

Judges Notes for Summer 2026



Category Cat C9 Railway Stations and Transport Hubs

Bridlington Railway Station

Gold & Category Winner

Overall Impression

As you walk into Bridlington railway station ticket hall the sheer scale of plantings at different stages of growth and flowering is breath taking, and is a credit to Andy Loxton.

Closer inspection of wooden planters, which have replaced plastic planters, on every available window ledge, reveals, tomato, cucumber, chilli peppers and garlic growing along side begonias, Petunias, Geraniums, trailing ivy's and Cordylines providing a stunning floral display.

A local DIY warehouse has donated plants, like Cupressus on a stem which Andy has rescued. Andy's sunflowers are towering above everything else and when they flower will provide a vibrant display. Nothing is wasted as weeds and prunings are composted and the end product is used as a liquid feed.

Whilst we were judging it was apparent by the number of positive comments that Andy's work is appreciated by passengers coming into Bridlington station and leaving. Previous certificates of achievement are on display in the ticket office for passengers to see and comment on !

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Andy is always looking for new ideas in plants to surprise passengers. More scented plants and Coleus for foliage variation would provide a better floral display.

Cottingham railway station

Gold

Overall Impression

On arriving by train I got the instant wow factor from the floral displays in raised planters and hanging baskets, attached to the old station building. Both contained a good selection of annual plants like Petunia, Begonia and dwarf Dahlias along with permanent planting of Campanula, Lavender and Salvia 'Hot Lips' all attracting a wide range of insects from bees, butterflies and moths.

One member of Cottingham station adopters has produced a Planting and Growing plan to assist the volunteers on the Working for Health scheme. The high standard of 'floral Art' on Cottingham station is a huge credit to all those involved in the partnership between, Northern Rail, Working for Health, Beverley Bloomers, Cottingham Parish Council and two local nurseries.

The Chair of the town council told me a nice story whereby a young passenger asked if he could help in planting whilst he was waiting for his train as the station environment gave him so much pleasure.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- A new area at the end of the platform which has very shallow soil due to concrete foundations would benefit from alpine plantings such as Sedums and herbs like Thyme.

Where there are seats near planters the scent from plants like Nemesia 'Wisley' Vanilla and Phlox paniculata will make waiting for a train a more pleasant experience !

Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station

Gold

Overall Impression

The judges were very impressed by the efforts made by the Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station. The platforms and surrounding areas were very well kept with a mix of wooden half barrels and newer composite barrels combined with baskets and planters mounted on the station fences containing attractive displays positioned along the platforms providing a welcoming site for passengers using the station. Enhancing the planters the Friends group have produced information boards about notable citizens and moments from history from the local area which they continue to install as more research is completed.

In the surrounding areas there are several themed attractive gardens with a range of shrubs and perennial planting, including a pollinator border. The charming Bronte garden also houses a memorial to railway workers who were killed in action during the great war. Bird boxes, insect stations and a bird bath could be seen around the area. Creative installation of water butts on a neighbouring businesses' downpipes were noted, as was the start of work to install more water saving devices on the bike shelter. The friend's group are very active within the local community and have an excellent website and Facebook page which is used to inform the community of activities and visits.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The planting on the platforms is extensive and while this is beautiful it takes a lot of maintenance for the small team of volunteers. Replacing some of the bedding plants with perennial plants would reduce the effort it takes to maintain the planters to their current high standard.
- The replica phone box installation has the potential to be an outstanding feature for the station. Adding plants to either side of the image will further enhance the display.
- The Bronte Garden has recently had some clearance work done on it. When considering replacement planting shade tolerant species which are also beneficial to wildlife

Horton in Ribblesdale Station

Gold

Overall Impression

Horton in Ribblesdale station presents a colourful and well-maintained welcome to passengers. The beds include shrubs, perennials and seasonal planting, with the embankment adjacent to platform two supporting native planting and encouraging pollinators. Recently installed bird boxes support local wildlife and the flowerpot train spotter on platform two provides an amusing and unique feature.

The recently established allotment area behind the station house is providing villagers with a space to cultivate, supported by the new composting area and water butts.

The café bar managed by volunteers, although only open on Fridays and Saturdays, adds to the visitor experience.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Planting and maintenance plan for the banking on the entrance to the car park – may be dependent on support from Network Rail contractors.
- Options for developing the fenced area behind the station house, perhaps for an extension of the allotment area.
- Continue development of the composting area.
- Consider installing a bug house to complement the existing bird boxes and encourage more wildlife.

Hutton Cranswick Railway Station

Gold

Overall Impression

In Hutton, the station is part of the Northern Rail Station Adopters Scheme, it is lovingly cared for by Elaine and a small team of enthusiastic volunteers. On arrival, the judges were welcomed by a range of horticultural features and floral displays. These included a succulent-planted gravel bed at the front of the former station building and a model train filled with seasonal bedding on platform one, creating an attractive focal point for passengers arriving in the village.

The platform borders, edged with white-painted stone and finished with blue slate mulch, create a strong visual impression, while the whole area is clean, swept, and litter-free. The planting is well suited to the setting and appears drought resilient, with the Callistemon bottlebrush on platform two providing a particularly attractive feature. The station also shows sustainable planting in practice by using surplus plants from elsewhere in the village. The two new camellias in half barrels add appealing spring colour and provide scope to grow plants that prefer a different soil type.

The bug hotels show how biodiversity can be enhanced in any setting. Although some areas on platform one can no longer be maintained for safety reasons, they now provide a wildlife refuge between the track and car park.

This entry once again shows what passionate people can achieve with limited support.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- As noted previously, if possible, consider asking Northern Rail to repaint or clean the white boundary fencing. While the overall standard of upkeep is high, this would make a noticeable improvement at relatively little cost.

- Soil spilling onto the platform was noted as a particular maintenance issue. Consider removing some of the topsoil to allow additional slate mulch to be added, helping improve stability and reduce cleaning requirements.
- The gravel bed at the front of the station would benefit from added height, such as natural boulders or creative artwork. This would greatly enhance the entrance and create a stronger visual impact.

Keighley & Worth Valley Heritage Railway

**Gold and Best
Heritage Railway**

Overall Impression

KWVHR is more than just a group of volunteers looking after a railway line. These volunteers, working across 6 different stations, are the beating heart of KWVR. Some have full time occupations and volunteer in their spare time. Some are retired and give countless hours in volunteer roles. All are dedicated to keeping this heritage line thriving and they are succeeding! Collectively, their customer care skills are second to none and nothing is too much trouble. The gardens at each station vary in size, shape and planting but all are beautifully maintained to give a glorious floral welcome to visitors. Aside from seasonal bedding in tubs and baskets, most of the planting is permanent and sustainable giving a good home to birds and insects. This is an excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry and congratulations to everyone who works and volunteers at KWVHR.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Each of the six stations visited has its own unique identity and all are beautifully maintained by the volunteers. It would be very difficult to “criticise” any of the work you are all doing. However, it will be interesting to follow progress on the following projects:

- Oakworth – Continue to progress the china clay wagon for a picnic area.
- Haworth – Continue to develop the new beds and the new memorial garden.
- Ingrow – Consider some work needed on the large sleeper bed which is beginning to show signs of wear and tear.

Ribblehead Station

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Ribblehead station, in a stunning but very exposed position, is supported by a group of volunteers who maintain the planting areas, museum and run the café.

A border at the rear of the car park provides interest and planters on the station platforms include herbs, heathers and dementia friendly plants in the well-stocked station trolley. The altitude and exposed site present a challenge with planting and the garden volunteers continue to experiment to see what works in this environment.

House Martins have nested under the gable end of the station roof.

There's a varied programme of events supported by the volunteer groups and an exhibition and information on the history of the railway line and construction of the viaduct in the museum. The flowerpot navy on platform one is a unique feature.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue trialling plants that will thrive at this altitude to provide seasonal interest.
- Consider including information on the dementia friendly planting trolley to explain the reason for the plant choices.
- Are there opportunities to encourage more wildlife by installing a bug hotel or bird boxes.
- Follow up with Network Rail to explore the option for utilising the discarded railway sleepers. They may be useful in relaying the old tram tracks currently in the car park, linking back to the heritage and construction of the railway.

Settle Station

Gold

Overall Impression

Colourful and well maintained borders, planters and hanging baskets welcome rail passengers. There's a good mix of shrubs, perennials, annuals and herbs, with passengers encouraged to sample the latter.

Local businesses support the hanging baskets and platform planters and there's community involvement (guides and cubs) in encouraging wildlife (bug hotel/herb planters) and the dementia friendly planting trolley.

Volunteers run the shop/refreshments and there's a wide range of local and railway information, including free guided walks, available for visitors. The signage on the benches provides a local identity to the station.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Replanting of the border when the wall adjacent to the car park is repaired by railway contractors.
- Continue the ongoing trial of planting in the shady area adjacent to the waiting room on platform two
- To complement the bug hotel, consider installing bird or bat boxes to encourage more wildlife.
- Review the position of the signage on the Dementia Forward planting trolley to make it more visible.

Starbeck Station

Gold

Overall Impression

It was a real pleasure to visit Starbeck Station on a lovely summer day. It was clear from the start what a lot of love and care is put into the station.

The planters on the platforms were bright and colourful with geraniums and hardy perennials, making the platforms cheerful and welcoming. The information on the history of the railways was a unique focal point for the station.

The spray painted wall art in the station underpass made the area so much more friendly and the care that was taken in cleaning and painting the underpass was obvious.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The underpass is so much brighter and more welcoming now. If it was possible to increase the light in the underpass it would really add to the improvement.
- The planters were full of lovely colour. Perhaps it might be possible to add some evergreen planting, dwarf conifers or dwarf ivy, spilling over the edges

of the planters, for year round structure.

- Perhaps it might be possible to consider tubs of lavender to add perfume to the platforms and to benefit pollinators and bring in butterflies for passengers to enjoy. Like the geraniums, lavender would be very drought tolerant and hardy.

Todmorden Railway Station

Gold

Overall Impression

A vibrant, warm welcome to all users, including artwork, history, renovation work and floral containers. This station is an inviting introduction to those visiting Todmorden or passing through. Train traffic has increased 3 fold on the line, a train every 20 minutes, with more people using the station. This together with the information, communication and displays on site is encouraging more visits to Todmorden, and more footfall in the town which is thriving.

The Friends of Todmorden Station are dedicated to improving and maintaining the site together with Northern Trains. Excellent partnership working between Todmorden in Bloom and Northern Trains at the Station under the Adopt a Station scheme to make the station a clean, safer, friendlier environment reflecting the area through involving the local community. Excellent ongoing commitment and partnerships with local students - artwork on the station and engineering students at Calder College in restoring the 150 year old Parcel Trolley.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Draw up a planting plan for the trolley over the next seasons to reflect seasonal interest.
- Update timeline poster in waiting room to reflect recent changes/achievements
- We look forward to the floral new containers and planting to replace old barrels
- The creation of a new mural for the exterior wall at the station will brighten the approach further whilst waiting for the building work to commence to improve access.

Improved access is dependant on Northern Rail completing lift works - we know this is part of planned future improvements at the station.

Category Cat C10 Charitable Establishments

Barnsley Hospice

Gold

Overall Impression

It was a pleasure to meet the dedicated gardening team of volunteers and members of staff who make Barnsley Hospice a welcoming place. The gardening group all have a wealth of skills and experience to bring to the team allowing them to make the site a beautiful place for all that visit.

On entering the car park at Barnsley Hospice you are greeted with brightly planted areas and impressive hanging baskets. Patients and visitors alike will appreciate this clean, colourful and welcoming area. All the plants are quality plants which have been purchased from a local garden centre.

The gardens are well designed and tailored to the different climates around the hospice, incorporating biodiversity within the planting areas. Rooms facing the gardens give patients a peaceful space where birds can be seen and heard, these are special calming areas.

The choices of plants throughout have been carefully chosen. There are sensory plants, the walkway with the delicate smell of jasmine, the lovely roses and lavender all help create a special space for patients and families to enjoy.

The Orangery is a fantastic facility to the site which is excellently maintained with a well-chosen selection of plants to complement this relaxing area with the gentle sound of water flowing and the koi carp in the pond which are mesmerising. This area is also used by the complimentary therapy teams and for events. It was good to see the composting areas and the large number of bird boxes and feeders positioned around the site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider interpretation signage within the sensory garden to maximise visitor experience and assist with future therapy sessions.
- Look into increasing the number of water butts were possible to help reduce funding implications whilst increasing water supply to different areas of the site.
- Consider adding additional gravel to the rockery to suppress weeds and improve the general appearance.

High Green Methodist Church

Gold

Overall Impression

The wonderful colourful floral display at the entrance to the church is uplifting for not only those attending the church, but also those passing by on the pathway and road outside. The innovative writing in the grass is to be commended.

The planting throughout is excellent with a good variety of sustainable and annual plants including a lavender hedge which was buzzing with bees. Heucheras were used to good effect providing all year colour. The grounds surrounding the church are all cultivated to a very high standard and include a very productive kitchen garden.

There is plenty of evidence of attention to the needs of the environment and wildlife, including a small pond. All areas are maintained to an exceeding high standard and are immaculate. This entry, of an extremely high standard is due to David who spends most of his life looking after this as if it was his own personal garden.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It is difficult to find much to improve in this entry as it is of such a high standard.
- It is very labour intense and will need more help. I would suggest as it provides such a good learning environment the use of apprentices or students would be good but extra help from any source will be beneficial.

There is a good mixture of planting but the more sustainable the better in view of the current trends in climate change

Horticap

Gold

Overall Impression

Horticap is more than just a charitable organisation! It is a whole community of people working together for mutual benefit.

Everyone is dedicated to making Horticap a calm and happy place. With its roots firmly established in the local community and outreach projects further afield, the students and staff are well respected for the work they do.

The well-stocked shop and thriving café raise funds to support the charity and also give the students valuable work experience in a variety of situations. Well done to everyone at Horticap and thank you for an excellent visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was lovely to meet, briefly, a small cohort of students who were just on their way out to a work assignment. Perhaps future judges could be shown round the grounds by some of the students giving a different perspective to Horticap.

NEET People CIC

Gold

Overall Impression

The work being done at this site is truly remarkable, providing support to 40 adults a day to gain skills, feel welcomed, and thrive in an ever-evolving environment.

The diverse raised beds, featuring vegetables, fruits, and flowers, not only supply fresh ingredients for the kitchen but also yield fruits for homemade preserves and high-quality blooms for plant sales. It was encouraging to see that solar panels, water butts and percolation system are working overtime at the site to reduce expenses and contribute to sustainability.

Wildlife is also seemingly loving the site, with the pollinator garden, wormery, hedgehog and bird boxes, and various planted areas for pollinators. All staff, volunteers, and participants should take pride in their ongoing dedication and evident enthusiasm for the site. It was a pleasure to visit and witness the positive impact of their efforts.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Judges look forward to seeing the access ramp in the future once the project is completed.
- Judges are also looking forward to the courtyard area and herb shed once finished
- The tuk tuk will be a fantastic advertising element once it's out and about!

Keep up the fantastic work at this site.

Overall Impression

Firstly, the judges wish to thank Cath, Joe, Nathan and Sarra for making us very welcome and for a very enjoyable visit to this oasis they have created, thank you.

Cath and her team of volunteers have created a very calm, extremely well planned area to give maximum effect of a tranquil place for patients and their visitors, this is reflected in the plant choice throughout the garden providing wildlife, sensory, vegetables and their latest project, the Apiary, which can supply honey to the kitchen and Cath explained, honey is also being used for patients receiving chemotherapy helping with mouth sores.

The Path of Life provides seasonal planting for the natural environment along with wildflowers, planting to attract birds and pollinators, bird boxes, hedgehog box and again extremely well planned to give the maximum effect of a peaceful, tranquil place to reflect on loved ones. More evidence of the natural environment within the gardens are the wildlife pond, bird boxes bug hotels all helping the biodiversity in the gardens. The spaces within the garden have been developed with feedback from patients and visitors providing excellent well thought out dedicated areas for that space, providing peaceful areas for the patients and visitors, all well planted with excellent plant choice and maintained to a very high standard. The team continue to propagate and collect seed to help with sustainability also producing their own compost bays and utilising tree cuttings to create bug hotels.

St Gemma's continue to work very well with local business through volunteer days and the open day in June, a particular mention to S9 Communications Limited who help throughout the gardens on projects and with the latest building of the Apiary.

St Gemma's continues to grow within the community not only through their excellent services but by the magnificent gardens Cath and her team have created and the partnerships they are now forging within this community and the amount of businesses and volunteers that wish to participate throughout the year is a testament to the hard work and dedication they provide not only to the community but the patients and families of St Gemma's.

A special mention to Joe for an inspirational speech and the passion he has shown over the 12 years he has been volunteering and the further volunteers that help at St Gemma's thank you for making this a memorable trip.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Richard mentioned that he has photos of the gardens showing masses of annual planting and other old photos of the grounds. From previous judges suggestions also, it would be nice to see a dedicated interpretation board to see

how the gardens have developed over the years and a potted history of the original St Gemma's.

- Continue to forge the excellent partnerships you have with the local community maximising the publicity through social media and open days.
- Follow up on the potential to have school visits to talk about the new Apiary and how this ties in with the planting of pollinators in the garden and the use of the honey for the patients.
- Richard mentioned that he has photos of the gardens showing masses of annual planting and other old photos of the grounds. From previous judges suggestions also, it would be nice to see a dedicated interpretation board to see how the gardens have developed over the years and a potted history of the original St Gemma's.

St George's Crypt, Leeds

Silver

Overall Impression

St George's Crypt is a peaceful haven in the heart of a busy city centre. There are many challenges and restrictions, this being an ex-churchyard, which the team are overcoming. The garden is used by both staff and clients and is a safe and quiet space for them to go to relax. The commitment from the team and to hear how they have developed this garden and their plans for it is impressive.

The St. George Angel statue has been thoughtfully planted with peace roses, passion flowers and starry night petunias. The wisteria is healthy – even though it is being difficult and not flowering! There is a water collection point that is attached to an irrigation system. There are bird feeders and a wide variety of both perennial and annual plants.

John, the gardener is extremely knowledgeable and is able to manage the garden with a limited budget and is reliant on donations. Jason, a volunteer who helps in the garden, is making wooden planters from a donation of wood from a local business. John and Caroline are considering placing a green roof on to the metal bike store. Caroline has many plans for the site and her enthusiasm and ideas are brilliant to hear. The most exciting is the agreement to place a beehive on the roof of the building. We look forward to perhaps in the future sampling some of your Blessed Bee Honey.

This garden has been brought back from a 10 year period of neglect. This is the second year the garden has entered the competition and it is clear to see/hear of the

improvements from last year. With the current plans this garden can only go on from strength to strength.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- There are many exciting plans for the future; the greening up of the bike shed, the introduction of the bee hive. Ensure you have support to see these projects flourish.
- Consider putting a wood bark mulch around the base of your trees. Leeds City Council may be able to provide this, hopefully at no cost.
- Feed the wisteria with plant food and give it a good trim in February. The new planters will further enhance the garden. Consider planting climbers near the railings.
- Continue to improve the pond area.
- We understand that funding is hard to come by but consider contacting your local councillors for the Little London and Woodhouse ward for funding;
 1. Cllrs Javaid Akhtar javaid.akhtar@leeds.gov.uk
 2. Eden Hills den.hills@leeds.gov.uk
 3. Abigail Marshall Katung Abigail.MarshallKatung@leeds.gov.uk
- Check the RHS and Yorkshire in Bloom websites to see if they have any funding resources <https://www.rhs.org.uk/get-involved/community-gardening/resources/fundraising>
- Explore providing more nature friendly planting wherever possible within the site and provision of e.g. a bug hotel and bat boxes etc.. where space permits, you could consider recycling your green waste on site.

The Kirkwood

Gold

Overall Impression

It was a pleasure to visit the Kirkwood Hospice. Linda is the Lead Gardener and is a volunteer as are the team of 10 gardeners she manages. The gardens are a credit to this busy and committed team.

The gardens are maintained to an extremely high standard. Everything is organically grown and maintained. The team are responsible for growing, propagating and dividing plants. The potage is impressive and supplies organically grown crops to their on-site

kitchen. The Chef explained how beneficial it was to cook with seasonable organic vegetables and fruit. There were a number of pots with herbs growing outside the kitchen door.

This is a one acre site that includes a woodland. Planting is carefully thought out to benefit the patients, visitors and wildlife. There is a composting terrace which is hugely impressive. A second composting area is separate for leaf mulch. Water butts are placed around the site along with bird and bat boxes. The pond has a duck house and the team are hoping for the ducks to return this year.

The community are welcome to visit. There are days where you can book afternoon tea and walk in the garden. There are traditional fish and chips on a Friday.

This is a peaceful haven which I am sure anyone who stays or visit will very much appreciate.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Due to the hot weather there were a few small gaps – however there are plans for filling them in the near future by splitting some of the larger plants and utilising some that have been propagated.
- Next year will be the 40th anniversary of the hospice and a new garden is already in development.

This garden is of a very high standard making it difficult to suggest changes.

Category Cat C12 Prison Gardens

HMP Doncaster

Gold

Overall Impression

It was excellent to meet the team at Doncaster, Delia, Sharon and Caroline working together across the site and working weekends to support team members. There is a high standard of horticultural training including companion planting, good composting and leaf mould areas. The site is very green, creating a wonderful landscape for all to enjoy. The gardens are complimented by various artwork giving an extra dimension. There is lots of nature on site including various orchids, fruit trees and natural ponds giving a range of wildlife including frogs, voles, goldfinches robins, dragonflies and ducklings. Planting is obviously created for pollinators which adds the the general wellbeing on site.

There is partnership working with a local wildlife area providing bird boxes for the wildlife site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The decking area is in need of some repairs. Consider labelling some of the plants to help with horticultural education.
- Consider another member of the team to take over the maintenance of the greenhouse which is an important area for production and propagation.
- Consider adding the total amount of fruit and vegetables produced on site.
- Maybe think about a bio blitz on site to record all the wildlife on site and repeat every few years to notice any changes or increases.
- Take part in some of the national wildlife campaigns such as the Big Butterfly Count or the RSPB Big Birdwatch in January.

HMP Lindholme

**Gold and Category
Winner**

Overall Impression

As soon as you entered Lindholme there was a real sense of team work and communication which continued for the whole of the visit. There is an excellent collaboration with various workshops, helping to create different features around the grounds and good teamwork designing their own borders and new beds. There is also a good partnership working with Strata Homes recycling wood. There is an overall approach of reduce/reuse/recycle through extensive compost and bark mulch bays and ways to save water by rainwater harvesting. As well as the various borders and flower beds there is a nature area including a pond and bug house, with hedgehog, bat and bird boxes

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider enhancing the memorial area in partnership with the woodworking or metal work teams to create a sympathetic sculpture or feature.
- Think about raising the height of the grass cutting machines a few more millimetres to encourage more low-growing wildflowers to develop within the lawns such as birds foot trefoil, and selfheal which will be good for pollinators.
- There is a good range of trees on site which are well labelled and could be turned in to a printed tree trail adding further information about each tree.

- Consider more drought tolerant plants that could be used around the site to reduce the amount of watering.
- Also research the RHS Plants for Pollinators plant list for other plants that will attract more pollinators.
- The LBA Team channel could put a list of drought tolerant plants which would be available to each site.

Think about taking part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch next January.

HMP Ranby

Silver

Overall Impression

It has been a number of years since Land Based Industries have been involved at Ranby and there is significant building work at the moment creating a new education area, workshop and accommodation. The issues on site give almost a blank canvas which allows many opportunities for the future. It is early days in the development of this site and filling various posts will go a long way to moving the planning on. Support is required with pest control and until this issue is under control the problem is just being moved around the site.

There is a well landscaped area near workshop 3 with raised planters and seating area, involving the team with the landscaping and design. This style could be replicated in other areas. There is also an allotment area and propagating area which could be used for propagating from the plants on site such as salvias, lavender and rosemary. The education training is currently at RHS level 1 but will move to level 2 in October. Little goes to waste for example laundry bins are reused as planters around the site.

It is excellent to be considering new techniques such as Hugel beds - a permaculture technique where you build a raised garden bed over a base of decaying wood and organic matter. As the wood breaks down it acts like a sponge, retaining water and slowly releasing nutrients into the soil.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider some herb beds/planters near the dining area.
- Review the planting around the site in particular under trees and consider more drought tolerant plants which will require less watering in the continued hots summer.

- LBA teams channel could discuss putting together a list of drought tolerant plants for all the HMP sites.
- There is opportunity to work with other teams/groups both inside the prison and externally. The Community Payback site over the road is one option and could enter Yorkshire in Bloom as an Its Your Neighbourhood entry in future years, with greenhouses, orchard and wildlife area.

HMYOI Wetherby

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The Prison grounds would have been a harsh environment up to 18 months ago however, now the young offenders alongside a dedicated team of staff that clearly have the vision and drive to take this project forward, the young lads are undertaking nationally recognised training and practical hands-on experience and producing food for the kitchens, plant sales etc and have created something special and to be proud of. The hive being the sites wow factor, this area that has been created out of a barren corner of the grounds and now boasts a pagoda with cooking facilities, very large pond, paths and sustainable planting and a large polytunnel for production of bedding plants and produce for the kitchens. All of which have been carefully planned and constructed to a high standard with an array of perennials, sustainable and edible plants which doubles as an open air education and meeting space.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was good to see the Young Offenders growing plants from seed and plug plants for the summer bedding displays around the site and for Hanging basket sales etc.
- It may be useful to link into a local in bloom group regarding supplying plants for summer displays which could increase your revenue in the future.
- Maybe expand the project planning for the young offenders to include some cost projections into the tasks they undertake such as material time estimating to help broaden their understanding of the project (if time allows).
- Carry-on with the plans to expand and finish the Hive area hopefully incorporating soft fruits which could boost income generation.

The pond areas are new and as such will develop over time, however you may need to look into some cultural methods of controlling the blanket weed which could become an issue.

Category Cat E1 Young People's Award

Banana Moon Day Nursery

Silver

Overall Impression

Banana Moon is a private nursery for children aged 3 months – 5 years. The garden provides an active façade to the nursery building.

Although the only available garden space is north facing and partly shaded by a large tree (much valued by the whole nursery community) it offers a wide variety of outdoor experiences: vegetable growing in raised beds, bug hotels, flowers attractive to bees and butterflies, herbs and other flowers in pots etc.

Parents and carers are often working during the nursery opening hours, but many are keen to support the nursery with donations of plants and gardening equipment.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- There is limited growing space, so more use could be made of containers, e.g. growing attractive and bee and butterfly attracting herbs and flowers.
- Few other comments to make except to keep up the good work.

Birkwood Primary School

Gold

Overall Impression

It was lovely to see and hear how committed the school is to ensuring that every child in the school has a chance to interact with nature and with growing things. It was good to hear that every child has a chance to take part in the gardening projects which the school organises.

It was lovely to meet people who were obviously so enthusiastic and committed about the gardening work done by the school.

The bug hotel which the school has created was a lovely feature and it was interesting to see the new orchard which hopefully will grow and flourish and be better year by year. Using knitted fruit to show to the youngest children what sort of tree it was, was a very original idea.

The school are very lucky to have a polytunnel and obviously it makes a good place to talk to children when the weather is bad.

It was lovely to see how many raised beds the school has in the gardening area and the wide variety of plants grown. It was a good idea to use plastic bottles to cover the ends of the gardening canes as a safety feature.

Having a dedicated area for wildlife is a lovely idea.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The polytunnel is lovely. Of course it's always difficult knowing where to keep things but if it was possible to perhaps find another spot for the materials stored in the tunnel it might be possible to grow some crops in the ground there and make full use of that part of it and even over winter things there.
- If funds permit it might be a good idea to invest in some larger pots for plants like tomato plants which would benefit from bigger pots.
- It's always difficult growing plants in schools because of the long summer holidays but perhaps it will be a good idea to investigate potential plants which would mature whilst the children were in school so that they have their enjoyment of seeing the growth of the plants through to the end.
- On the same theme it might be a good idea to consider growing simple ,quick maturing plants like radishes and lettuces which the children will be able to eat and enjoy during term time.
- Perhaps it might be possible to talk to the kitchens and decide on some crops that are grown quickly and which could be used so that the children can see what they've grown actually being eaten. It might be a good idea to consider growing some herb plants, simple herbs like parsley and mint and perhaps the children could actually cut them for use in the kitchen.
- The big buddleia plant by the kitchen garden gate is a brilliant resource for encouraging children to watch and identify insect life from around the site.
- The Nature Garden is a lovely idea, perhaps the children could do further research about wildlife gardening and the sort of plants that could go in their wildlife areas and why it's a good idea to leave plants such as nettles and which insects benefit from that so they were more aware of what's happening in their nature area.

Church House Pre School

Gold

Overall Impression

The school displays real environmental awareness along with engaging horticultural practices the children clearly enjoy. It was pleasing to see the children involved in novel but very useful projects like the sensory train and the 'pooch pit-stop' which will have gone down a treat with local dog walkers in the recent hot weather.

Their involvement in the town-wide 'Hedgehog Highway' is also noteworthy. It was great to hear about the Little Bloomers and their litter-picking achievements. There is good parental buy-in exemplified by the joint work on the excellent boat display near the school entrance.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider holding a poster competition where the children's work can be displayed around St Mary's neighbourhood.
- Consider adding more planters/raised beds or utilise a few old tyres as planters at the rear of the school.

Crossley Fields Junior and Infant School

Silver

Overall Impression

There is clearly a lot of potential and enthusiasm at this school with its ample grounds with small, interesting pockets to develop such as pond, copse and wildflower areas.

There is valuable support from the Mirfield In Bloom group in terms of plant supplies, plus the planting of 'recycled' fruit trees and the group planting days.

It was good to hear about the school's environmental ethos and see the numerous bird and bat boxes.

It was encouraging to hear there is a three year plan to develop the In Bloom initiative.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It is unfortunate that the standards of grounds maintenance have had to drop due to budget constraints but a review of the current contract with a view to adding more than basic grass cutting would improve things significantly.
- In the interim, it would be easier to concentrate on one small area of the school for gardening activities rather than having them spread around.
- The pond area could be an excellent wildlife resource if managed properly. Perhaps a local company or organisation looking for volunteering opportunities could assist during school holidays, along with a possible Mirfield In Bloom volunteer day.

Hutton Cranswick Community Primary School

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Hutton Cranswick Community Primary School is ideally located in the heart of the village and looks out onto a magnificent village green featuring planted borders, a pond, a play area and several large trees. The entrance of the school has a large chestnut tree, shrubs, pots and hand-crafted containers filled with a variety of low maintenance annual and perennial plants. On the door the school proudly states its connection to Yorkshire in Bloom and we thank Hutton Cranswick Community Primary for their continued support.

On arrival the school seems well organised with a strong sense of identity. The staff are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and truly support children's outdoor learning by providing access and opportunities to engage with the natural environment.

The tour covered several zones within the school grounds including play area, school garden, pond, den building area and outdoor classroom.

The garden was very tidy and well organised. The children spoke confidently about what was growing, how they had been involved and what they enjoyed tasting. There were sunflowers grown from seed along with many crops including: tomatoes, courgettes, runner and dwarf beans and, squash, rhubarb, apples and strawberries. Children across key stage 2 take part in gardening activities as part of the curriculum, enjoy open access to the garden at breaks and lunch times and there is a gardening club after school once a week. Staff reported the recently introduced Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) strategy was already having a positive effect.

Staff, families and the wider community support the project with donations of plants, planters and materials and committed staff contribute their time and expertise along with weekend watering duties. Children demonstrate understanding of environmental

sustainability through measures such as composting and recycling. Raised beds made of old tractor tyres showcased creative reuse of materials. Wildlife-friendly features included bee drinking stations, impressive bug hotels created by pupils, bird feeders and rainwater collection.

Congratulations to the entire school community for their infectious enthusiasm, dedication and pride in their outdoor spaces. The school grounds were presented to a very good standard, and pupils communicated their achievements confidently and knowledgeably during the judges visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- As discussed on the day rainwater harvesting is currently limited to one water butt. Expanding water collection capacity, alongside increased use of mulching and drought tolerant planting, would further improve the sustainability and resilience of the garden.
- It was good to see some artwork connecting to the garden and wildlife areas and the judges felt there were further opportunities for art in the landscape to enhance the spaces and showcase the children's creativity.
- There is potential to increase community and intergenerational involvement. Opportunities could include inviting In Bloom Volunteers to lead gardening club sessions. Drawing on local expertise for areas such as pond management and an annual open event and plant sale to raise community engagement and generate additional funds for the garden.

Molescroft Primary School

**Gold and Category
Winner**

Overall Impression

The importance of nature is embedded into the ethos of the school and its curriculum. Each class

has representatives on the Green Team who are also involved in litter collection and recycling. There is an annual Easter Garden event when pupils bring plants and bulbs to school which are then planted up in the borders. Parents and grandparents are willing volunteers.

Using the RHS theme Bringing Nature Home, each class had planted up a container for bees and pollinators with creative use of plants and natural materials for bug hotels and bird feeders and the pupils were able to explain why they had chosen them. All the pupils

were engaged and knowledgeable when expressing their reasons for choice of plants and materials.

The allotment area is impressive and included fruit trees, a greenhouse, compost heaps, water butts, beds of vegetables and herbs. Some of the produce is used in cooking.

There is a large wildlife pond which is used for pond dipping, also hedgehog houses, bird boxes and feeders. Pupils were able to explain how they had been involved in the various activities.

The school also has Ecoschool and Green Flag status.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- A couple of flower beds in front of the school gates would make a more impressive entrance.

Rossett Acre Primary School

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

It was lovely to visit Rossett Acre Primary School on such a lovely afternoon. The school are fortunate on having such wonderful, spacious grounds and it was easy to see that full use is being made of them to benefit the children. It was impressive to see the importance which the school places in giving children a chance to explore and love nature. The Forest School is a lovely idea and the children are lucky to experience such activities in a safe and secure setting.

The planting of native trees and hedgerows was lovely to discover and the range of species especially in the hedgerow were impressive. It was lovely to see that chances to grow things are given to a wide range of age groups. We were also pleased to hear about the way children are encouraged to develop knowledge and carry out investigations.

The area where vegetables are grown in raised beds was very well organised and the planting was various and in good condition. We were pleased to see that composting and water harvesting are carried out. Clearly conservation is very important.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Perhaps the younger children might be further encouraged by growing simple, fast maturing crops such as cress and radishes, which they can quickly enjoy eating.
- Keep researching crops which can be harvested before the summer holidays.

- It would be lovely to keep adding to the collection of native trees.
- In the corners which are being left for wildlife tubs etc. consider planting teasels to attract insects and hopefully goldfinches to the seedheads. Where there is space a buddleia or two would give the children a wonderful chance to enjoy and recognise butterflies. In the same areas, near the wildlife tubs perhaps replace some of the long grass with insect friendly planting. Lavender might do well and will certainly bring in bees and butterflies for the children to admire.

Woodmansey Primary School

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Nature plays a significant role in the curriculum of this school which is set in a rural setting. All the pupils are encouraged to become actively involved in the horticultural and wildlife by recording observations, hands on activities such as making bird feeders, planting seeds and cooking with the produce. Pupils are also taken to off-site venues such as garden centres to select their seeds and bird hides.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The photography competition with the theme of nature is a good idea and can engage those who prefer it to the art activities, as is the pumpkin growing competition.
- There are activities throughout the year. Pupils plant up containers for both Spring and Summer and Christmas decorations are created from natural materials, please continue these.
- A pond, however small, would make an interesting addition to the school

Category Cat E2 Universities, Colleges and Further Education Establishments

University of Bradford

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

The University grounds contain a varied range of green spaces including The Peace Garden, mixed borders and planters around the University buildings, grass areas, meadow areas, a woodland space and orchards. The University has also achieved the Green Flag and Keep Britain Tidy Awards.

There is a high priority placed on sustainability and increasing biodiversity on site through well-established no mow banks, meadow areas around the car parks, water features and a woodland area.

The University is an edible campus which includes a student allotment space with raised vegetable beds, an apiary and orchard areas with soft fruit and top fruit.

Seating is situated around campus to enable staff and students to spend time outdoors enjoying the green spaces. The team have developed a five-year ground management plan, and schedule routine and seasonal maintenance tasks which are completed to a high standard.

Welcome sessions to new staff, and students at the beginning of the academic year, include a tour of the grounds to highlight the green spaces throughout the campus.

This year Bradford College students have also attended vegetable growing sessions and there is a plan to include harvesting sessions too.

Thank you for meeting with us and providing a detailed overview of the work being completed on site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider further activities to extend student engagement on site, this could include citizen science activities such as wildlife surveying.
- Consider installing more signage to inform staff, students and visitors of the excellent work being done to support biodiversity on site. This could include information boards with QR codes directed to the University website.

