned a well-balanced route covering the town centre, Cliff Top Gardens, and the local nature reserve. The town of Filey is located on the East Coast of Yorkshire and is steeped in local history.

Its heritage lies within the fishing industry which is notable by rows of fisherman's cottages lining the narrow streets. Many landmarks and information boards tell the story of the town's growth and progression, but in modern times the town has been a popular holiday destination for day trips and extended weekends away.

On Entering the town, we were greeted by the Lions Locomotive Bed which is situated outside the railway station. This area is looked after by volunteers and is part of the

Northern Rail Station Adopters network partnership. It has a good mix of donated and salvaged herbaceous perennials which provide a wonderful array of seasonal colour. At the front of the station self-watering tubs display a nice choice of sustainable and annual plants such as the Fleabane which is self-seeded and contributes to the local biodiversity. A special mention must go to the 'Saucy Seagull Café' and the taxi company who keep the area litter free, throughout the year along with the Keep Filey Tidy Group.

One of the jewels in the crown which has a WOW factor, is the Northcliffe gardens which is a former private garden that was donated to the town and houses a well-maintained collection of twenty-four different varieties of hydrangea. Over the years this has been transformed into an amazing public space that can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike and is a notable example of partnership working between the Council and the In Bloom Group.

The Crescent Gardens is another WOW area where horticultural standards of excellence are demonstrated. The partnership between the In Bloom Volunteers, Friends of Filey Park and the Council is integral to maintaining a series of well-maintained and themed beds displaying a good choice of coastal resilient plant species.

The judges were taken on a journey that included the Shipwreck Bed, the Bathing Hut, the Gardeners Bed, the Bee Bed, the Fisherman's bed, the Quiet Garden and Ronnies Memorial Bed.

Biodiversity and conservation are a common theme in Filey. The judges were given an informative tour of The Dams Nature Reserve, which is managed by Filey Bird Observatory and Group on behalf of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. The site is home to over 208 species of birds throughout the year and provides a fantastic educational resource and opportunity for residents to get out into nature. Feeding stations and nesting boxes were notable throughout the town and areas such as the Nuns Walk and the grass banks along the promenade provide rewilded spaces to attract additional flora and fauna. Watering is kept to a minimum around the town and where possible recycling of plants and materials is encouraged.

Local identity was evident throughout the tour, with interpretation boards (bearing the logo of the In Bloom Group) and sponsors at every turn. The judges were particularly impressed with the portable feather flags that are put up when volunteers are working in a particular area.

The group have an excellent online presence through social media and WhatsApp but also have notice boards promoting their work to engage people who are less technically minded.

Filey In Bloom has a full programme of events throughout the year which includes the popular Garden Competition. It is also successful at attracting funding through grants and donation and the Wishing Well in the Crescent Gardens is a fantastic source of income from people visiting the town, raising almost £2,000 per year. Finally, the judges would like to say well-done to everyone for their hard work and commitment, and a big thank you to Mark, Andrew, Catherine, Jo, and John (our driver) for being our guides for the day.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Once again Filey in Bloom have demonstrated their ambition to meet all the challenges of Yorkshire in Bloom, through community involvement, publicity, partnership working and forward planning, but the involvement of young people needs to be a key priority for sustaining future participation. It is appreciated that engaging the local school is challenging, but it might be worth developing and extending connections with uniformed groups, such as the scouts, guides or after school's clubs and nurseries to raise awareness of the In Bloom initiative, the natural environment and to help foster civic pride.
- The judges noted that the tree pockets near the bus station were proving difficult to maintain. The former trees were removed by the Council for safety reasons and the wildflower seeds that were sown recently have had little success due to the hot weather. It is suggested that these spaces could provide an opportunity for redevelopment, (involving young people) to tell a story using additional artwork and incorporating drought resilient planting.
- Care is obviously taken to ensure the seats, litter bins and planters are in good condition and when necessary, replaced or renovated. There were just a couple of areas where a fresh coat of paint would enhance the planting. These were the raised wooden beds to the rear of the train station and the herb circle in the Quiet Garden.
- Although it is recognised that the recruitment of volunteers can be difficult, attempts should continue to recruit new In Bloom members to provide future stability and progression.

Category C3b: - Large Town

Todmorden in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Extensive floral displays in barrier planters, planters and hanging baskets. All appropriately planted, well filled and literally blooming. Some are sponsored or paid for by local businesses with the rest provided by the group. A strong sense of place and heritage was amply displayed with visible community support and appreciation.

The In Bloom group clearly work well together with specific areas of the town "owned", cared for and maintained by individual volunteers. Everyone is involved in forward planning and decision making which adds to the group's strength and volunteer involvement. Their ethos of "the best it can be for everyone" is clearly their driving force.

The group have an excellent mutually beneficial partnership with Northern Rail which is committed to supporting TIB long term.

Additional funding is raised via plant, seed and card sales and other events throughout the year.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Work towards more sustainable and resilient planting to recognise our changing climate of hot dry summers and wetter winters. This will help reduce both the need to water and current high costs.
- If using tall plants which are prone to wind damage, consider staking or planting companion plants which will provide the necessary support.
- Perhaps shrubs could be considered in areas where perennials are proving problematic.
- Consider labelling herbs and perhaps provide suggestions for use.

Mirfield in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

Visiting Mirfield the judges were immediately impressed by some superb floral displays and carefully thought out, superbly effective planting schemes. There is a real sense of community cohesion, exemplified by the lack of litter and well-maintained shop fronts.

Biodiversity is very well considered, with the Sunny Bank Ponds area a little gem with huge potential and the Critters Clubhouse at the Co-op car park both excellent initiatives. We were very impressed by the work done by the Duke of Edinburgh Award students at Ings Grove Park. They have shown real responsibility and maturity in doing some great work here and should be proud of their efforts.

All in all, a fine effort and it was an absolute pleasure to visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was pleasing to see the railway station re-opened following a major rebuild. The In-Bloom group have quickly left their mark with the introduction of some splendid planters and we look forward now to seeing the tunnel mural refinished.
- Consider complementing the Ings Grove Park wall bedding plants with trailing plants to add variety.
- Also, if possible, consider a few more herbaceous perennials to fill up some of the gaps in the already vibrant border at St Marys Community Centre. This would increase the level even higher.

- Consider approaching the amphibian charity Froglife for potential improvements to the ponds at Sunny Bank.

Keighley

Gold

Overall Impression

There is certainly a wow factor as you drive into Keighley. The floral displays adorning the Civic Centre, the railing baskets along the road side and the dazzling colour in Town Hall Gardens are something special. Railings and hanging baskets adorn the streets radiating out from the central gardens supporting the community identity & feel.

Community activity also features very highly in the town with the art classes in the Civic Centre, Keighley Healthy Living and their beautiful garden, Keighley and Worth Valley Railway Volunteers and Keighley Horticultural Society's superb Community Poly Tunnel at Castle Hills, not forgetting Ian's prize winning plot at Arncliffe Road and Bilal and his bike scheme at Airedale Shopping Centre. You have a town full of human treasures and plant treasures! This is an excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry and congratulations to all involved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue to progress the painting of the utility boxes across town working with a local artist. This will make a massive difference to your street scene and could depict some of the natural world found in the area or some of your town heritage.
- Continue to progress the Damems Nature Reserve project which will be a special addition to your Keighley entry.

Category C4a: - City

Harrogate in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

The warm welcome and highly informative and well-planned tour of Harrogate was much appreciated by the judges. There was a lot to see and as the tour developed it became easy to understand why Harrogate in Bloom achieved its Gold award, in the national

Britain in Bloom competition in 2025.

The standards seen were high, embracing good practice, very effective partnership working, a high level of dedication and a significant business and community involvement at all levels.

The group through its networking activities are also raising awareness of the need to consider the natural environment, encouraging water capture methods, further use of more sustainable planting and selecting plants for their value for pollinators not simply for their attractive display.

It was a privilege to meet so many of the volunteers and supporters of Harrogate in Bloom, who in their own way commit a considerable amount of time and effort to enhance the town for those who live, work or visit Harrogate.

The judges were impressed by their passion and energy, not looking for plaudits but just for a job well done. Thank you for an inspiring visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The Harrogate in Bloom information boards at the West Park Centre are excellent, could consideration be given to placing a duplicate set in Valley Gardens to further inform visitors to Harrogate of the groups activities.
- During the judging visit encouragement of wildlife and nature was in evidence in many locations. Could consideration be given to the development of bug hotels in the garden at The Rogers Almshouses, thus supporting nature in the town? With the St Peters Primary School close by it may be an opportunity for pupil involvement and a learning experience.
- During the visit to the impressive Harlow Hill Allotments it was evident that some measures had been made to accommodate a plot holder with mobility issues, through redesign and altering plot layout. Could consideration be made with grant aiding, to explore the development a plot for those with mobility issues or wheelchair users at this site? This could then lead to the potential to establish a similar plot at each of the allotment sites in Harrogate, promoting access to all sections of the community?

Category C4b BID Town/City Centre Only

Ripon in Bloom

Gold

Overall Impression

A strong sense of community with attendant financial backing, Ripon in Bloom is supported by Ripon Bid, Ripon City council, Ripon Rotary club and Ripon Community Poppy Club whose members' knitted offerings added to the floral displays in the market place.

The Temple Gardens continue to be developed with the addition of two raised beds which are to be planted up for 2027.

There is a printed map featuring all the planters/planted areas which are maintained by the group and Holy Trinity church has a designated wildflower space which is used by St Wilfreds school as a teaching aid. The newly refurbished Workhouse Museum is replanting the overseers' gardens with as much historical reference as possible in addition to maintaining the walled garden.

An addition to the town's portfolio is the acquisition of a new garden bed opposite the Cathedral which was saved from re-development.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider a more cohesive design and plant colour choice for town planters.
- Perhaps introduce more climate resilient plants to the summer displays eg perennials, grasses or evergreens.
- Complete planting of Temple Gardens raised beds

Skipton

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Skipton is a very busy and thriving market town. Skipton BID co-ordinate and support a varied number of community groups. Skipton in Bloom have been successful entrants in Yorkshire in Bloom in the past. However, due to the small number of volunteers, the Skipton in Bloom team recently have taken the decision to disband. Skipton BID now are responsible for funding all the floral displays in the town.

The Buzzing Skipton community project is relatively new. It is endeavouring to revitalise underused and neglected areas of Skipton. They encourage businesses and

communities to plant native and pollinating species. There have been workshops to explain how this can be achieved. They are working together to transform a number of areas to enhance the town. This will increase footfall in low footfall areas and further raise Skipton's identity as the 'Gateway to the Dales'

The majority of the town's displays have been created by Stepping Stones. This is an organisation who support adults with learning disabilities. The floral arrangements are of a very high standard. If you arrive in Skipton by bus you will be met by a blaze of colour and a wide range of plants all of a high quality.

The canal basin is a well used public area. Its planters are again provided by Stepping Stones. Skipton BID now employ a gardener/designer, Sarah De Nurcheylo, to work on the permanent bedding. It is clear to see this is a work in progress and some of the areas are looking good. A wide range of pollinator plants have been used. Feedback has been really positive.

The small grassed area close to the canal is a peaceful place to sit, it has an impressive bug hotel, wooden seats and waste receptacles.

Skipton is moving forward and it is clear there is drive to encourage communities to become further involved with the projects. One of the successful projects is the Artery. Lovely crafted butterflies adorned the perimeter railings of the building. We agreed this years entry would be used as a benchmark and Skipton BID are moving in the right direction.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- There are many areas for which plans are being drawn up for changes – the canal boat planters that require replacement and some of the beds that previously were looked after by Skipton in Bloom.
- We discussed adding mulch to planters – especially the one with the entry stone at the Bus Station and the long stone bed in front of it.
- At the Canal Basin consider using coffee grinds to detract the slugs from the hostas. The wooden planters in this area have suffered due to the weather. It may be worth considering using different plant species when you re plant them
- Consider adding more drought tolerant species – especially as we now are moving into more drier summers.

Overall Impression

Harrogate BID continues to function at an exemplary level of cooperation and coordination, promoting Harrogate as a year-round destination including showcasing the abundance of green spaces, planted areas, displays and bespoke shopping across the town.

The consistently high standard of planting and space curation (both natural and man-made): for example, the Crown Roundabout, the hanging baskets/planters and the themed crime writing trail; demonstrates an effective understanding of the relationship between plants and their environment. This is supported by respectful visitors and residents with street cleanliness high and a distinct lack of litter (although not non-existent).

The overall effect is a healthy mix of businesses and green/floral oasis punctuated with seating areas, including the characteristic serpentine benches where people can stop and admire the differing floral views or take the obligatory selfie. The various trails around the town further support year round interest even, in the less obvious tourist areas which is of benefit to all. Overall the cohesive sense of identity means that visitors clearly know they are in Harrogate.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Harrogate BID continues to demonstrate it's ability to see the bigger picture and forward plan and has to be commended for this. In order to continue this success the following areas are put forward for consideration / ongoing work:

- Whilst the planting of the body outlines was innovative and successful, it may be worth considering for future low level planting, that isn't at floor level, that it is placed on a slight bigger slope than used to make the full effect easier for all to see.
- Whilst overall street cleanliness is exemplary there were some exceptions generally relating to dogs. It may be worth, in high dog walking areas, putting in dog bag dispensers to encourage dog owners to clear up after their dogs. A QR code could be introduced at the point of bag dispensing to seek donations towards purchasing the dog bags
- It continues to be recommended that the use of artificial plants to bolster real plants on some of the displays should be withdrawn wherever possible

Category C8: - Grow Your Community

Owd Martha`s Yard

Gold

Overall Impression

Fully open to the public located in what could be back waste land. Instead the volunteers have created a wonderful green space. I use the term green space as there are ornamental areas, wildlife areas, vegetable areas, fruit, along with fun this year fill your boots represented by one. Duke of Wellington and of course half a car with the boot planted. Whilst not having a direct water supply a system of IBC containers and a pumping system move water but it still needs a lot of hand watering, which is challenging. A small area provides a cabin and area for children to play. The group involves all ages and holds a range of events to fund raise, and engage with groups such as scouts.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The water storage is excellent and the home made watering pipe is going to be replicated, if/when possible consider getting some form of irrigation to areas that currently need hand watering just to try and ease the workload.
- It was noted that due to the weather some planting had not been carried out with the plants being retained in places that enabled more watering and care to be given whilst this left a few gaps it is a sensible course of action.
- Ensure you gain the publicity you want or can get for the fun things like your fill your boots especially the Duke and car.

Very well done and thank you for enduring the visit on a very hot day.

Lepton in Bloom

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Lepton in Bloom is a small team of 5, however they work very closely with the many community groups in the village.

When driving through the village you are aware of how clean it is with very little weeds and no litter. The entry stones are lovely and well planted. It is a credit to the Lepton community that the team, with a number of volunteers, had got together for a community clean up. This included the use of a donated skip with a number of volunteers who

strimmed back the overgrown tall grass on the verges and in public areas that the local authority had neglected to do.

Communication is very good via a number of sources; social media and leaflets and information placed in the new notice board which the team had raised funds for. It was lovely to see the Little Library designed by school children which is really well stocked and used. The planter in front of the church is good and includes vegetables along with annual plants. Thought has been given to improve the community area with planters, some having been made by the man's club. Two large murals by Sue Kershaw are on the old council wall, bedding displays to the front of the shops and a seating area.

The work undertaken at the 'rec', playground, skate park and woodland are a credit to the team and its wider community. They have created a safer, cleaner space for all members of the community to enjoy. There are composting areas, bird and bat boxes, a bug house created by the beavers. There is a lovely walkway through the woods with 'hidden' fairies for the young to find. An area at the top of the park has been cleared and fruit trees have been planted.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It is commendable that as such a small team you have completed a massive amount of work in your village. Consider creating areas that a community group may wish to adopt and look after. The Beavers have created the bug hotel and the man's club planters. Perhaps the scout group or the local school that may wish to help you?
- Consider mulching around your planters to conserve water and enhance the soil.
- The area around the willow deer may benefit from perennial plants such as geraniums, sage and grasses. A similar planting could be consider for the old Belfast sink by the side of the shops.
- Investigate if water butts could be placed at the side of the shops.

Beckhill Community Garden

Gold

Overall Impression

Beckhill Community Garden is only small tucked away at the bottom of a carpark, however it really boxes above its weight mainly because it's a true community project, built bottom up by dedicated local people that want to make a difference in the area they live.

This small team of 7 plus have created something that's well used and respected by the local community. Providing raised beds for edibles an orchard, soft fruits wild life areas and plans for a pond.

From starting 2 years ago Lynne has managed to attract just over £22K in funding and £17K is to expand the project along with funder Fruit works a community fruit education and growing scheme for the area.

Whilst I was judging this area several people came round to talk to lynne about the plants, pick the fruit, just have a chat, or offer their time.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Carry on with plans to work with fruit tree works to plant fruit trees in the area not yet cultivated and take forward the educational package connected to the funding.
- Look into water butts on the daycare centre and or nearby houses to provide easy access to water for the future of the project.
- It was good to see the involvement of the younger children and maybe this could be expanded to the secondary school just up the road
- There could be a sign about the funding from Fruit works and the educational package, planting that will be rolled out in the next two years this may generate a broadening interest with residents that use the busy route.

