

Judges Notes for Summer 2026



Category Cat B1 Small Business

Abbeydale Residential Home

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

As you walk up the drive at Abbeydale Residential Home you're struck by a wall of colour from the seasonal floral displays (it's just truly stunning), not a plant out of place or any weed its a credit to the gardening team and the owners. Even the residents get involved with planting up and watering the many floral feature that festoon veery wall and of this business.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was good to hear of plans for a new floral feature for next year which will add something of a focus to the carpark frontage
- The intention to add agapanthus in some areas for next year will lift the mixed borders.
- It was good to see the improvement of the grass to the rear of the property since I came 4 plus years ago the shade tolerant grass is looking very well maintained.

You saying (costs as nearly as much to do it wrong as it does to do it right) is clearly paying off as being 100% full with a waiting list is an achievement which many business could adopt

Hutton Cranswick Fisheries

Silver

Overall Impression

Hutton Cranswick Fisheries is located on main street and is one of the first businesses to be seen on entry to the village. Its bright and colourful floral display gives a cheerful greeting to customers, residents and visitors alike. We thank the Hutton Cranswick Fisheries team for supporting Yorkshire in Bloom 2026.

On arrival, the owner, Jess, greeted the judges and explained the positive impact of the floral display. The well stocked baskets were full of healthy plants and the shop frontage was clean, well maintain and looked very welcoming. Jess explained her daughter had chosen the vibrant, colour scheme for the frontage. The use of hot colours including Diascia and Tagetes with striking Lobelia produced a basket full of blooms. We were told that she took great pride in the care of the hayracks and wall baskets with regular watering and dead heading.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The judges thought that better consideration could be given to publicising the company's participation in Yorkshire in Bloom to raise awareness of its involvement and support for the campaign.
- The judges felt that inclusion of perennial plants could further enhance the displays whilst being more sustainable and having more than one season of use.
- The judges recognise that this is a busy commercial site with limited space but felt the display could be elevated even further with an artistic or wildlife feature linked to the identity of the business.

James White Family Butcher

**Silver Gilt & Best
Shop Front Winner**

Overall Impression

James White Butchers has a well-presented shop front enhanced by a delightful floral display. The judges were welcomed by business owner, James who came out of his shop during a well-timed quiet moment. James explained he received many positive comments from his customers and liked the connection of the freshness of plants to the freshness of the products in his shop.

The display consisted of several planters with cascading golden creeping jenny, bright pinks and soft whites from Pelargoniums, Diascia, Lobelia and Cosmos amongst others. The wall to the left of the shop was also brightened with a colourful display of annual bedding plants and some planted wellington boots.

The whole area is clean, swept, and litter-free making it welcoming for customers. As an experienced entrant in Yorkshire in Bloom James White Butchers once again shows how to add beauty and colour to village life.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The judges felt that the display at the front and side of the shop would look more cohesive and impactful if the same plants and colour scheme was used in both areas.
- It was good to see a conifer used to add height in the central container at the front of the shop and the judges would encourage further use of low maintenance shrubs and perennial planting to increase the sustainability of the display.
- Although the space is relatively compact the planting to the side could benefit from greater height and the inclusion of creative artwork or wildlife enhancement could add further interest to the arrangement.

MonkBridge House York

Gold

Overall Impression

MonkBridge Guest House, close to the centre of York, is easily recognisable as you approach the property. The front gardens are colourful and beautifully planted, patio areas create an excellent first impression for visitors. The back garden is relatively small but certainly packs a punch! Guests have a choice of seating areas but both give views of well-stocked borders with shrubs and perennials giving all year round interest.

Congratulations on an excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry, creating a beautiful garden to such a high standard which your guests (and you!) will enjoy relaxing in!

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

It is very difficult to make suggestions for further improvements to your garden as I am sure that every spare minute you have, when not working on your business, is spent outdoors.

- Perhaps the only comment I would have is that the small planters in the car park at the rear of the property were not of the same quality as the rest of the garden. This could be due to the hot dry weather we have experienced this summer and the difficulty in watering. However, maybe one or two larger pots which would hold more moisture may be more productive than several small ones!

SPAR Convenience Store

Silver

Overall Impression

SPAR Convenience Store is a busy and well used general store serving Hutton Cranswick and the wider community. As a relatively recent entrant in the Yorkshire in Bloom campaign, it is wonderful to see the SPAR is helping to bring the blooms to main street.

The attractive display incorporated new wooden troughs filled with a frothing mix of delicate and colourful annual bedding plants. The plants were very healthy and worked extremely well together. The judges were not able to speak to a representative from the store on this visit but could see the shop front was well maintained, smart and clean. During the visit several customers entered the shop passing the floral display as they went.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The judges thought that better consideration could be given to publicising the company's participation in Yorkshire in Bloom to raise awareness of its involvement and support for the campaign.
- As the SPAR is one of the largest businesses on Main Street the judges felt that use of larger scale containers would increase the impact from the road and give a more balanced aesthetic to the shop front.
- The Judges understand the SPAR sells fresh seasonal products including flowers, plants and hanging baskets and felt that an increased display would be a good opportunity to showcase plants and inspire customers.
- The judges felt that the addition of low-maintenance perennial planting could further enhance the display in a sustainable and cost-effective way.

Category Cat B2 Medium Business

Beverley Race Co. Ltd

Gold

Overall Impression

Displaying balconies lined with boxes of locally sourced, colourful annuals using a watering system and borders planted up with shrubs and trees, the racecourse is impressive. Tom and his small team are responsible for maintaining this venue which is maintained to an excellent standard. The furniture is power washed each Spring, there are frequent litter picks and there are statues for interest and a memorial to the former airfield. Sunflower benches are dotted about for those needing a quiet place to sit. Water for the course and distilled drinking water are sourced from bore holes.

All pathways, lawned areas and furniture is in excellent condition including the large area where the horses are stabled. Perennials have been planted in new beds including lavender from which cuttings have been taken.

Grass cuttings are used as mulch and all waste is sorted for recycling.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Mention was made of using more perennials and it will be interesting to see if you can create a colourful display.
- Large containers at the roadside entrance would enhance the venue when the planned work for resiting the cattle grid is undertaken.

Goldsborough Hall

Gold

Overall Impression

This garden provides an abundance of formal gardens, terraces, lawns and woodland. All of which combine to provide a plethora of vistas which engage all the senses as you take in the studied elegance of the gardens integrating with the wooded and curated lawn areas. The gardening team, and owners, demonstrate what can be done when there is the ambition to recreate historical splendour whilst adding more contemporary accents. A recent addition are the pyramids in the wood which provide architectural notes with an animal habitat created from wood collected from around the garden.

The kitchen garden is a highlight with a healthy range of produce being grown which is utilised across the hotel's menus.

The Team are justifiably proud of their snowdrop display, which is a keynote spring feature, whilst the wider planting ensures year-round interest is maintained. In all aspects this garden shines.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The following areas should be considered to support ongoing development:

- Continuing to sympathetically refresh the woodland walk whilst maintaining its woodland characteristics and increase the range of shade loving plants/ground cover
- Reduce, and eventually eliminate, dependency on externally procured compost
- Leave the extensive oak 'log pile', which is getting absorbed into the undergrowth as an attractive visual novelty as well as being an extensive habitat for a wide variety of animals

Livingstone Motor Group

Silver

Overall Impression

Livingstone Motor Group is situated on the A164 at the entrance to Hutton Cranswick. The company has supported the Village in Bloom campaign for several years, and it was pleasing to see the dealership taking part once again. On arrival, the grassed areas and hard standing were clearly maintained to a consistent, tidy standard, with neatly cut verges and a well-swept forecourt. Although the planting displays were more limited than in previous years, the wooden planters outside the main entrance were well kept and added seasonal colour for visitors.

Overall, the judges would like to thank Livingstone Motors for its continued participation during a highly unpredictable year, from heavy rain in early spring to a heatwave at the start of the judging season.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The judges recognise that this is a busy commercial business with limited staff capacity but would have liked the chance to meet company representatives and better understand its environmental approach. It is suggested that developing natural areas and wildlife habitats, such as wildflower planting, bird boxes, or insect hotels, would support future nature conservation.

- The judges felt that consideration should be given to identifying additional areas of the site where sustainable, low-maintenance perennial planting could enhance the horticultural displays, such as feature beds or planters reflecting the company's local identity.
- The judges thought that better consideration should be given to publicising the company's participation in Yorkshire in Bloom to raise awareness of its involvement and support for the campaign.

Paul Harrison Cars

Silver

Overall Impression

Paul Harrison Cars is located on the A164 in Hutton Cranswick. Having supported the Village in Bloom campaign for several years, it was encouraging to see the dealership participating again. On arrival, the owner greeted the judges and proudly showed a range of floral planters, troughs and wall baskets filled with seasonal colour, including geraniums, begonias and french marigolds. Other pots featured roses and clipped box trees. The grassed areas and hardstanding were well maintained, with neatly cut verges and a litter-free, well-swept forecourt.

The whole team helps maintain the site and waters the floral planters when the owner is away. It was pleasing to see water conservation addressed through a tank that harvests rainwater from the buildings, alongside efforts to support biodiversity by planting climbers and flowering shrubs along the boundary fence to provide natural wildlife refuges.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The judges thought that better consideration should be given to publicising the company's participation in Yorkshire in Bloom to raise awareness of its involvement and support for the campaign.
- Repairing and repainting the wooden planters near the MOT bays would help raise standards.
- The judges felt that sustainable, low-maintenance perennial planting could enhance the displays, such as feature beds or planters that reflect the company's local identity.

- The judges recognise that this is a busy commercial site with limited staff capacity, but suggest that developing natural areas and wildlife habitats, such as wildflower planting, bird boxes or insect hotels, would support future nature conservation. They also noted that the wooden planter on the front verge needs attention and could potentially be repurposed as a bird feeding station.

Saltmarshe Hall

Gold

Overall Impression

The Hall is Grade 2 listed, a hotel with style and elegance, situated on the north bank of the River Ouse in parkland of 17 acres. The Saltmarshe estate passed through many generations of a single family until 1970's when it was purchased by Kate and Roland Whyte.

The grounds are landscaped specifically to accommodate the wedding guests and hotel residents for which subtle colours are used as a backdrop for wedding photographs.

There is a good approach to recycling with real emphasis on composting and producing leaf mould for reuse in the garden along with the hotel being run on a biomass boiler. A good range of produce is grown in the garden, used by the chefs in the dining room and any surplus is for sale.

The gardens are well landscaped and maintained despite the usage by the many weddings and functions. The grounds are used for various events including Christmas market, craft fairs, croquet day, NGS open day, and garden club tour, opening up the grounds for public use.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Maybe consider trail cameras in the woods which can be used to show the range of wildlife to the visitors.
- Reflect on planting some more unusual trees in the grounds to compliment the range of trees and continue the tree cover

Stirling Park

Gold

Overall Impression

This smaller industrial area, which is aligned with Clifton Moor Industrial Park, benefits from the oversight of Sam and maintenance from the same Landscaping Company. High quality of the plants and the lawn areas is noticeable and commendable, with a focus on net gain, provision of wildlife habitats and encouragement of wildflower integration.

The visual presentation and atmosphere of the area has an established feel with mature plants being curated to maximise structural as well as floral interest supported by the lawn green corridors and selective mowing schemes providing a good mix of plants/habitats and visual stimulation. In all the site provides a welcome example of effective integration between planting and concrete.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It is suggested that the following continue to be a focus of ongoing work:
- Working with businesses to ensure alignment and mutual understanding of tree management plans
- Encouraging of businesses to integrate with national and/or local charitable initiatives: Purple for Polio / Forget-me-not for dementia, etc.
- Integration of green spaces into future development plans to promote environmental net gain ambitions

The Farm Shop at Cranswick

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

On arrival at Hutton Cranswick Farm Shop, the judges were welcomed by Adrian and Helen amid a range of vibrant floral displays, from hanging baskets and half barrels to repurposed farming items, including tractor tyres and feeding troughs used as planters and reflecting the site's agricultural heritage.

Locally sourced annual bedding plants are used to excellent effect, particularly the mixed geraniums, which were all in good health. The lawned areas are maintained to a very high standard, and the hardstanding is clean, swept and free of litter. The wildflower area

at the end of the car park provides an impressive display of thistles while creating a welcoming haven for wildlife. In addition, the many formal and informal hedges, particularly the euonymus bank by the car park, offer a windbreak from the adjoining agricultural land and further support biodiversity.

Overall, the judges would like to thank Hutton Cranswick Farm Shop for its continued participation in the Yorkshire in Bloom Competition.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Maintain your excellent standards, while considering sustainable planting in containers to reduce watering needs.
- Consider harvesting rainwater from the building roofs to reduce reliance on mains water.
- The judges thought that better consideration should be given to publicising the business's participation in Yorkshire in Bloom to raise awareness of its involvement and support for the campaign

The White Horse - Hutton Cranswick

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The White Horse is a traditional country pub on main street in Cranswick. It has three distinctive planted zones: the pub frontage on main street, a covered seating area along the side of the building and a separate beer garden.

The judges were shown round the beer garden by the manager, Sam, who was behind the creation of this fun and vibrant space. Sam felt that her customers were enjoying the garden particularly in the recent heatwaves and with world cup football matches being aired on the large screen.

The beer garden was full of character and humour with colourful decorative items and a local identity from the Gee Gee Stable Bar and Cran-Bury signage, frames, brightly painted saws, clocks and even recycled toilets creatively used as planters.

The plants used included bright pink Pelargoniums, Petunias, herbs and even an eye-catching golden Catalpa or Indian bean tree. The grass, trimmed by a robotic mower, was green and healthy. There were also bird boxes, sunflowers planted by local children and some beautiful plant specimens.

The covered seating area was decorated by several willow cone hanging baskets filled with petunias. There were also substantial raised wooden planters with Hostas, summer bedding and a large Japanese Acer and Phormium giving a super display.

The planting at the front of the pub consisted of wall baskets and a trough. The display had little colour and was likely suffering from inconsistent watering during the recent hot weather.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The judges felt that the display at the front of the pub needed to be of the same high standard as the other areas. To help create the best first impression of the business. It would be nice to see common themes or colour running through all the areas to give them a sense of identity and cohesive design.
- It was good to see several shrubs and small trees used alongside summer bedding for a more sustainable and longer lasting planting scheme. The judges would encourage further use of low maintenance shrubs and perennial planting to increase the quality of the display throughout autumn, winter and early spring.
- The judges appreciated the volume and diversity of planting but greater attention to optimum planting times, dead heading and watering would ensure baskets are full of colour and provide the best seasonal display.

Category Cat B3 Large Business

Clifton Moor Industrial Estate

Gold

Overall Impression

Sam, his vision for the site and the delivery of this vision continues to demonstrate how to get the best out of challenging industrial landscapes. The well curated, healthy green corridors between and behind the industrial buildings provide a welcome environment for flora, fauna and people with fallow areas, flexible grass mowing and nest boxes supporting wildflower/wildlife lifecycles and eye interest with many different species being on display as well as an orchard area, new hedgerows and an experimental area to test plants tolerance of the prevailing conditions.

The approach is supported by several businesses; for example Community Bees, Blackwell and Denton; with planters, bulbs and thematic lighting all being demonstrable. Overall this is a site that effectively integrates green spaces seamlessly with the industrial landscape to contribute to mental health welfare and an overall focus on net gain initiatives.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

It is suggested that the following areas continue to be a focus of ongoing work:

- Encouraging of businesses to integrate with national and/or local charitable initiatives: Purple for Polio / Forget-me-not for dementia, etc.
- Wider participation in flora and fauna monitoring schemes, encouraging businesses to participate where possible

We look forward to the fruition of existing projects and next steps including:

- The York Aerodrome / RAF Clifton display planned for next year
- The outcome of the experimental bed sunflowers and lessons learnt

Crystal Peaks Shopping Centre

Gold

Overall Impression

Built in the 1980s, Crystal Peaks comprises a well-occupied shopping centre, medical centre, library, petrol station; it has banks, building societies and an estate agent and is served by buses and the supertram. It is at the heart of the community and has a loyal customer base. Ochre Dyke runs alongside the shopping centre and connects the green spaces through Beighton Village to Rother Valley Country Park.

The management team embrace their surroundings and recognise their responsibility to help establish a green corridor. There have been bee hives on the roof of the centre for 15 years. The bees thrive, feeding in the green spaces and suburban gardens close by, and their honey is harvested. Swift boxes have been placed on one of the buildings and birds are nesting there now. The extensive range of trees of many varieties on the site provide shade and soften the hard landscape; these are all checked regularly for their condition and safety. Pinecones from one of the trees were collected at Christmas, decorated and sold, with the money being donated to charity. The Centre now has a shedder, so branches from tree pruning can be shredded and used for mulch. There is a kestrel box in one of the trees and an owl box, both of which have had birds fledging; there is a hedgehog box in the stumpery and one in the sensory garden and lavender bushes teeming with bees all demonstrate the excellent management of the site for wildlife. There is a badger sett on the edge of the site and a bee orchid growing in one of the grassed areas. There are several areas of relaxed mowing and information boards,

some with QR codes for more information, mark all these and other wildlife areas. Hedges are all healthy and well maintained.

Hanging baskets and planted containers, funded by the service charge to the centre's businesses, provide a colourful display on the outside of the buildings and enhance the seating areas. Plants for these have been carefully chosen for a co-ordinated colour scheme and maximum impact.

Over 1000 tulips, of all colours, were planted to give Spring colour which attracted lots of interest from visitors to the centre.

This year has been a challenging one due to the very dry weather and the resignation of the gardening team. However, all the staff have rallied to the challenge with the maintenance team helping to plant the hanging baskets and containers and the evening security staff helping with watering. A new garden team will be in place shortly. The maintenance team also do an excellent job to keep the site clean and litter free.

There are a few water butts on site, but there are some difficulties in retro fitting a large-scale water collection system – though the team hopes this is not insurmountable. There are plans for the site to be net zero by 2030 and to extend the solar energy systems which have been on the roof since 2012. The centre has links to local schools and events are planned for the summer holidays including a bug house building session. Currently there are a series of colourful animal statues around the site, which children can look for, celebrating 150 years of Sheffield Children's Hospital.

Some plants have struggled in the recently developed sensory garden – partly due to the weather but also some plant choice – the team acknowledge that they need to make changes. This garden is still a work in progress, but is already a quiet, peaceful spot. Overall, this is a very welcoming environment for visitors and for wildlife. Lee and his team can be rightly proud of their Shopping Centre.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider replacing the bedding plants in the annual bed on the edge of the site with perennial plants and grasses to help with maintenance.
- Investigate some different plant choices for the sensory garden – perhaps more herbs for smell or grasses for sound. Wild strawberry might provide good ground cover. The RHS website has lots of ideas for sensory gardens.
- As discussed, a “twigwam” on the north bank wildflower meadow or in the sensory garden would be a fun addition and talking point.

Kingswood Retail Park

Silver

Overall Impression

This busy retail park is kept in pristine condition by site manager Ian. Low, neat hedging surrounds the carpark and there are phormiums a variety of shrubs and white barked birch trees in the grounds. Although built on a flood plain, the grass verges are well kept and there is a pleasant area with bug hotel and pollinators. The paved walkways are clean and free from litter.

The management firm is committed to improve sustainability across the site by introducing electric and battery-powered equipment which has helped to reduce emissions and lower noise levels and minimise the environmental impact of routine operations. The retail park is litter free and well maintained for an area where there is such a large footfall.

The planting is sustainable and suited to the environment and include shrubs with interest for all seasons.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The planned wildflower meadow and introduction of spring bulbs in the area where maintenance work is currently being undertaken will be an attractive addition to the site.
- While appreciating the fact that containers are not allowed in front of the stores for access reasons, perhaps consider hanging baskets or containers or raised beds at the entrance to welcome shoppers and give more impact.
- The area would benefit from a notice board or information board on the history of the area or to publicise events and a quiet green area with seating for clients..

Leeds Valley Park

Gold

Overall Impression

As you drive into this modern office park you get the impression that this is a good place in which to work and do business. The first impression is always important.

It is very clean and immaculately presented. It is well landscaped with footpaths trees, grassed and planted areas all to a very high standard

The main foot paths throughout the site are surrounded by low hedging, grassed areas including wild flower meadow planting, and flower beds with a good variety of sustainable

planting. There is a well cultivated area with a pond in front of the office building providing a lovely area for relaxing and staff break breaks
Bug huts with information boards are excellent with bee hives present on the site. (the honey being sold to the client.. The whole area is very well maintained by a small team of gardeners,

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- As this is an award-winning business site it would be a good to see Yorkshire in Bloom added to the awards and displayed for people to see.
- There are plans for development and improvement to the site which hopefully will be funded to allow this high standard to be maintained and made even better.
- In places in the low hedging gaps have been created and planted with a good selection of sustainable plants which are a big improvement and should be continued.

Market Cross Selby

Gold

Overall Impression

Pleasant and inviting you to the central shopping area with outdoor seating area for dining surrounded by colourful planters. Areas well cleaned and maintained. The shopping centre is colourful with use the of bedding plants, petunia's, Geraniums and Begonia's , perennial and dwarf shrubs, Varigated Hebe and Lavender in well maintained raised planters, along with 26 hanging baskets in colours used in the management companies logo. There has been a particular challenge with pigeons nesting in a couple of the hanging baskets, but deterrants have stopped this!

The centre manager, Melissa, is open to suggestions from both staff members and tenants of shops. There are events like a Community Arts and Food Festivals, with the centre team working with Selby Town Council to encourage visitors to Selby, which appears to be working as there is a higher footfall in the shopping centre.

At the main entrance the lime stone facias blend in with the aesthetic of nearby older town buildings near Selby Abbey.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It would benefit with two raised planters near the main entrance to the centre with herbs for use in cafe.

- Use more scented plants such as Nemesia 'Wisley' Vanilla in the central area planters.

Nidd Hall Hotel

Gold

Overall Impression

Nidd Hall Hotel sits in extensive grounds which are, for the most part, beautifully maintained by a small team of gardeners who work very hard to keep everything in first class condition.

It was evident throughout the tour of the grounds that visitors staying at the hotel were most impressed with the garden and facilities on offer. Planted pots and containers can be found on the patios and in hidden courtyards surrounding the hotel.

Formal and informal areas of planting can be found throughout the grounds leading down to the lovely, serene lake. Harvey and the team are to be congratulated on achieving such a high standard of work. You are obviously a very creative and hardworking team and it will be lovely to see your ideas for future projects come to fruition.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue to progress the firepit project.
- Continue to progress the water garden project and try to find the solution to the disappearing water problem.
- The Macmillan Garden could benefit from some loving care and attention when time and work schedules allow. This is a central feature in the garden and has obviously been well planted in the past. It would be a fabulous feature in the central part of the garden if it could be restored to its former glory.
- Continue to look at the future use of the “beach” area and try to come up with a new design which would be more in keeping with the excellent features in the rest of the garden.

Rudding Park Hotel

Gold

Overall Impression

Rudding Park Hotel is an excellent Yorkshire in Bloom entry displaying the best horticulture across this large site. All areas are maintained to a very high standard but are constantly under review to ensure the highest levels of visitor satisfaction. There are many beautiful mature trees across the garden and a comprehensive programme of new planting to ensure succession.

The kitchen garden is highly productive as well as being visually attractive growing a wide range of fruit, veg and herbs. It was lovely to hear of the partnership working between the gardeners and the kitchen team to produce some highly innovative ideas which can be transferred to customer's plates for a fine dining experience with no food miles involved!

Rudding Park is a big team effort. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue to progress work on the Clock Tower Terrace to get the right combination of planting which will cope with the very dry conditions here.
- Continue to progress the softening of the planting across the site from very formal to a more informal relaxed look.

Sheffield Forgemasters

Silver

Overall Impression

Sheffield Forgemasters is in the heart of the Sheffield steel covering a very large area. There are 2 main areas of garden for staff to relax in. The first is a fairly large garden with walkways along the established borders and trees, with benches along the way. A small pond area is a good feature situated in the middle of the garden. Due to the hot weather, many of the plants were showing signs of heat stress and we're not at their best.

The 2nd garden is smaller and runs by the River Don, and is another area for staff to relax and make use of the table tennis tables and boules. There was plenty of shelter and seating for the staff. The borders had sustainable planting and array of grasses. Thanks to Julie for showing me around on what was an informative and interesting visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Look for more variety of plants to bring colour to the first garden in particular.
- There is a large workforce so recruitment of some volunteers would help maintain and improve the gardens.

Wellington Place

**Gold and Category
Winner**

Overall Impression

Wellington Place is a 32 acre site built on what was the old Leeds Central Railway Station and Goods Yards. The development has seamlessly integrated state of the art eco technologies with green spaces and the local industrial heritage. All of which is extremely impressive and identifies the developers long term vision of creating a carbon neutral workplace where businesses and employees are able to play a part. They are proud to advise that the site does not use any gas, using heat source and solar technologies. There is an impressive recycling area, again using the latest technology. The whole area is spotlessly clean.

The site has lovely managed green spaces with trees creating a canopy with cool areas for people to sit and relax or work. There is an excellent balance of planting throughout the site. The renovation of the wagon lift creating a museum is impressive as are the darker pavings which indicate the original rail lines in and out of the area.

Seating areas have been carefully thought out with a variety of seats from deck chairs to fixed benches and wooden loungers. There is an impressive water feature in the main area. There are extensive programme of events for the sites community and visitors too. It was great to hear of the courses on gardening and bee keeping. There are hives on the site and cleverly nearby is ivy which is one of the very few plants that are pollinators during the winter months. The Urban Garden was a wonderful area where businesses could use a space to grow, vegetables and herbs. There is also a Community Patch cared for by the on site landscape team and encourages local primary school children to become involved, 'Roots' garden club, and learn about growing food.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

There are very few suggestions given the evident success and standard of this site.

- We are aware that you wish to incorporate more colour into the bedding areas and to replace some tired plants.

- It may be worth considering the introduction of further prairie/drought tolerant planting and plants that will give movement. We discussed adding varieties of sage for pollinators. Also, white lavender may give a break to the green area.
- In the Urban Garden consider incorporating a water collection area – perhaps attached to a potting shed.
- Consider re-siting, if possible, the astilbes, they don't like being in too dry a condition. Also consider further mulching of planted areas to reduce watering would be worthwhile.

White Rose Shopping Centre

Gold

Overall Impression

All of this large shopping centre is very eco friendly and is continually being developed to meet the current retail needs. The grounds are all very clean and tidy with a variety of suitable planting schemes throughout. The site is looked after by 3 full time gardeners, led by Claire, and do an amazing job. So well done to you all.

Health and safety is a major issue with such a large footfall and is managed well. In close proximity to the entrances to the shops there are 14 mobile planters and 32 very attractive hanging baskets with water reservoirs. The strategically placed flower beds around the site are filled with a variety of mainly sustainable plants with annual bedding used appropriately to create the wow factor. They were well cared for in spite of the very dry conditions. It was encouraging to see many bees and insects buzzing around. There are also bee hives on the roof. The roundabouts are well planted have a small area of mixed pelargoniums used to maximum effects.

There are 9 car parks all of which have appropriate planting of flowers hedges and trees. All hedges are trimmed and looking good. At the lower end of the site is a very attractive area of water with water lilies and natural growth with good wildlife. There is also a woodland area, and a good well maintained walkway for access. The staff car parks have a more natural collection of trees and shrubs that are well maintained and good for wildlife.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The main part of this site has good sustainable planting. This should be continued paying particular plants being drought tolerant in view current climate trends.
- The lower part of the site is an excellent area for the environment and wildlife but presents many problems. The pond tends to get overgrown and it is a big job to rectify the situation. The woodland area also needs attention with some

invasive plants. It is important that this work is done to maintain the high standard of this entry. I know that this is currently on the list of future plans.

- As some of the trees that were planted when the site was being developed are now showing signs of die back they need to be replaced. This is also on the list of future plans and hope fully will be appropriately funded.
- Some information boards mentioning Yorkshire in Bloom and something about the wildlife would be good.

Category Cat B3 Large Business

Filey Zoo

Gold

Overall Impression

Filey Zoo is a thriving and popular East Coast tourist attraction. There are many examples of horticultural excellence throughout, not least the long border which is rich in colour thanks to the many perennials within it.

There are skillful design touches at every corner and exciting plans for future development including the new woodland trail and pond redesign. The site is managed in harmony with nature and with conservation and sustainability in mind. The zoo can only go from strength to strength under the excellent management given by Fran and her family.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Could the car park and entrance to the zoo be further enhanced by the addition of small pockets of colour using a combination of bedding plants, bulbs and or summer flowering perennials.
- There is scope for the gradual renewal of the interpretation panel depicting the garden layout and there is also space for some additional information panels at strategic points within the zoo.
- Consider ways that would allow the zoo to establish closer links with Filey in Bloom.

Himalayan Garden and Sculpture Park

**Gold and Joint
Category Winner**

Overall Impression

Inspired by the Himalayas, the steep sided terrain, extensive woodland gardens, three lakes and arboretum are full of interesting plants and wildlife making this a beautiful, tranquil garden. The topography, acid soil and microclimate are used to great effect as the garden is home to one of the North's largest collections of rhododendrons, azaleas and magnolias. In recent years, a collection of hydrangeas has been added to provide colour when the Spring flowers are over and there is a vast range of trees, including many well-placed acers, providing interest all year round. There are also pockets of blue meconopsis to be found in the garden.

101 permanent sculptures are strategically placed to enhance the landscape and provide added interest. Some of the sculptures even provide homes for bees, wrens and other wildlife. A further 100+ temporary sculptures are available for sale. It was a pleasure to have a tour of the garden with Head gardener, Paul, whose philosophy is to garden for nature, and this is reflected in the way the garden is managed. New bird boxes have been put up and bat boxes placed near the adjacent farmland. Areas of the garden have been opened up by cutting back overgrown plants such as butterbur to let more light through and allow other plants to thrive. Weeds are allowed to grow to the flowering stage in places and then removed before the seeds set.

Recently, new, improved, site-specific interpretation boards with maps have been strategically placed. During the winter months, Paul and his team intend to review and replace, where necessary, all the plant labels in the garden. There has been significant investment in footpaths, and it is now possible for visitors to hire an all-terrain mobility scooter, which is provided in partnership with the charity Outdoor Mobility. There are also many seats carefully positioned to provide great views of the garden. Wooden recycling bins are provided near the Horsebox café.

As well as four permanent gardeners, a group of volunteers help on Mondays and Tuesdays and students from Evolve, a small college in Ripon working with 16–25-year-olds, have the opportunity to work in the garden. The volunteer group has recently introduced some no-dig raised beds in front of Paul's office to grow vegetables and herbs. The volunteers also contributed to the garden's Yorkshire in Bloom "Fill your boots" display.

The name of the estate is The Hutts, which derives from the Norse for "Head of the Valley". In July this year, local Viking reenactment group 'Vanaheim' held a Viking weekend, with displays of crafts, cooking and combat. Other craft courses, e.g. Botanical casting, are held during the year too.

There are two play areas for children, and a series of summer holiday activities are planned. Local schools visit the garden to learn about growing too. Plants are on sale in the former tennis court; some of these are propagated on site and some are bought in. There is a Garden Tea room near the entrance, and it is also possible to take afternoon tea with the Buddha in the walled garden.

Overall, this is a wonderful garden, excellently managed for visitors, clearly caring for the natural environment and with very good links to the local community.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- As you suggested, it would be a good idea to move the plant sales from the former tennis court, which is very sunny, to a shadier area and once the new polytunnels are in operation you might also have the opportunity to propagate more of your own plants.
- QR codes on the information boards could allow more information on the plants and on the different areas of the garden to be provided.
- Consider a nature trail leaflet for children with things to find in the garden.

Mount Grace Priory

Gold

Overall Impression

Sitting below the cliffs which rise up to the North Yorkshire Moors, Mount Grace Priory is a peaceful place with a backdrop of woodland. The Gardens are substantially outside the Priory to the front of the Arts and Crafts Manor House. They include restored herbaceous borders directly in front of the house with pathways leading out into the grounds and other garden areas further downhill.

A small lake and a pond provide tranquil spots within the grounds. Wildflower meadows are a particular feature in the more informal areas and a 'King's Meadow' is also located within the Priory Grounds. An orchard of Yorkshire Heritage varieties of mainly apple but also some other fruit is being established in the area adjacent to the café.

The Gardens staff constantly review areas needing attention and some have been redesigned and planted. Spring bulbs including snowdrops and daffodils contribute to year-round interest. A new children's play area is due to open for the School holidays and will add to the on-site activities available to families.

The gardens are looked after by two staff and they are joined on an annual basis by an apprentice on a year-long placement. A group of regular volunteers also help look after the site. The team are to be commended on the maintenance and ongoing development of this lovely garden in keeping with its history while also gardening sustainably and with wildlife in mind

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Plans to extend the pathway around the lake and possibly from the moated 'island' will improve the circulation around the grounds and improve the visitor experience
- Ash dieback will require removal of some trees for safety reasons. It was good to hear of plans to replace these trees in some places with specimen trees reflecting the journeys of Gertrude Bell the famous traveller and writer, and a member of the Bell family who previously owned the site.
- One of the wildflower areas has become dominated by a limited number of species and may require attention to improve diversity.

Sledmere House and Gardens

Gold

Overall Impression

As you leave the new car park and enter the courtyard there are raised planters with a variety of exotic plants like Cleome and tender Fuchsia's at this time of year, which is re-planted with winter bedding in the autumn. In front of the house a Ha Ha by Capability Brown protects the gardens from a deer herd. The real Gem at Sledmere is the cleverly designed 18th century hexagonal shaped walled garden which originally produced food for the kitchens and cut flowers for the house and still does with the addition of the cafe.

A plan of the wall garden has been meticulously drawn by hand showing a lot of detail in both the parkland areas and the walled garden by Lady Isabella Sykes who is the owner of the house and garden. The new wall garden was designed by the previous Head Gardener Andrew Karavics and modifications by the owner and present head gardener Jan Lathan.

All the different sections of the gardens, rose gardens along with rose archway, kitchen garden split into four sections for crop rotation and wild side garden with ornamental grasses and prairie planting attract a wide variety of insects. The overall effect is stunning with different plant combinations at the turn of every corner. The wall gardens have day events like Growing cut flowers in the cutting garden and summer nature trail in the open parkland for families to enjoy. Along with four farmers markets, Countryside learning days and school sports days. Sledmere house connects well to the village community. Composting bins are well used to put organic matter back into the flower and vegetable beds

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The very high standards in horticultural presentation lends its self to more workshops like planting up hanging baskets and consider planting indoor pots/bowl at the Christmas fair.

The Cockpit Garden, Richmond Castle

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

This small but fascinating garden sits just outside the walls of Richmond Castle. The name may reflect its use at some time for cockfighting, though it is likely that it was also used for leisure and recreation by the castle's inhabitants. The garden sits high above the adjacent river with long distance views from a large bench set above the garden. The current garden is a remodelling of the garden created in 2000 to create more seasonal interest. The narrative theme reflects a more recent history of the castle when 16 local conscientious objectors were imprisoned in the castle during the 1st world war, with the path circling through the garden representing their 'journey' from imprisonment to freedom.

As such it incorporates formal yew hedging, an open 'amphitheatre', then an area with perennial herbaceous plantings set alongside one of the castle walls.

Spring bulbs planted by local school groups provide colour earlier in the year and a Catshead apple tree is a reminder of another likely earlier use of this area as kitchen garden. Local volunteers also assist with the upkeep of this space.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The planting of the garden, particularly in the herbaceous borders area is generally supportive of pollinators and associated wildlife such as birds. It would be good to see the provision of other habitats (eg small wildflower meadow or less 'manicured' area) or shelters (bug hotels, bird or bat boxes) to increase the biodiversity in this area. It is appreciated however that the 'theme' and historical nature of the garden would limit the location and extent of such features
- The location of the garden outside the castle walls means that it is not immediately obvious and therefore signage is important to lead visitors to the entrance. It would also be helpful to have a plan of the garden at this point as it may be necessary to draw attention to the fact that unfortunately the nature of the site (both in physical and historical conservation terms) does not lend itself to being easily accessible. An overview of the theme of the garden and associated photographs would allow those who are unable to access the garden to still have an understanding of its significance.

- Within the garden itself interpretation of the different areas and features reflecting the 'journey' of the 16 conscientious objectors would enhance the visitor experience.
- At the time of writing the information in regard to the Cockpit Garden on the Richmond Castle website refers to the previous design and not the newly created garden. Hopefully this will soon be updated.

Thorp Perrow Arboretum

Gold

Overall Impression

A tidy entrance to the café, with tastefully done planters and hanging baskets around the entrance and café building. These contained seasonal and perennial plants.

The site is 60 acres and consists of five National Tree collections, Champion Trees, rare and unusual trees and shrubs, some of national importance.

The whole site was well kept with closely mown grass areas and paths with taller grass between plantings and outer areas which contained native plants and bulbs.

Pests and diseases are evident on the site, as you would expect with such an old collection of trees. These are managed by pruning or removing trees by using outside contractors and suitable replacements are sourced and used. The staff are very mindful of creating colour, form and textures in new plantings and opening up new vistas.

The whole site is managed by a part-time curator and two staff, one of whom is also part-time. Volunteers also help with gardens maintenance.

The site is very well set up for education groups; schools and colleges. The new explorer trials are aimed at families and children. It is also used for events and concerts and there is a program for families throughout the year which includes half terms, school summer holiday and week-long events such as Halloween.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This is a very important arboretum and the importance of the collections at a local, national and international level cannot be over emphasized. It gets 80 000 visitors a year and is well covered on social media and YouTube.

- The staffing is barely enough to keep on top of the maintenance and the running of the programs which are on offer. Increasing the number of the arboretum staff would help in the long-term planning for the future and help with the maintenance, replanting and adding to the collections.

York Race Course

**Gold and Joint
Category Winner**

Overall Impression

When you go through the entrance hall into a courtyard area you are met with plenty of planters, hanging baskets, as well as established herbaceous borders with climbing roses clothing brick pillars providing a floral extravagance throughout the year.

The head gardener produces 40,000 plants at a nursery owned by the company and stores 80 mobile planters used on racing event days. They have the advantage of being able to control the quality of plants used in displays. Seasonal displays are changed over twice a year.

An automated irrigation system which is supplied by both a bore hole and capturing water from roofs is stored in a large underground tank helps in keeping plants and grass areas in pristine condition during the 17 race days and other external events held at the course.

Bird and hedgehog boxes are distributed around the race course estate. A hotel near the stable area has a kitchen garden where herbs and salad crops are grown and used in the kitchen. All staff volunteer one day a year at a chosen charity's building. This year it is Brain Kind. Recycling systems for litter and kitchen waste is aiming for zero land fill.

Excellent standards in horticulture.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Maximise the use of scented plants like, Nemesia Vanilla, and herbs like trailing Rosemary, Golden Thyme and Sage for all year round interest and a supply to chefs on site.

