

Judges Notes for Summer 2023



YORKSHIRE

Category B1 – Small Businesses

John Blenkiron Funeral Directors

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

John Blenkiron & Sons are a long established business, set in a prominent position and close to the town centre. It is set back off a very busy main road and has a colourful and immediate impact to people entering Richmond. The building was once The Cottage Hospital and has a fantastic exterior which is maintained to a high standard.

The plants are all contained in troughs, barrier baskets and two barrel planters. They have been tastefully planted and are extremely impactful. This year's theme is 'Save the Bees' the plants chosen are all pollinators. There were a number of bees and insects enjoying the nectar as we viewed them.

The baskets have been created by a local nursery based on this year's theme. There were lavenders, lemon balm, lemon thyme, marigolds and Cosmos to name some. The plants at the end of the season are removed – some composted and others over wintered. The barrel planters have a good mix of perennial and annual plants. Pansies and primroses replace the summer bedding. The hard landscaping is immaculate weed and litter free.

It was lovely to see free packs of seed bombs and bottles of water placed on the steps entering the premises, encouraging passers-by to take them. There is an information leaflet about the importance of bee friendly planting for people to read. This business works closely, all year round, with local community groups and charities. From the information shown Rebekah described how the business interacts with the town and surrounding area.

I am sure these tasteful, yet colourful displays bring a comfort and delight to their customers.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

There was a little gapping where the plants hadn't filled out or trailed on the barrier baskets. It may be worth discussing this with the local business to ensure they consider this for your next displays.

Consider spring bulbs such as snow drops and tete-a-tetes to add further colour to your spring displays.
Consider a water collection area around the back of the building.

Harrogate Golf Club

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

It was a privilege to visit and be shown around Harrogate's oldest golf club. We were impressed with the wide range of planting in the various beds and borders and the extensive rose bed which was clearly well maintained and in good condition.

The excellent formal garden aside, what impressed most was the efforts and inroads the club is making in challenging many of the traditional practices in golf course management. These practices are not readily associated with biodiversity, with many courses often looking very pretty but hosting very little wildlife. Harrogate GC is changing this.

Head Greenkeeper Ken provided the judges with a very interesting and educative tour of the course, explaining the club's grassland management, where wildflowers proliferate, its minimal use of chemicals and the recent harnessing of the site's natural springs to form wildlife friendly ponds which also provide a sustainable water source. It was also a pleasure to see the 400 year old Belmont Oak and to hear about the recent planting of berry-bearing trees. We were delighted to hear of the drastic reduction in the use of fungicides on the course.

The knowledge of wildlife on the course shown by both staff and players was impressive and makes a valuable contribution at a time when wildlife is suffering. Clearly care of the environment is of great importance to all involved and that is lovely to hear.

We were pleased to hear of the support given to young people entering the profession of greenkeeping.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

If possible, consider a programme of thinning/opening of the canopy of the wooded area at the sixth hole. We noticed a lack of understory in the mature hawthorn. In time this would encourage more woodland ground flora.

Possibly consider an interpretation panel by the Half Way Café illustrating wildlife and the club's practices and objectives. Golfers tend to be focussed on their game but we feel the direction the club is heading and what it's achieved with regards to biodiversity ought to be celebrated and promoted.

Perhaps further interpretation boards could be installed at key points such as the ponds to encourage interest among players and make people even more aware of what they may be lucky enough to see.

Perhaps some information could be displayed in the clubhouse to make people aware of new or unusual wildlife around the course.

Lavender is a traditional underplanting for rose beds. The addition of dwarf lavender among the roses or along the edge of the bed would bring extra colour and fragrance as well as bringing in butterflies to be enjoyed by people on the terrace. Of course lavender needs maintenance.

Another suggestion would be a border of dwarf catmint running along the edge of the terrace which would need less care.

Huddersfield Irish Centre

Gold

Overall Impression

The Irish centre brings more than a touch of colour to central Huddersfield with an inspiring front garden. The replacement of narrower planters with larger units has improved the displays and eased maintenance.

The use of a range of plants to provide colour is essential as they provide a background for weddings and other events that use the facilities of the centre. Bug houses and a bird box are included, along with improvements to the entrance with hanging baskets.

This garden is a credit to all those involved and most plants are home grown.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This is really a case of continue to maintain the high standards that are being achieved , and change and alter planting as opportunities arise.

James White Family Butcher

Gold

Overall Impression

James White Family Butchers stands in the centre of the village of Cranswick but occupies a tiny space fronting the main road and opposite the pond. This tiny frontage is packed with colourful planters giving a warm welcome to visitors and customers. Additionally, the shop has a fine display of indoor plants in the shop window which add to the overall display. The overall impression we get from the owners of all businesses who support Hutton Cranswick in Bloom, is the wonderful enthusiasm and commitment to improve the environment of this community. James White Family Butchers is no exception to this and the beautiful floral display outside the shop are testament to this enthusiasm and commitment.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The indoor plants (Kalenchoes) made a very colourful window display – simple but eye catching.

The outdoor containers were colourful and well maintained and included bee friendly cosmos and nicotiana extending into the adjoining garden providing an excellent overall effect.

We were impressed that the colour of the flowers co-ordinated with the colour of the shop blind!

This is only a tiny space but the planting is maximised to its full potential.

Old Colonial

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

A splendid array of colour greeted the judges upon turning into the car park of the Old Colonial on a sunny afternoon.

All planters & hanging baskets were in full bloom & coupled with the established beds & borders offered a kaleidoscope of colour.

There is obvious pride in the war memorial & the many artefacts from around the world which is replicated inside the building.

Cleanliness of public areas was clear to see which only added to the customer experience.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Consider a colour themed planting season for the tubs/baskets, pink/reds, white/green, this may provide a more visually impressive display. Conversely a reduction in the amount of tubs/planters with a few larger ones may make the outdoor space look a litter bigger.

A simple interpretation panel for the war memorial would be of interest to customers/visitors.

Continue to develop the herbaceous border with plants that have a long flowering season & consider bulb planting to offer spring colour.

Spar Store

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

We were very impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff at Spar in Cranswick who were obviously very proud of the floral planting around the entrance to the shop and post office. Colourful seasonal planters welcome customers to this vibrant business in the centre of the village and the flowers "lift" the surroundings to make a very attractive contribution to the overall village scene.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

A very neat and tidy frontage to the Spar shop with well maintained raised planters and containers provided by Skerne Nursery who trade just outside the village. Full of vibrant colour including Pelargoniums, Heucheras and seasonal bedding. The area was weed and litter free. Makes a lovely entrance to the shop and it is obviously appreciated by customers who were coming and going when we were there.

Stable Cottage Vintage Holidays

Silver

Overall Impression

Stable Cottage is situated in a row of small properties at the bottom of a large carpark.

A lot of care and thought has been given to the planting scheme which is all in planters of various sizes and shapes and in keeping with the age of the property and has a cottage garden feel. However, this is a high maintenance scheme requiring regular watering, feeding and deadheading.

There are galvanised planters sitting alongside various shaped pottery ones giving a natural and quirky feel. There are a mix of plants herbaceous/perennials and annuals. They are moved around depending on the season.

The courtyard area of this property is small and shaded but the best use of plants has been made. The majority of the planters are outside of the property and make a lovely impact for anyone staying here or passing through.

There is a watering system in place and the plants receive regular feeds.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Due to the small area there is very little space to place a water butt. Though Melanie did advise that she was looking for a small one that may go inside the courtyard.

Consider mixing in further drought tolerant plants such as lavenders, rosemary and thyme to save on having to water.

Consider adding more perennial geraniums.

The Dusty Miller

Gold

Overall Impression

The Dusty Miller is a busy local public house that is very much part of the community. As you approach you are greeted by a lovely array of colour making the establishment extremely welcoming. The whole area including the car park was clean with no signs of weeds or litter.

The plants are grown, planted and tended by a local charity, NEET. The team regularly visit the establishment and tend to the numerous pots and tubs. They seasonally change the displays with Rob, the landlord, suggesting the colours he would like. The end of season plants are taken away and composted.

The trees in the car park have been well maintained. There are bird boxes, birdfeeders created from recycled empty bottles and a bug hotel. It was good to hear that Rob saves his bottles and the NEET team take them to create these bird feeders which they sell at their centre to help them raise funds. There is a composting area at the side of the garage which is out of sight of customers.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Consider changing the box plants in the containers to possibly lavender, thyme and low growing rosemary.

It may be worth considering adding spring bulbs such as tete-a-tete that are small but impactful and hopefully would be low enough not to receive damage in strong winds.

Consider placing a water butt at the recycling area, which again will be out of sight to most visitors to the establishment.

Consider asking NEET if they would like a few plaques to acknowledge their involvement on a few of the planters.

Consider wildflower seed to go into the grassed area by the footpath.

David Higgins Hair Salon

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

David Higgins hair dressing salon is adjacent to his house in a residential area of the town and occupies a sizeable corner plot, with one side facing a busy road. The structure of the garden relies on a variety of small trees for screening with well established and healthy acers being a favourite and forming a second barrier. At the time of our visit in July the heavens had opened but David was still working away to present the garden in the best way regardless of the heavy rain and that some of the hanging baskets had been brought down by an ingress of water earlier. Despite this the hanging baskets were colourful and should recover fully. David remained undaunted and explained how important he found doing the garden, and the impetus the In Bloom competition gave him. The entrance too was colourful and welcoming and we found him determined to pot more plants up. The garden is stocked with all year round interest, with spring bulbs starting the display. Summer bedding is mainly in pots but there is a good selection and variety and all plants looked healthy and well maintained. His enhancement of the grass verge area outside the building is appreciated by those visiting and passing the area.

Wildlife is not forgotten and David has bird planters, areas for birds to nest and old logs are used as a haven for hedgehogs.

David's efforts are to be commended and he should take time to sit back and enjoy the fruits of his labour.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Consider consolidating the number of containers to reduce the considerable workload whilst maintaining the look and feel of the garden. Fewer larger pots would help in this respect. The use of more perennials would assist and still provide a floral impact.

Category B2 – Medium Businesses

Goldsborough Hall

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

Goldsborough Hall is a garden with a real pedigree, with Grade II * grounds laid out for the early 17th century house by Thomas White an associate of Capability Brown and in 1920's the Hall was home to HRH Princess Mary with various members of the royal household visiting on several occasions. The Hall was bought by Clare and Mark Oglesby in 2005 and since then they have supported the

gardens being renovated along with the skills and talents of Mark. Developments include replanting the 120 foot herbaceous border, planting an incredible 140 different types of snowdrops, the extensive kitchen garden and glasshouse containing many exotics. Of course the wide variety of fruit and veg from the kitchen garden is harvested for the award winning restaurant reducing air miles to strides . There are various features around the site including a woodland garden, shade garden, several Champion trees and a terrace area with borders planted up with the appropriately named Rosa Yorkshire Princess. There is a large Union Jack mowed on the south east lawn which is very appropriate this year and a wow for the various weddings held at the hall. In conjunction with the horticultural focus, the local wildlife are also encouraged, giving another dimension to this horticultural haven.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The garden goes from strength to strength with plans for the future always being considered including a pond and a permanent meadow. Plans for working more closely with the school will be constructive. Maybe the children could help create some labels for the plants, maybe painting cobble stones or slate to help give the visitors more information on the range of plants within the garden. There is such a wide variety of horticulture on site could it be considered to take on an apprentice (through the Government scheme) or a student through the Wrags (Work and Retrain As a Gardener Scheme) www.wfqa.org.uk/wrags/ as the variety of work and skills would be a great asset to a student training in horticulture. It may also be worth considering whether to join the Royal Horticultural Society Partner Garden Scheme which would help to raise the profile of the garden even further. With the collection of snowdrops consideration could be given to join Plant Heritage's National Collections www.plantheritage.org.uk

Abbeydale Residential Home

Gold

Overall Impression

Stepping into the grounds at Abbeydale Residential Home you're confronted with a very impressive display of 3500 seasonal bedding plants in baskets, troughs, to the entrances along with sustainable well established shrubberies all maintained to the highest of standards. Yet there was space for a small putting green, raised herb/ veg beds, small glass house growing cucumbers and seating areas for residents all carried out along with general maintenance by a team of two.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Consider removing the old hydrangeas down the side of the drive that are clearly suffering from the climatic conditions of being in full sun and replace with something more appropriate that will tolerate the conditions.

Next time the lawn to the rear of the property is reurfed consider laying a more shade tolerant grass which is available from some suppliers.

Beverley Racecourse

Gold

Overall Impression

We were impressed by the hard work taken to continue development of the Racecourse. Beverley Racecourse is very neat and tidy and all efforts are made to welcome all their visitors, whether racegoers or hospitality events. Over the past year improvements have continued with new waste new bins, additional balcony planters and Sunflower seating. The Sunflower seating is provided in quieter areas for racegoers, together with the Memorial Walk area. The planting in the Memorial Walk has matured, particularly the hydrangeas. Planting throughout the Racecourse is colourful and plants are healthy and chosen to withstand the often windy conditions and the local rabbit population. A new addition this year are signs giving information about the history of the Racecourse. New stabling buildings have been completed and we look forward to seeing the additional tree planting screening around that area. Congratulations to Tom and his small grounds team who care for the Racecourse and who have developed good links with other local businesses who they work with on projects at the racecourse. It is obvious that much thought has gone into planning and maintaining the site. The photographs shown to us on the day demonstrated how the Racecourse comes alive on race days and we could see how good the Racecourse looked on days other than judging day.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Display copies of your Yorkshire in Bloom awards around the Racecourse. This would raise awareness and appreciation of your participation and achievements. Provide judges with a display or photo book of your year round activities and usage of the Racecourse.

Further greening of the stands and some floral displays on the disabled viewing area have the potential to enhance your entry further.

Future plans to create a wild flower border at the front of the Racecourse (once the cattle grids have been moved by the local authority to prevent the cows accessing the area) are very interesting and we would advise taking expert advice on the choice of wildflowers and preparation/maintenance.

Consider replacing the brick paving at the front of the entrance with bonded gravel to improve drainage and run off.
Consider using some wheeled planters which can be moved around the Racecourse to future enhance the hard landscaping.

Country Style Foods Ltd

Gold

Overall Impression

The floral display of hanging baskets and fence and wall planters at the front reception gives the entrance of Country Style Foods a wow-factor. Staff and visitors are greeted with colour on all levels, which continues up the steps to an old church building which has been acquired for meetings and as a staff break room. Just outside the entrance to this old church stands two healthy olive trees, and a bed of roses, selected by Christine, the owner of the company, that are well maintained.

The recycled tubs used as planters around the front perimeter of the building works really well to bring some of the factory's identity into the gardening. With 52 hanging baskets, 60 tubs, and 28 railing planters, the irrigation system set up ensures all are covered for watering. Within the railing planters are perennials, which are then built around with annuals that match the tubs depending on the season.

The mown lawn, planted with daffodils which pop up in the spring, is well-maintained, and the compost heap to the back of the lawn was great to see and will provide nutritional compost for future planting.

It is clear to see that Trevor and Claudio do a fantastic job at maintaining the flowers, planters, and lawn area, and that they enjoy what they do. They should be proud of the work they have done.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

It was great to hear about the history of the business and the achievements of the family and staff so far. Promotion of this should be considered with either information boards mounted outside, or as features on the walls in the old church to really emphasise just how far the company has come to staff and visitors alike! Could a bug hotel be added near to the compost bin

Nidd Hall Hotel

Gold

Overall Impression

The long drive from the main road indicates the scale of the grounds which amount to some seventy five acres. A programme of maintenance is carried out that incorporates many areas beneficial to wildlife and of course importantly to visitors. As well as an extensive maintenance programme the small team undertake restoration and development work. This is successfully demonstrated in the area below the terrace where limited shrub/tree removal has enabled visitors to again enjoy views of the countryside.

As well as horticulture the team have created a magic mystery tour with a variety of enhancing features throughout the grounds.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The team have plans for the future be it improvements or changes as shown by the clearance of a large patch of ivy to reveal a statue and an area of planting to be completed.

A large scale tree management programme is to be implemented across the site, to ensure the continuing health of the tree stock.

Various changes to the courtyard areas are planned.

Consideration is ongoing as to how best to preserve the willow horse structure.

Paul Harrison Car Sales Ltd

Gold

Overall Impression

The overall impression gained from the owners of all businesses who support Hutton Cranswick in Bloom, is the wonderful enthusiasm and commitment to improve the environment of this community. Paul Harrison Cars is an excellent example of this commitment. The flowers on the garage forecourt are of an excellent standard and are well maintained. Additionally, it is clear that appropriate trees and shrubs are being used to screen security fencing and the wildflower area was buzzing!

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The frontage of the shop, and walls on the garage bays are dressed with planted hayracks, hanging baskets and ceramic pots full of masses of vibrant flowers brightening up this otherwise sterile grey concrete environment. The forecourt baskets and troughs looked immaculate.

The planters contained seasonal bedding and the troughs filled with pinks on the old pump area looked beautiful.

Every corner of this area is filled with flowers and shrubs.

Paul has utilised appropriate shrubs around the boundaries of the garage to screen ugly metal fencing and to soften the lines.

There is a newly created wild flower area which was teeming with insects in the warm sunshine.

Water butts were in evidence and the hanging baskets on the main building were in excellent condition.

The overall floral effect from this garage for motorists visiting the village from the south is very impressive.

The Farmshop at Cranswick Ltd

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The Farmshop at Cranswick is clearly a thriving business serving visitors passing through the village on the main road and residents as well. It has a lovely family feel with children's toys dotted about on the lawn at the back and some lovely planting to enjoy while customers are seated outside on the patio. Work is ongoing to extend the car park and this will no doubt be supplemented by appropriate planting and borders. We look forward to visiting again to see how this has been achieved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The entrance was neat and tidy with colourful borders and containers.

The planters at the front of the shop are eye catching and we were pleasantly surprised when we visited the patio area with dining tables at the rear of the farm shop. A line of raised rectangular planters containing good quality annual summer planting gives a nice edge to the patio.

A selection of children's toy tractors on an adjoining large grass area indicates that families are welcome at Hutton Cranswick Farmshop.

The area was largely litter free .

Continue to develop the borders in the over flow car park – work which is obviously in progress.

The White Horse Public House

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The White Horse is clearly very popular in Hutton Cranswick with visitors and residents alike. This busy pub is very proud of its outdoor space which is used for events and activities throughout the summer. Thank you to Stacey for taking time out of her busy day to talk to us. It is clear that she is an excellent ambassador for the business and the village as a whole.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The main part of the garden is hidden away at the back and side of the property making it a quiet retreat from the main road through the village.

Colourful baskets and planters can be seen along the sides and front of the property along with seven ceramic Belfast style sinks of alpines and containers of colourful annuals. The large well-tended beer garden appears to be very popular with families. The business allowed the cubs and scouts to use the outside area when regulations allowed during Covid and when meetings indoors were prohibited.

The bowls club also have their green next to the White Horse Beer Garden and there is a public footpath which links Hutton with Cranswick starting from the pub. We were impressed with bird boxes and insect 'hotels' hung up on a long length of perimeter fence.

The excellent condition of the lawn area, which is maintained to a very high standard should be acknowledged considering the heavy usage, indicated by several outdoor food and drink sales outlets. This indicates the popularity of the pub in the community and is a credit to the staff. The team effort certainly shows! The raised planter of herbs looked good in the sunshine. Maybe more could be made of this for use in the restaurant kitchen?

Category B3 – Large Businesses

Rudding Park Hotel

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

It was a privilege to see the wonderful gardens and grounds of the spa and hotel in what is a fine example of classic English Parkland on such a lovely summer day and hear about the special commitment to wildlife which the site has . We were pleased to hear that the hotel website celebrates wildlife on site.

We were impressed by the wide horticultural knowledge of the staff in all areas of the gardens and grounds and by the enthusiasm and commitment of everyone that we met. It was a fascinating and educational experience.

The kitchen garden has an amazing array of fruit vegetables and herbs and is truly impressive. Everyone connected with it has every right to feel proud. It is maintained to the highest standard and we are sure that it must be greatly enjoyed by guests staying at the hotel.

The interest and enthusiasm shown by the owners of the site and the far reaching plans for the hotel and spa are bearing valuable fruit are seen in the art installation involving birch trees.

It is wonderful that visitors to the holiday park and the wider public are able to come and enjoy the hotel gardens for free. We were impressed by the nature activities available to guests, and especially the nature walks with children. The tree trail is unusual and interesting .

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Perhaps it might be an idea to add extra early nectar bearing plants such as more witch hazels and perhaps Viburnum tinus to the site, to benefit wildlife.

There is a wonderful diversity of trees on site already.

Perhaps a selection of rowan trees might be added to it, with pink, yellow or white berries as well as the normal red for autumn interest.

Consider a mown maze in one of the unmnown grassy areas.

Introducing interpretation boards on the wildlife on the site is a good idea.

Airedale Shopping Centre

Gold

Overall Impression

We really enjoyed our visit to Airedale Shopping Centre and were delighted to receive such a warm welcome. Clearly Airedale is so much more than a shopping centre and it was obvious what a valuable part it plays in the whole life of the town. The hanging baskets in and around the shopping centre contained a good selection of very healthy plants with a pleasing colour scheme. Large containers in some of the walkways adjacent to the building were maintained by centre staff and within the centre recently introduced small tubs and containers enhanced the interior space. These were packed with a beautiful range of colourful and well cared for plants. We were extremely impressed to hear of the involvement of the family members of the Centre Management Team in providing and caring for so much of this planting and also for the little 'green oasis' in a corner of the multistorey car park complete with colourful bug houses.

We were also pleased to hear that the centre manages removal of weeds from the buildings and walkways surrounding it, and has painted an area underneath the car park ramp with giant sunflowers thus enhancing the external areas around the building.

The recycling efforts organised by the centre management team, working with tenants is very impressive indeed. We were delighted to hear that the Centre is a carbon zero site. Gaining a Green Apple Award for reducing energy costs by so much is a wonderful achievement.

The involvement of the Centre with many local charities and community groups such as Dementia Friendly Keighley and Green Crescent Eid, does so very much for the town and is highly commendable.

The tenant area adjacent to the management offices is wonderful, with a wide selection of fruit, vegetables and flowers in a small space. We loved the various imaginative touches, including the use of reclaimed roof slates and the bird boxes decorated by family members in a really creative and colourful way. We were pleased to hear that produce grown in the centre is donated to the Keighley Good Food Shop to benefit others.

We loved hearing of the many little touches such as the coming implementation of a 'chatty corner' , the introduction of multicoloured benches made from recycled rubber and were surprised to find massage chairs available in the shopping area.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

It would be lovely if planting could be included in the upcoming 'chatty corner'. It would add a lot to its atmosphere.

The involvement of the centre with Keighley in Bloom is very valuable and it would be great if that could even be extended further.

Perhaps it might be possible to organise a little exhibition in the centre featuring the work of Keighley in Bloom. Such an event might well help a lot by attracting new volunteers for the organisation.

Clifton Moor Industrial Estate (IPIF York Trust Ltd)

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

A new entry to Yorkshire in Bloom and maybe not a site which would automatically be entered but an interesting and thought provoking visit to this 52 acre site. A tidy well maintained site in a mix of units. Much of the maintenance regimes have been revised to encourage biodiversity including pruning after flowering and lifting the mowing blades higher to allow birds foot trefoil, yarrow and clover to flower for the bees. Other areas have been left uncut to allow the bee orchids to flower along with other wildflowers and areas which could have just be mown areas have been converted to planted areas of borage along the line of trees. Additional areas of colour for the spring have been added with 11,000 bulbs plants last year. Would there be any opportunity to invite some of the tenants to help plant the bulbs in the autumn? Whip tree planting has taken place in the last couple of years with trees granted from TCV will start to make a difference as they start to settle in.

There is good communication with the tenants through a facebook page passing on details about the site and there are links with other conservation groups in the vicinity such as St Nicks Green Corridors, York Beekeepers and Abundance York. Surveys for birds and butterflies are carried out and a biodiversity strategy is being worked on, formalising this would give a clear direction of travel.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The site wasn't the easiest to navigate with which areas were looked after by the main contractor, which areas were looked after by their own teams and areas that were under development. Maybe a coloured plan could be offered with the different areas marked on a future visit.

Would there be an opportunity to work with the tenants to create walks around the site for the workers and visitors to help with health and wellbeing?

Could a planting of nut trees be considered to compliment the orchard and have some interpretation information about the various apple varieties? The apple trees might benefit from some mulch around the base.

Crystal Peaks

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The shopping centre hard landscape areas were well maintained and litter free. The centre benefits from mature trees and shrub areas, with well-established rewilded areas increasing the biodiversity of the site. Interpretation boards placed around the site giving information on what the visitor will see with regards to wildflowers, birds and pollinators. There's provision for wildlife habitats, bird boxes, habitat piles and Martin/Swallow boxes on the building. General open spaces around the site were highlighted with seasonal bedding in hanging baskets and planters, these were colour coordinated with the Centre logo, and grown in house. Spring bedding is also provided to add colour in the colder months. The majority of the ground works are carried out by the two gardeners, and the site's a credit to them. The Centre roof is utilised for the greenhouses that support growing the bedding, and the roof is also home to a number of bee hives, which enjoy the wildflowers on the many areas around the complex, with the addition of the honey being sold locally. Green waste was composted and pruning's are shredded and used as mulch around the site. The area of green "eco" wall was good to see, as was the beginnings of the sensory garden at Boots entrance, work with Bents Green students is to be commended, and other opportunities to engage with young people are being discussed.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

There may be an option to tap into the adjacent down pipe to aid watering of the green wall area, this might also allow for expansion.

Future experimenting with plant choices for the sensory garden, which is shaded and on the dry side, will provide a peaceful space within the busy complex for visitors and staff to sit and enjoy. Maybe the use of different ornamental grasses, lavenders, salvias would work well, along with the idea of the camomile lawn

A small number of trees need attention, maybe seek to remove the dead ones and have a forward plan to replace.

Maybe links can be reformed with the Orche Dyke meadow area and the wider community. Potential to seek advice from Sheffield CC or Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust, to help reconnect.

Fox Valley Shopping Centre

Gold

Overall Impression

Settled in the Steel valley of Stocksbridge, Fox Valley SC is proud of its industrial heritage, with nods to the Steel works throughout the site. The addition of the steel statue of “Grandfather Fox” welcoming visitors at the main entrance, the site timeline, and the “proud past, new future” mural by local artist Pete McKee, celebrate its history. The hard landscaping around the site, is well maintained and the car parks spotless, highlights of colour from the many hanging baskets, large planters outside the shops, to the pleasant seating divides around the cafes and restaurants, lifted the site perfectly. A good selection of seasonal and permanent planting, giving scent and encouraging pollinates. Large areas around the site have been re-wilded and managed to encourage birds and insect life. The mature tree line along the river gives a stunning back drop to the site. Good use of solar power, composting, mulching and collection of grey water. Overall, an excellent entry maintained by Johns small team, and the fabulous courtesy buggy driven by Dave only adds to the experience.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Always difficult to encourage the local community to actively get involved in business sites such as these, but the opportunities given through monthly events for families to come along and make such items as bird feeders and create cress heads and herb garden workshops for younger children is to be encouraged and expanded on.

Potential in providing child friendly interpretation along the re-wilded area of what you might see in there, both identifying the wildflowers, birds and the insects that may visit them.

Leeds Valley Park

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

It's clear to see that Nurture Landscapes have hardworking staff on board, as Leeds Valley Park is maintained to a good standard by two Nurture employees. Judges were shown around various sections of the development and were pleased to hear that steps are being taken to reduce the carbon footprint caused by maintenance with an electric vehicle that is on the way, and battery-powered tools.

When walking the site, judges were enthralled by the use of multi-stem birch to break up the rows of green pine bordering areas of the development. The same can be said for the use of herbaceous white and pink perennials selected to break up the green shrubbery, the red hot pokers along some walkways, and for the white Yorkshire roses that remind visitors and employees of where they are in the world, and provide a pleasant entrance to the raised vegetable beds. Judges were impressed when told that many pine trees were found to have pine sawfly three years ago, but the team quickly stepped in and removed the pests, losing or damaging no trees in the process.

Now that staff are returning to offices post-Covid, it is hoped that the vegetable beds will be brought back to life, as well as events such as the harvest festival get-together which was held a few years ago on a grass space which now boasts a mini orchard. The beehives on site are suitably placed, away from staff or visitors, and are a great way to include the community by involving the Leeds Beekeeping Society to maintain them and collect the honey.

Bug hotels were evident in some areas, one being situated near a koi pond near the management suite, filled with large and healthy koi. The water feature at this pond provides aeration of the water, and the pond has a suitable selection of water plants. This pond is a lovely feature, contributing to a peaceful atmosphere for staff to wind down and relax.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was good to hear that the bug hotels will be given some TLC in the near future and replenished.**
- Judges found the raised vegetable beds to be a great idea and look forward to seeing them reinstated / re-established.**
- Could it be possible to trial out bird boxes in the denser areas of woodland**
- Could there be an option for tree name plaques to highlight the species of trees, or possibly to allow companies to sponsor trees / planted areas?**

Sheffield Forgemaster Engineering

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The sixty four acre site is of course a huge manufacturing site on the side of the river Don. However the company has found room to accommodate some garden areas which are used by staff at breaktimes. The encouraging thing is that alongside major investment in the plant, new garden areas are planned around the site to enable more staff to enjoy fresh air and green space in their breaks. Given the scale of the work areas and age of the site providing green space is a challenge.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

I suspect the issues of the past few years have resulted in less attention being paid to the garden areas than had been in the past. There are some gaps in the planting in the area close to the entrance.

In the large central garden area invasive plants such as the Phlomis have gained a strong foothold and could well do with being controlled.

In general the garden is good in having the pond and wetland area along with extensive planting of Perennial plants. The garden would benefit from a programme of reviewing the planting and possibly lifting and splitting/ replanting to regain a better balance of plants.

At some point the seating will require some maintenance and possible treatment.

The White Rose Shopping Centre

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

We were met by the centres senior management and given an overview of the development of the site using the large aerial photograph in the boardroom. We were able to see the solar panels, rain water harvesting, woodland planting around the site boundary and water treatment of drainage run off from car parks.

We were able to walk around the woodland walk as part of our tour and visit the bee hives on the centres roof

The floral hanging baskets and car park planting were well maintained.

It was good to hear about plans for replanting of car park trees which were suffering from crown die back due to climate and lack of water and space within the tree pits. The filling up of gaps in shrub beds offers opportunity to bring more colourful and flowering shrubs around the car parks and floral impact for customers to see when they visit the centre.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

We would have liked to have seen more colour and plants around the centres main entrances possibly by using containers and perennial plant species. This could be used as part of future increased vehicle security measures at the centres main building entrances.

- We would have liked to have seen more hanging baskets to make a greater impact around the Cineworld village entrance.**
- Leeds Baby Tree Planting area requires some work to cut back undergrowth and allow the area to be opened up to view the trees and read the interpretation boards about the initiative.**
- The Woodland Walk would benefit with signage and requires periodic undergrowth cut back throughout the growing season to make the walk safer for users and avoid overhang of the path and a litter plan put in place to deal with range of litter seen on our tour. The disabled ramp requires periodic sweeping to ensure wheelchair users could use the ramp at all times**
- We welcomed the links and partnerships which the centre is making with the local communities and would suggest that these are documented so they can be shown to future judges.**
- We would suggest that the centre explore the use of mulch on some of the shrub planting areas to reduce maintenance work during peak growing periods and free up staff time to ensure shrubs are trimmed back to maintain vistas across some of the car parks exits**
- We noted a number of the fence wires had been cut and some litter build up around the pond and water filtration area dealing with the water runoff from the car parks.**

York Business Park (IPIF Ltd)

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Another new entry to Yorkshire in Bloom and a very warm welcome to the site. The maintenance regimes have been changed to accommodate the planting for wildlife creating areas for insects and birds to proliferate. There are diverse types of vegetation creating a variety of habitats allowing different management techniques including dead hedges, wildflower areas, a balancing pond and tree planting areas. There was an impressive amount of Bee Orchids on the site. All this and areas around the units are cared for with a variety of shrubs and lawns.

The cornflower annuals created areas of colour and nectar and pollen for the insect pollinators but maybe some wildflower seed annual and perennial would be a better fit in the landscape. Maybe the additional of yellow rattle would help reduce some of the grass species. The tree planting will come to fruition in the next few years, softening the units on site but also creating more habitat for the

wildlife. There are plans for wildlife boxes to be added. Butterfly surveys are carried out along with bird counts.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Would there be any opportunity to invite local school children to help plant the bulbs in the autumn?

I understand the need for plants that will cope with the climate change issues but I would suggest there are other more native plants that could be used such as Geraniums or Achillea

Is there any opportunity to have an interpretation board added to the site to explain the history of the site? This may have to be on line with a QR code to access the information.

Would it be possible to discuss with Poppleton Community Railway Nursery or Brunswick Organic Nursery the possibility to grow some of the plants required for the site to help reduce costs and allow the budget to go further.

Category B4 – Tourist Attractions

Mount Grace Priory and Arts and Crafts Garden

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

As soon as you park at Mount Grace Priory you can see that you are entering a very natural environment. The Priory was built by Carthusian Monks, a silent order, who made full use of the natural springs running down the surrounding hills and through their properties and gardens.

This is an English Heritage site and covers 12 acres of land. The planting throughout has been professionally designed to match the conditions in which this fantastic house and priory stand. There are 3 onsite gardeners with up to 5 volunteers helping daily. There are strict restrictions on what they can do as the site is classed as of architectural importance.

The gardens designed by Chris Beardshaw, were created 5 years ago and are now well established. The gardens have been designed as rooms, each planted to match the landscape and environment. The whole garden has an immediate wow factor due to the careful planting schemes with each area rolling seamlessly into one another.

Herbaceous plants that boarder the lawned area have been chosen based on the William Morris arts and crafts designs in the house. They make an immediate and delightful impression. Below, streams run through the terraced planted areas where the ancient acers look like huge clouds floating over the ponds. Amongst these is an alpine terrace and a dell garden. The streams flow down to ponds and

to the lake. There are a small amount of quirky signs giving extra interest to visitors. The grass is in a fantastic condition when considering the footfall of many visitors.

The vast amount of green space is really well maintain and it was lovely to see children running around enjoying it. Wildlife areas are managed along with the orchard that has been planted with old English species fruit trees.

There is a monk's garden that has been authentically recreated and is the only one of its kind in England.

I can only imagine how spectacular the property must look in spring and early summer when the peonies and thousands of different varieties of daffodils will be at their best.

This is a property that deserves more than one visit as it changes from season to seasons.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The standard and quality of this property make it difficult to offer further suggestions.

It may be worth considering producing a document describing the various plants that visitors can purchase and take around with them.

There are plans, during the autumn and winter months, to widen a 'pinch point' from the garden into the lake and wildlife area – extending the garden a little further to drawing more visitors into this area.

Himalayan Gardens and Sculpture Park

Gold

Overall Impression

The judges visit to Himalayan Gardens and Sculpture Park was set with the back drop of heavy thundery clouds which all added to allure and excited anticipation of the landscape to be explored.

Dropping down into the valley below to the almost serene landscape at the bottom with 4 lakes, 88 sculptures along the route you pass thorough a passage of time and horticultural excellence and even though the garden by nature would be at its best in late spring early summer there was still floral splenda available on the site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

To create more variety of summer flowering plant species within what is the valley floor of the site consider introducing a plant collection of Himalayan Whorlfower (*Morina longifolia*) which will mean creating suitable well drained planting conditions.

The further encouragement of English native wildflowers to Huts Abortorium, Woodland Walk would be appropriate for the site and a good addition to see in the

short medium term as it would add to the biodiversity of the site and not necessarily add much time to the maintenance regime.

The judge parked next to half a dozen disabled parking bays which is the expected normal nowadays, however there was no provision for an off road unmotorised wheel chair around the site. This needs to be explored and advertised on the web site via a pre booked basis as it will make the garden more inclusive.

Keighley & Worth Valley Heritage Railway

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

It was lovely to visit such a fascinating site on a sunny summer day and to meet such a dedicated group of people who work so hard to preserve this important part of our heritage and give pleasure to so many people. The efforts that have been made to recreate a long gone era really enhance the visitor experience and everything is decorated and maintained to the highest standards.

Along the line the gardens and planting at each station add so much to the visitor experience and help to give the site its unique character. Containers, raised beds and hanging baskets are used effectively to bring splashes of colour on and around the station platforms. Dedicated volunteers maintain and develop the planting at each station. They are to be congratulated on producing so many hanging baskets themselves this year, clearly a mammoth task.

Attention is given to attracting and supporting wildlife in the area where appropriate, for example at Oakworth where longer grass is allowed to grow near the goods shed and a boundary hedge provides both food and shelter for a variety of creatures. Working with the Woodland trust to plant wildlife friendly species is a good idea and we were pleased to hear that the group think of their tracks as a wildlife corridor and are intending to produce a booklet featuring wildlife along the railway.

It was good to hear that the railway are attempting to reduce their environmental impact by introducing solar panels, LE lighting and experimenting with alternatives to coal.

The opportunity that the railway gives to young people to become involved and develop their skills and knowledge is impressive. We were impressed by the group's varied and valuable work with the community, including help for the local Sue Ryder Hospice. Tailoring work with local schools to fit the National Curriculum is a good idea.

In summary, we were very impressed by the work of the gardening volunteers all along the line and the great efforts they make to make the railway lovely. It will have a great effect on the visitor experience. A big WELL DONE to all.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Perhaps it might be possible to bring the gardeners together on occasion to talk about their own successes and problems and maybe coordinate things just a little for impact and maybe share ideas that could be repeated along the line to create a pattern. If this wasn't practical then a 'co-ordinator' might be able to share best practice and ideas across the station sites.

We felt also that the gardening side of things is so important that it would be good to provide a yearly gardening budget, to help volunteers, even if this could only be a small one.

Perhaps it would be an idea to add bark chippings to the paths of the large garden at Ingrow West. This would make the paths pleasant to walk on, require little or no upkeep and add to the overall impact of the gardens.

The pots at Oxenhope had upright evergreens which together with the trailing lobelia had a lot of impact. Perhaps it might be an idea to add dwarf conifers or other dwarf evergreens to some other pots along the line. The herb bed at this station was lovely. What about planting parsley closely together along the front of the bed to create a little herbal hedge?

Lister Park

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Lister Park is a valuable focal point for the local community in Manningham. When we visited there was evidence that the park was being used by a wide range of age groups for educational, leisure and fitness activities.

There is evidence that Ian and his team are making every effort to maintain the park to a high standard and that there is a strong strategic plan in place for the future of the park which takes into account the heritage of the landscape and the future needs of the local community.

The 'showpiece' formal garden, Mughal Garden and Botanical Garden offer a wide range of plants of interest and different garden styles,

The park feels like a safe and welcoming space and is a genuine asset to Manningham and Bradford.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The formal gardens outside the entrance to Cartwright Hall were previously planted with seasonal bedding. The space is currently in transition between bedding and more permanent herbaceous planting. In the long term there is a desire for the beds to be less intensively managed. A move fully away from bedding schemes into long term herbaceous planting across the whole area would give the space a greater sense of unity. Selecting perennial plants with a low growing profile and a

long season of interest would replicate the feel of the traditional carpet bedding schemes without the need to be replenished on a bi-annual basis. While there is evidence of interpretation boards across the site there seemed to be a variation in style and presentation in different areas. To build a sense of unity in the park the presentation of the boards could be linked to the Lister Park Guide and Maps document using a unified City of Bradford brand. Currently the signs are exclusively in English, which given the rich cultural heritage of the Manningham area is surprising. Updated signage could include interactive links to the information in a range of languages as well as accessible features for blind or partially sighted visitors would enhance the visitor experience. The Crown Green bowling area has now fallen into disuse as it no longer reflects the sporting interest of the local area. There was some discussion during the visit about the future use of the area which is as yet undecided. As a large, flat space the greens would be ideal for converting to a multi-use fitness space with a measured mile running / cycling track around the outside, outdoor gym (already on site) and grassed area for community sports as well as cultural events such as markets and performances. The grass maze to the rear of Cartwright Hall has been pleasantly planted with perennial wildflower species. There is scope in the future to expand on the range of species in the area giving greater options to increase biodiversity in both the plants in the areas and the number of species that can benefit from them. The Mughal garden is well maintained and a good example of an Islamic style garden. However the range of plants in the space is limited and there is further scope to fully embrace the concept of a paradise garden. There is opportunity to further develop the garden to provide shaded areas for visitors to relax in as well as additional vibrant scented flower planting which would bring what is currently a beautifully set out and well kept but somewhat sterile area into a truly stunning feature for the park.

Middleton Railway Trust

Gold

Overall Impression

Newly painted entrance railings and colourful planters in the Car Park and around Entrance exhibits welcomed visitors. Interpretation signage have been renewed and a team of enthusiastic volunteers have taken on board the recommendations made by last year's judges

The station platform had numerous floral containers in full colour and complimented the hanging baskets from the Platform seating shelter. It was good to see water butts catching the water from the roof of the shelter to water the platform containers.

Bird boxes and hedgehog shelters had been added to buildings and natural areas alongside the Track to encourage wildlife.

The maintenance of trackside is carried out to compliment the natural surroundings.

Exhibition and visitor facilities are first class and the group is working hard with the local community to develop new facilities and features
A very good entry the judging tour was well orchestrated and met all of the key criteria.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Develop the two wild flower areas beyond the station as planned by clearing out the undergrowth prior to sowing.
- .Consider using volunteers from local companies who are signed up to providing their staff to community tasks.
- Continue vegetation clearance along the line to open up vistas across the city and views from the train coaches making a better visitor experience.
- Consider working with Leeds City Council to fit additional interpretation boards aiding visitors to walk into Middleton Park at the end of the Line outlining the facilities within the Park
- Continue to Develop Long term plans for the extension of the track to Middleton Park. Consider setting up a crowd funding page for internet users across the world to contribute funds towards the delivery of the project. The history of the Middleton Railway Trust is a story worth telling and if achieved will increase visitors and the long-term sustainability of the trust
- There is a need to try to secure the track to avoid accidents and potential insurance claims working with the local school and John Charles Centre for Sport and the local council.

Oakwell Hall and Country Park

Gold

Overall Impression

Oakwell Hall Country Park is a wonderful country park providing excellent facilities for the community, and also includes wonderful habitats for a wide variety of wildlife.

The 110 acre site is managed and maintained to high standard by 3 very enthusiastic, knowledgeable gardeners led by Amanda and is an absolute haven for wildlife.

The Hall itself was built in 1583 and is now used for filming and weddings as well as a being a popular visitor attraction. There are attractive formal gardens here with appropriate planting.

There are numerous activities for the community eg work with 5 local schools on climate change project, a forest school, pond dipping etc. The park provides a very peaceful relaxing space for everyone.

Ravenshall Special Needs School have been visiting for some time on a weekly basis and now have been allocated an area entirely for their own use.

The paths and equipment are well maintained with safety in mind.

There are many well supported organised events and activities events in collaboration with numerous groups, - Health Walks, Park Run, Dog Shows, Concerts and support for Kirklees Year of Music 2023
Volunteers carry out general gardening maintenance, bulb planting etc.
There are 12 bee hives providing Oakwell Honey.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

There are many plans and hopes for the future so that the work can continue looking after the garden and its beautiful trees and to further enhance it. The current gardeners achieve a great deal but funding for additional staff would enable them to further develop this lovely park to its full future potential. Most areas of the park and garden were maintained to a high standard it was felt that the area around the entrance to the hall could have been better.

Scampston Walled Garden

Gold

Overall Impression

A surprise awaits the visitor to the walled garden at Scampston. Far from a traditional layout of paths and borders a hidden gem of contemporary design invites the curious into compartmentalised themed gardens, each with its own identity. The use and scale of yew hedges to delineate boundaries and as sculpted features adds another layer to the fascination and interest. Plant selection has been meticulous and a real bonus for any plantsman fortunate to visit. The drifts of Molinia grass were particularly impressive and the temptation to sit and enjoy the peace and quiet of a stunning design had to be resisted.

A garden of brick raised beds where flowering annuals and vegetables were interplanted, demonstrated that colour and attraction isn't limited to just seasonal bedding, and that shape and form of the humble vegetable can be appreciated in a different way. The abundance of flowering plants throughout the gardens attracts many bees and pollinators.

Other wildlife is catered for with nest boxes and a hedgehog house, seed heads are left for foraging birds, chemical use is almost absent and sacrificial plants used to protect susceptible vegetables. Overall the garden was stunning, the degree of care for both the visitor and plants was high and after a refreshing cuppa in the garden café there was the temptation to do the visit all over again. Well done to the staff and volunteers who make the visit to the gardens such an enjoyable experience.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Early completion of the plant identifier and labelling project should be seen as a priority, to help the keen visitor leave with their plant knowledge increased. Public awareness of the everyday activities used in the garden to support wildlife needs to be raised with either more signage at each location, or information boards and illustrations exhibited in the Heritage and Learning Centre conservatory.

The reinstatement of the demonstration beehive could increase visitor interest. It is suggested that the support of a local Beekeepers Association be sought to help with its reinstatement.

Sutton Park Stately Home

Gold

Overall Impression

Sutton Park Stately Home has a beautiful garden, with many appropriate features and wonderful trees probably dating back to the 1800's when the house was built. The family live here and there is a good balance between allowing their privacy and providing a visitor attraction.

I was given a very good informative tour of the garden by Michael the head gardener who, in the 9 years since his appointment, has made this neglected garden into the beautiful tranquil place it is today. His love of plants and his flare for design were evident throughout.

Many areas of the garden have been restored with their original features and are maintained to an extremely high standard.

The walled garden is a good example of what can be done for wildlife with a delightful mixture of long and short grass, a pond, and some trees. including some productive fruit trees.

The kitchen garden was very well maintained and productive, with a beautiful wildflower area. There are plans to include a seating area for visitors.

Other interesting features include a stumpery and fernery, and an ice house.

The three beautifully maintained terraces in front of the house are the formal part with a lily pond and appropriate planting throughout.

Recycling and composting are evident

There are many community activities and it is certainly a lovely to visit with its excellent tearoom.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This garden has been re-established over the last 9 years with a series of well-planned and costed proposals as time allows for this small gardening team to carry out and should continue.

It would be good to see this very beautiful garden develop as a visitor attraction but of course this must not impinge on the family requirements and privacy.

Thorp Perrow Arboretum

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

«F6»

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

«F7»

York Racecourse

Gold

Overall Impression

York Racecourse is a very special place with its own particular requirements for the purpose of the horse racing calendar. It is 300 years old, with a lot of history and many awards. It now has an environmental strategy for the next 300 years! The whole area is maintained to an exceptionally high standard and changes are continually being made to meet today's environmental needs.

There are 3 gardeners led by Zac who produce and maintain all the wonderful floral displays, mainly in the blue hues, for all areas of which there are very many. They grow all these plants themselves in their own poly tunnels. The quality of all the plants is exceptional as is the general maintenance everywhere.

To increase biodiversity, changes are continually being made to sustainable, and where appropriate insect friendly planting. Trees are being planted and much is being done for wildlife.

Every effort is made to reduce water consumption even though they have their own bore holes.

Stableside (the stable yards) was a very an interesting part of the tour. Horse welfare is paramount to everything. There are 200 stables with all the facilities needed including showers and blow driers. These stables were developed around two bowling greens that were no longer used for their original purpose. This area is being further developed with climate change and biodiversity in mind and at the same time ensuring that it is attractive with good horticulture in line with the environment strategy. There is hotel and hostel accommodation (sleeps 200) primarily for stable staff, but which is also available for the general public.

Although the racecourse is primarily for horse racing, it is widely used for very many other activities and as such is a real asset for the people of York and beyond.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This entry is of such a high standard with a good infrastructure in place to ensure its future it is difficult to add anything.

It was good to hear about all the future plans especially the development of the South End this winter and the ongoing development of Stableside.

Category C10 – Charitable Establishment

High Green Methodist Church

Gold and Joint
Category Winner

Overall Impression

The minute you walk up to this church you can quickly see how much care and attention has been placed with regards to the planting by David and Janet. The front of the church has been planted in a medallion shape of blue and yellow to show support for the Ukraine. The church gardens have a number of areas which can best be described as rooms. All differ from each other and are kept to a very high standard. I am sure this will bring great pleasure to the congregation. The areas consist of a mix of perennials and annual plants. As you walk to the front of the church the path has a lovely lavender border which was covered in bees collecting pollen.

On three corners of the church there are water butts there are a further few placed around the church hall. All green waste is composted. Many of the annuals have been grown from seeds. There is a wilding area and a fabulous vegetable garden. It is good to see the repurposing of the villages old wooden planters at the back of the church.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

David identified that there are a number of the shrubs that will require maintenance in the autumn/winter months.

- The lavenders look fantastic but it seems may require replacing in the near future.
- It would help if you could encourage more to join you. Perhaps posts on your Facebook page and added to the church's newsletter

St Gemma's Hospice

**Gold and Joint
Category Winner**

Overall Impression

Firstly, a big thank you for the very warm welcome the judges received on the day from Jason, Richard, Nathen, and Andy.

Set in 4 acres and flanked by Harrogate Road the gardens provide an oasis from the busy main roads around St Gemmas and are a credit to Andy and Nathen for the continued devotion to the project in producing a space where patients and families can enjoy and participate hands on in a peaceful inspiring place. Andie's enthusiasm was above all noticeable as not just a job and this is reflected greatly in the quality and diverse range of plants and themes running throughout the gardens. The gardens include the woodland area, Mediterranean garden, the rill, labyrinth, Walls of Light, Path of Life Garden and a raised alpine bed all sympathetically designed to add diversity while blending effortlessly within the gardens and are maintained to a very high standard.

The new Carbon Neutral Young Peoples Cabin, designed by ArkleBoyce as a designated place where children and families who have been bereaved can reflect within the heart of the gardens. The cabin made from various shades of wood blends perfectly within the garden and Andie's choice of plants with vibrant colours planted around the cabin compliments this wooden structure.

A key aspect of the gardens is the participation from patients in helping with projects or creating artwork incorporated into the gardens such as the mosaics inlaid within the paths, the management team along with the gardeners see this as a vital part of the ongoing treatment within St Gemmas.

There is evidence of composting, environmental and wildlife habitats, community links with schools.

The produce grown in the vegetable garden are used in the kitchens.

One project among many that the judges particularly liked was The Tree of Life situated in the memory garden at St Gemma's Hospice.

The Tree of Life is sculpted from bronze. The Leaves are made from copper and can be engraved in memory of a loved one. The leaves hang on the tree for a minimum of ten years, providing a lasting tribute to a loved one lost.

Can we take this opportunity to thank Jason and his team for a wonderful visit and a difficult one to fit every project within our comments.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Expand on the judges last year's comments and consider providing more bird boxes, feeders etc would you consider buying bird boxes, bat boxes kits etc, the patients can then assemble these together with the team and have their names added to the base making it their own contribution to biodiversity.

- Is there a potential to further develop the links with the school and invite them over to the gardens and the pond area to develop a project around wildlife, we think Andie's enthusiasm even to give a talk around the pond area would greatly benefit the school and raise awareness of what St Gemmas does.

Barnsley Hospice

Gold

Overall Impression

Barnsley Hospice has a very welcome maintained and pleasant main entrance that reflects the high standard of the surrounding gardens. The site is blessed with a relatively small and varied landscape and planting styles all of which have a riot of colour and textures which reflect the caring environment that is the core ethos of the site.

The day treatment room is connected via bi-folding doors to a private garden that has not only been planted up to the highest standard but it also boasts a water feature that provides relaxing noise and movement to the garden.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The gardening volunteers adopt good environment principles around the site and the plans to fit a 2500litre water tank to collect rain water is more than ticking a box.

Plans to sow wild flowers on the steep lawn to the rear of the facility has proved difficult given the dry spring and site conditions, as such considering planting wild flower plugs to supplement the seed next spring would be a good idea.

Grow with Case

Gold

Overall Impression

Case Training are a charity who offer training, support and development to adults with learning disabilities. Brenda and Sally look after anywhere between 15 to 20 learners throughout a week, usually split into 2 separate groups doing 2 days each per week. They have 4 allotment plots, 2 are new and 2 are well established.

The work undertaken on these plots covers a wide range of horticultural practices, from a variety of beautiful annual bedding plants grown from seed, wildflower gardens to produce in the form of fruit, vegetables and salad crops. These areas are maintained to a very high standard, the plants are in excellent health and the visual effects created by the displays give a wow factor. The crops grown on site either go back for use within CASE training kitchen, or for the learners to take home themselves.

Environmental promotion is a big thing for the team, with several compost heaps, wormeries, and some water storage tanks to collect rain water from the roof tops of their buildings. They have 3 bee hives on site and teach the learners practical beekeeping. Multiple bird feeder stations and nest boxes are placed around the site, attracting a wide variety of birds many of which were witnessed during our visit. They proudly display a recently won award from the Yorkshire Wildlife trust for this work.

The team have some very tight budgetary restraints to work with, so they have to be creative, and this is clear to see everywhere you look, in particular when it comes to recycling, as they make the most of everything possible on site, creating some fantastic displays using old window frames, reclaimed sleepers and a very colourful display using old golf balls, screws and sticks.

Brenda & Sally create some excellent local community links, through their facebook page, but also through networking with Hull University, Humberside police, the RSPCA and gain some donations through local businesses. They hold open days where they sell items made on site such as bird boxes and insect hotels, as well as honey from the hives.

Although we were unable to meet any of the trainees during our visit, we were shown videos and photos of them working throughout the year, such as Luke making his hedgehog house, Jack making the bug house and Dan making the gate. However, we did get to meet the resident cat, Smudge, who proudly followed us around during our visit.

Both Brenda and Sally have an infectious enthusiasm and passion for the work they do with their learners, and have meticulous standards of work produced, well done to everyone involved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The judges were unable to meet any of the trainees during our visit, this would have been nice to do so.

- Slug pellets were used with their operations, could a more environmental option be used going forward, such as wool pellets?
- The work undertaken by the trainees is of a brilliant standard, could vocational training be offered to them whilst performing this work?

- During our visit, we were informed of the plans to place braille signs around the allotments, this would definitely enhance the experience for visually impaired trainees and visitors.

Mires Beck Nursery

Silver

Overall Impression

Mires Beck Nursery is located in the beautiful rural setting of North Cave in East Yorkshire and was established as a charity in 1994 to provide adults with learning disabilities with a 'place to go and a place to grow'.

The nursery is managed by small team of 34 enthusiastic volunteers and 35 members of staff who provide an extraordinary level of care for over 96 service users and the environment in which they work - as well as producing a vast range of high-quality perennials, herbs, wildflower pollinators, and trees for sale.

On entering the nursery, visitors are greeted with an array of colourful herbaceous borders that spill out over the walkways and beds. All plant species have been well thought out for their locations along with the ornaments and artwork that provide focal points and inspiration.

It soon becomes obvious that wildlife, conservation, and an aspiration to be organic is at the heart of what Mires Beck does. There is a mixed variety of planted areas from gravel gardens which display a diverse range of drought tolerant plants, to the City of Sanctuary Garden designed by Alice and the team to welcome asylum seekers to the area and offer them an opportunity to find a community and improve their mental health and wellbeing. In the corner of the site, just before entering the woodland there is also the Anniversary Garden which is currently the home to a variety of Apothecary Roses.

Recycling features heavily in the day-to-day operations at Mires Beck with a move to using taupe coloured plant pots, so that they can be reprocessed easily to reduce waste into landfill. Additionally organic waste is composted on site, and wildflower seeds are collected to produce native species plants which can be sold and distributed to improve conservation, along with 350,000 trees which are being produced to supply the Yorkshire Forest.

The woodland is a haven for wildlife and the bark footpaths, log piles, bird boxes and bug hotels all contribute to the rich biodiversity of the local area and help to preserve the much-needed natural resources that are at risk from climate change. Partnership is the key to Mires Beck's success, and it has strong relationships with local Dementia and Autism Charities as well as older and younger people's organisations such as Age UK and the Humber Forest Schools Programme. Engaging with the wider community appears to be a challenge, but the Friends group continue to support and promote the work of the charity as well as an active social media network and website. Funding and support for Mires Beck is good with a healthy income generated through the sale of plants, produce and crafts. It also relies on the donations from local sponsors such as Smailes Goldie Group Accountants and Hainsworth Park Golf Club. Well-done to all the team for their

hard work and commitment, and a big thank you from the judges to Karen for being our guide for the visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- We may have missed this - Although the nursery demonstrates a keen ethos for conservation and recycling, it would have been interesting to understand about the possibilities of water harvesting from the roofs of the extensive range of buildings to reduce the reliance on the mains supply.
- The judges would like to have met more of the trainees and other volunteers such as members of the 'Friends' Group that engage in the activities on the nursery. Maybe a consideration for future years?
- Although there was some interpretation at the Sanctuary Garden, the judges would like to have seen a little bit more information displayed across the nursery, explaining garden themes, habitats, and plant combinations to enhance the visitor experience.
- A judges information sheet/pack of the entry would have been useful in advance to give context to the visit along with some photographs to show the seasonal changes throughout the year.
- Some of the gravel paths and driveways would benefit from some form of environmental weed treatment such as hand weeding or hoeing more frequently.

Northcliffe Environmental Enterprises Team (NEET)

Gold

Overall Impression

Overall NEET gives the strong impression of a thriving horticultural and environmental centre on a mission to enable people with learning difficulties to lead an inclusive and fulfilling life. A small team of paid staff together with 5 volunteers enable about 75 team members a week to participate in a working environment offering horticulture, cooking and woodwork opportunities. There is clearly an entrepreneurial and creative approach to design and materials which creates a series of interesting working gardens, horticultural workspaces, workshops and polytunnels. This is exemplified by both the raised beds in the kitchen garden and the new kitchen which is a very successful addition to the onsite provision. A drive towards environmental sustainability is very much part of NEET's ethos with many examples of recycling, reuse and upcycling evident using both donated and in house materials and resources. The breadth and scope of NEET's community work is impressive including both in reach and outreach with a range of community partners, schools and businesses. Best practice is promoted through sharing ideas and benchmarking with other centres offering similar opportunities for people with learning disabilities in the region. Income generation

opportunities are furthered wherever possible including through an onsite retail nursery together with fund raising and partnership activity.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The plans to continue to grow and develop the successful community programme of activities and partnerships both off site and on site is very much supported. The ideas being explored to utilise the new kitchen for cookery and healthy eating life skills for team members and wider community groups sound promising.

Rainbow Community Garden Hull

Gold

Overall Impression

We were very impressed by the Rainbow Garden project and by the number and range of people the garden is helping from Messy Play for youngsters to Social Prescribing, Dads Club, After School Provision, Work Experience, Half Term Crafts for Families, Summer Programme Healthy Holidays and many winter activities and events. This is a garden where people can come to play, garden, chat and just generally chill. We were also impressed by the leadership skills of Brenda and Emma who obviously love what they do and the people they work with.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Horticulture

Generally the horticulture within the garden was very good although perhaps it had suffered a little from the recent dry weather.

The greenhouse with tomatoes and cucumbers was very productive.

It was interesting to hear about future projects in the area at the back of the garden – possibly a cutting garden or a stumpery – and the fairy garden at the entrance.

Continue with your efforts to bring these areas up to standard as your time and funding allows.

The communal plots rented out to local people is a great initiative and makes good use of this extra piece of land to the side of the main garden.

Environment

There was plenty of evidence of recycling initiatives throughout the garden including water saving, composting and recycling including the composting toilet! A small pond area also adds to the overall environmental theme in the garden along with a bug hotel, and several wood piles.

The willow arch is one of the oldest features in the garden and it is good to hear that it is valued and looked after, offering shade in a hot summer where families can play and adding a touch of mystery to that part of the garden.

Community

The judges were very impressed with the range and scope of service users using the garden from Messy Play for youngsters to Social Prescribing, Dads Club, After School Provision, Work Experience, Half Term Crafts for Families, Summer Programme Healthy Holidays and many winter activities and events.

Funding and support for Rainbow appears to be excellent and this will help the overall project be sustainable into the future. Lottery funding has enabled a new operations manager to be appointed allowing team leaders Brenda and Emma to concentrate their efforts on service users and the garden.

All these activities cover a wide age range and it would be nice on a future date to meet a cross section of these garden users and to hear their experiences of Rainbow.

Category C6 – Parks, Gardens, Cemeteries

Elsecar Park

Platinum and Category Winner

Overall Impression

Elsecar Park is a very well used family friendly park which consists of 21 acres and comprises of a traditional park area planted in keeping with its age and heritage. Pitch and Put, a large children's play area, a lovely café and a nature reserve. All busy when I visited.

The park is maintained by a small parks team from Barnsley Council. On speaking with them it is immediately evident to hear how dedicated they are and see the pride they take in their work. It was good to hear how they had improved the beds around the bandstand which all looked in keeping with the park.

The park has a number of areas that seamlessly roll into each other. To say this is a very well used park it was extremely clean, tidy and litter free.

There is an active friends group who meet monthly for litter picks and weeding. They actively fund raise for the park by arranging brass band concerts in the band stand and selling a calendar. From funds raised they commissioned, and now have in place, a sculpture of two people and a dog – who are representative of the people who regularly visit the park. The pieces of sculpture have carved into them the various flora, fauna and wildlife which can be found in the park. This makes a lovely welcoming entrance to the park from the main gateway.

In the Nature Reserve there were people fishing on the reservoir and there were many children engaging with the local wildlife. There is also a bird hide with an interpretation board.

From an environmental perspective it was great to hear how no green waste leaves the park it is all recycled and composted.
The café is very popular and was full. I can fully recommend it to anyone visiting!

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Elsecar Park has Green Flag status and it is clear as to why it has achieved this very high standard. Making suggestions for consideration is a challenge.

Therefore these are only suggestions:

We discussed making fertiliser from the nettles in the area where the sheep graze. There are interpretation boards with QR codes which is helpful. Perhaps consider something similar for plant identification or place identification labels in the park area.

Consider water harvesting from the roof of the container or toilets.

Barnsley Main Heritage Group

Gold

Overall Impression

The winding gear of Barnsley Main Coal Mine which closed in 1991 is the prominent feature of this entry and is an important relic of the areas industrial past. The Phytimining garden project trial to extract metals from the ground using plants that absorb different elements if proved viable will be an invaluable alternative to mining for metals.

The site covers 7 acres and whilst the area to the frontage is open space the area surrounding is mainly woodland and is being managed by a dedicated group of volunteers that are actively engaging the wider community to use the site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The plans for the wetland area at the back of the building using the water off the roof is in principle a good idea, however consideration should be given to the water run off from the feature given the topography of the site.

Carry out a species survey on the banking next to the road to ascertain where it's viable to enhance with native wild flowers.

The signage on site was excellent and maybe in addition more information with regards the canal that runs past the site would close the circle on the historical transport links to the site.

Canon Hall Museum park Gardens

Platinum

Overall Impression

Cannon Hall Museum Park and Gardens popularity speaks for itself-having clocked up more than 250,000 visitors by July this year. The hard and soft landscape have been thought out with the visitors and heritage of the site in mind, having different themed areas around the periphery of the park to leave uninterrupted views of the parkland and surrounding countryside from the museum frontage. Dan the head gardener has to be commended for the high quality of maintenance achieved with minimal staff which are complemented by 38 volunteers that are also involved in fund raising for ongoing projects.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Consider more species posts in the walled garden to give the site a heightened horticultural experience for the visitor similar the species labelling of the pear tree collection .

The renovations to the Vinery are nearly completed and it would have been appropriate to have clear signage on the ongoing works and the fund raising from the friends of group to achieve this.

Carlton Marsh Nature Reserve

Platinum

Overall Impression

Once past the car park this site is a real treasure in the surrounding industrial area. Salvaged from a potential landfill site and a number of scrap yards the variety of habitats and wildlife supported is truly amazing.

The annual Natural History report, now in its 47th year details a phenomenal amount of work undertaken by Carlton Marsh Wildlife Group, Barnsley Metropolitan Council Rangers, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, North East area team and Barnsley Community Build. It also catalogues the number and variety of species found within the recording area.

The new hide created in a shopping container is a great asset to the group. Visitors to the site are welcomed by the group members who are keen to share their impressive knowledge. We were accompanied on our visit by Cliff, Dave and Logan. Along the route we met Pete who had come up with and implemented an innovative plan for repairing the benches and other members who were keen to report new sightings and to help us to identify the birds using the pond, including a very rare duck with its duckling.

The knowledge within the group and its supporters has enabled the maintenance to be targeted to sustaining the habitat and maximising the species who benefit. This in turn benefits the local community and visitors who can access this lovely site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue opening up the dense tree planting to allow light through to the understorey, especially along the railway path.
- Development of the moth trapping area on the site of the old hide.
- Consider how to bring on board new younger members who can carry forward the work of the group.

Cliffe Castle

Platinum

Overall Impression

It was lovely to visit Cliffe Castle on a lovely summer day. The views from the Castle are splendid and it was great to meet so many local community groups who love and help the castle. We could see too that the castle clearly loves the local community and that is lovely to hear about.

The variety of local groups who come to the castle to take part in many and varied activities which greatly benefit everyone involved was very impressive.

We thought the planting of Asian herbs was a lovely and unique idea and those involved should be proud. The variety of wide health promoting events and activities on site is great to hear about.

We were very pleased to hear of the care for wildlife shown by the site and the great efforts that are being made to conserve and encourage it. The bee survey carried out by the site was a lovely idea and it is good that the site is such a valuable addition to local bee corridors.

We were pleased to hear about the recycling of green waste and the sites support of the No Mow May initiative. It is good to know that there is a peat free policy the use of chemicals is strictly limited and that equipment is being replaced with electric items to reduce environmental impact.

The orchard and the raised bed area are valuable projects and we were pleased to hear schools and families will be involved. The idea of introducing musical stones is very exciting.

It was impressive to hear that people are actively supporting the self service litter picking initiative on site.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The Asian herbs planted on site were very interesting and we hope this project will grow over time. Perhaps some cooking demonstrations featuring such herbs would be possible somewhere on site.

We appreciate that use of bedding plants is limited for environmental reasons but perhaps small, colourful perennials could be added to the beds passed on entering the site and below the restaurant for added impact as people enter the site.

Consider installing information boards on the wildlife on site to encourage people to look around them.

Conyngham Hall

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

It was lovely to visit Conyngham Hall on a lovely summers day and hear about the efforts being made to increase biodiversity on site and to hear how the site forms part of green corridors for wildlife. The lovely grounds and splendid tree specimens are an asset to the community. The efforts to open up new areas for pollinator planting are a valuable idea.

There are magnificent tree specimens on site and it was great to hear about the tree planting taking place.

The masses of bulbs planted on site will be a lovely spring feature.

It was pleasing to hear that chemicals on site are kept to a minimum.

The number and variety of public events held on site is impressive.

The tree carving in the public car park enhanced the area.

The family golf course is a pleasing feature.

The Conyngham Kiosk and the various games facilities are a wonderful facility for families to enjoy. The nature activities undertaken at the Kiosk are very valuable.

The volunteers who run the Kiosk are doing a wonderful job for families.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Refreshing the nature trail is a lovely idea. Hopefully some of the original art works along the trail can be restored.

Working with the Henshaws Art Centre to create mosaics to enhance the trail is a good idea.

Continuing to make a pollinator friendly area at the Hall is a lovely idea.

Perhaps make use of social media to make people aware of projects like the pollinator area and the new nature trail would be a good idea.

Consider making labels for the new pollinator plants to help people who might like to attract pollinators to their own gardens.

Friends of Brighthouse Railway Station Platinum

Overall Impression

The Friends of Brighthouse Station are a really friendly and hard working group. The minute you drive into the car park there are two well established beds containing perennials with only a few annuals on one side for colour. One bed is referred to as a 'Climate Change' bed and has been planted with drought tolerant shrubs and herbs.

Moving on to the station area you can see how clean, tidy and litter free it is. The team have 28 fence planters and 18 barrel planters along both platforms. These are regularly watered and maintained. The team work closely with the rail network and much of their work has to be approved by them in order to comply with railway safety regulations. A challenge which they have met.

I was shown an area which Norman has responsibility for, there is an impressive water harvesting system designed and put in place by him. There is also the composting area and the nursery beds where spare plants are kept and maintained. He also has re purposed the old fencing which has recently been replaced and created a number of raised beds and path edgings from the wood. Platform 2 has a natural area which is not accessible to the public. In here there are a wide range of plants that require little tending other than general maintenance. It was lovely to see the teasels, grasses and Echinacea to name some of the healthy plants living in this area.

There is a further 'Climate Change' bed being created – this is an ongoing process and is already looking good.

It was impressive to hear and see how the majority of the planters are sponsored annually by local Brighthouse businesses.

Paul, the Chairman and his team are to be congratulated on their work. They pride themselves on there being colour throughout the year and not just through the spring and summer months.

There is clear evidence of the team working with the community. Spare plants have been given to a couple of local businesses to help them with the frontages of their premises.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

We discussed the possibility of adding an acer to the area off platform 1 to give additional colour in the autumn.

We discussed Lily of the Valley plants being added to the area on platform 2 as they seem to thrive in semi shade.

Continue to promote the team and their work on notice boards

Keep on publishing your work through the newsletter, local newspapers and via social media.

Friends of Monk Bretton Park

Platinum

Overall Impression

A very interesting park with a great deal of history. The new notice board at the entrance clearly explains the history of the site.

The large central area is ridge and furrow and the majority of the planting is around the perimeter. The old paddling pool has reverted to a wildlife pond.

The friends Group working day is a Thursday when I was lucky enough to visit and see the work that was being carried out clearing the pond steps and weeding the shrub beds.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The friends group has recently had a number of new members by reaching out on social media, in the local paper and on Radio Sheffield. Continue to reach out and encourage new members.
- Consider developing the boundary between the houses and the footpath from the main entrance to the playground further using either a wild flower or perennial meadow mix.
- Consider enquiring about section 106 monies to fund improvements to the infrastructure.
- Replant the hedge destroyed by wildfire with native species.
- Having heard the recollections of group members about games played within the local mining communities I can see the potential for an event based on reviving these. I am sure many of the local community would love to try their hand at Nipsy

Friends of Sheffield Botanical Gardens

Platinum

Overall Impression

The garden was established in 1836 by Robert Marnock, who as a landscape designer was known for the Gardenesque style which featured winding paths amongst tree planted mounds. Today the friends with a membership of 500 and active volunteers approaching 100 are one of the groups ensuring the success and maintenance the garden. The colonnade of greenhouses provides a distinctive feature of the garden. In practical terms the garden is peat free has extensive compost heaps, bees and areas of long grass. However as a botanical garden it has an important plant collections, and plant records since start of the gardens. To-day this care and recording can be seen in the form of plant labels. The small council team, volunteers and supporters are to be congratulated on keeping this important garden open and maintained.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The evolution bed will continue to develop and thought is ongoing as to how this can be explained to the public. It is an important resource for school parties.

The provision of horticultural education in the Dorothy Fox building is to be encouraged and developed when possible.

The installation of the volunteers building will provide due recognition for the work put in for the benefit of the garden.

The garden issues such as re planting beds, path repair and so on are all planned to take place.

The main entrance is a little drab and the borders just inside the gate may benefit from some attention.

Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

We received a warm welcome from Friends of Sowerby Bridge Railway Station volunteers - a very friendly united group determined to enhance their local station and surrounding area. There is a pleasant area with bird and bat boxes at the station approach welcoming travellers. The Bronte Garden is a delight with seasonal flower beds, planters and a recycled trolley sporting an antique flower filled suitcase. Notice boards about the Brontes - particularly Branwell - showing the plants and flowers he sketched and there is a War Memorial dedicated to the Lancashires and Yorkshire railwaymen killed in 1914 -18 war where the the annual Remembrance service is held.

There are numerous barrel planters and fence baskets on the station planted with shrubs, perennials and seasonal bedding to welcome travellers, plus impressive information posters. Grants and sponsorship from the council, local business and the Ward Forum have all contributed to the very impressive water butts, barrels and the delightful miniature train in the Bronte garden - also planted with flowers. The group have bird feeders and boxes on a small area of council owned land. Through the hard work and dedication of this relatively small group of volunteers, rail users and commuters are welcomed by lovely, colourful planters plus a wealth of local history on the platforms and around the station - well done everyone.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Possibly contact the council with suggestions for the maintenance of the small council owned bed at the station - otherwise just keep up the wonderful work.

Friends of Thurnscoe Park

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

The Park was well signed and had been fitted with new gates improving the overall appearance.

On the day of the visit a number of volunteers were working in the park maintaining the shrub beds and clearing up fallen leaves on the grassed areas. It was clear that they require more direction in order to prioritise and maximise effort. The removal of the fence dividing the play area and incorporating the area into the park has made a major improvement and made it more inclusive.

The work undertaken by the friend's group on replanting and replacement of shrubs and perennial plants is ongoing and will benefit the park in the longer term. There were a number of conservation projects taking place around the perimeters of the park to encourage wildlife some of which will require additional work.

The war memorial in the centre of the park makes a great focal point set around the shrub planting and trees.

There was no litter or dog fouling noticed during the judging visit as the park has a high footfall of local residents passing through to shops within the village.

A good entry

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The current arrangement of devolved budgets for the park within the council is not working and more coordination is needed to ensure that you are getting maximum value for money and better support and direction for the park's volunteers

- There is a need for the local volunteers to agree a maintenance plan with the council's Parks service each year for all aspects of maintenance work to ensure that the grass cutting service and community engagement contractor (Twigg's) deliver to the agreed standards
- The Local Authority should review the grass cutting frequency within the ornamental areas of the park as a more regular frequency would lift the overall area and quality of the park and compliment the maintenance activities carried out by local volunteers.
- The volunteers should try to concentrate on one or two specific projects each year in order to lift the overall quality of the entry
- The use of more perennial planting would add more colour around the central feature of the park. Some of the current perennial Geranium varieties could be lifted and divided in the autumn to provide additional plants. The need to continue to refresh key shrub beds and planting over the next few years will require additional funding from local area devolved budgets.
- It was good to hear about plans to relocate seating to offer more shade during summer and construction of a new path into the playground area from external Parks funding.
- The ongoing plans for more conservation work to encourage more wildlife are great perhaps more bird boxes in the trees working with the RSPB at Wombwell

who would provide advice and guidance would encourage more small birds to the area.

- The commemorative oak trees area is becoming established and will make a real difference to tree cover in that part of the park.

Friends of York Cemetery

Platinum

Overall Impression

This cemetery was first opened in 1837 and now covers 24 acres with 28,000 graves. The site became an overgrown and dilapidated wilderness until 1987 when it was taken over by York Cemetery Trust. The chapel was beautifully restored at this time so that it is now fully utilised for many events including funerals, concerts, talks and group meetings etc.

The maintenance and development of the whole site is mainly carried out by a large very active Friends Group led by their chairman Clive who is quite inspirational and extremely knowledgeable. Their newsletter is sent all over the world.

The site is a lovely peaceful, tranquil place to visit with many interesting features including the monuments and graves stones. It is a haven for wildlife with the natural environment as well as suitable planting, bird boxes and a butterfly wall etc. There are very many beautiful old trees and some more recently planted ones. Many areas have been renovated to reflect much of the history of the site which is well documented. There are also some newer features, which include a herb garden, a fossil tree lawn, wild flower areas, a fernery and a heritage apple orchard. The aim is to have flowers and colour throughout the year. This includes a very good display of a variety of spring bulbs.

The area is well maintained in an appropriate manner, which, is an enormous task. It also has to move forward to meet today's requirements.

There is an abundance of information and many group activities and talks about the many different aspects of this lovely old cemetery eg evening bat walks, guided walks.

Children are always welcome.

It is all very clean and tidy with no litter.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This entry has so much to offer which is provided by a wonderful team of volunteers and support from the council.

It is important to ensure that this can continue and should do so, with all the excellent publicity, events, group working and communication, often using social media.

Continue with the existing future development plans ensuring that there are sufficient resources for general maintenance.

As there is so much wildlife it would be a good idea to work with a suitable organisation to make a record of it all.

Harold Park

Gold

Overall Impression

A very dedicated group with a strong community ethos

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

General maintenance could be improved with increased support from Bradford City council. Could local councillors be lobbied on this matter, in line with the council policies in improving biodiversity, and could they be encouraged to add the park to the list of registered parks which might increase funding?

Registered Parks and Battlefields | Bradford Council

It would be good to see wildlife being encouraged into the park. Obviously the lakes are already a great resource for waterbirds and related flora and fauna. Could there be an interpretation board about the waterfowl to be seen on the main lake? A small wildflower meadow is a good step in supporting wildlife in other areas of the park.

It would be good to see evidence of more initiatives in regard to recycling/ reusing etc.

Hillsborough Park Walled Garden

Gold

Overall Impression

The Friends of Hillsborough park continue to ensure that the community has access to a well maintained garden and nature area. The herbaceous borders outside the walled garden provide a floral entrance to the park and a garden that is of a high quality. The walled garden is laid out in such away that it is essential to walk and explore as there are surprise plantings and gems around every corner. Less exciting but essential is the wall repair programme that has continued and seems to be approaching completion. The site incorporates a wildlife area, stumpery and a surprisingly long children's woodland walk, which provides a

sense of discovery and adventure for children. The last remaining rowing boat from the lake ensures that visitors rekindle memories of boating in their younger days.

The two greenhouses are used to produce plants for the garden and sale to raise funds, the group also works with a large retailer who's released stock is donated to the group, again reselling to raise funds helps the project.

The garden is now surrounded by restored buildings which brings activity and purpose to the once derelict site. A project within a building is the repair shop thus aiding recycling/re-use and community engagement.

The group also gain, as the restored buildings provide them with sheltered facilities for events and the weekly refreshment demands of working parties.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

A number of projects were discussed and the achievement's to date indicate that when circumstances allow they will be completed.

The fountain at the heated wall to restore to working order.

Completion of the main brick work repairs on the raised beds

In some ways the biggest challenge is to try to find a way to get the benches restored, but this is a big task given the number of benches in the garden.

When wall repairs are carried out to the doorway, restore the paved area and install the riot head stones.

Try to take time to enjoy the garden but when doing so make a note of areas that may benefit from a little bit of attention or replanting.

HMP Hull

Platinum

Overall Impression

HMP Hull was opened in 1870 and is steeped in history. It has two original Victorian wings at the front of the building and a modern extension to the rear that was constructed in 2002.

The prison may look forbidding from the outside, but once inside you are greeted with a welcoming oasis of superbly maintained floral features of exceptional quality. Around every corner the displays are complemented by innovative pieces of artwork and sculpture that are created in the onsite 'Men of Steel' workshop. The prison boasts a range of different gardens, starting with Emma's Garden which is situated at the heart of the prison. It is a fitting tribute to a former member of staff and is carpeted with neatly manicured lawns that are maintained by Carlos and Dave. The area is planted with a rainbow of seasonal bedding plants including begonias, marigolds and sunflowers that are complimented by a framework of sustainable shrubs and climbers giving all year-round interest. The newly created Islamic Garden is also outstanding. It provides a multifaith calming and tranquil

retreat displaying lavender hedges punctuated by perfectly trimmed topiaries in symmetry with each other.

In addition to the specific gardens, walkways, pathways, and roadsides are planted, or have containers bringing splashes of colour throughout the site. A special mention must go to Spike for his constant dedication to keeping the footpaths and walkways meticulously swept.

In the Kitchen Garden with its large polytunnel, and a newly renovated greenhouse, there is a significant growing area maintained by Jamie and Chris where Cucumbers, Peppers and Chillies are grown for the prison kitchens. This space is also used to propagate the bedding plants and cuttings for use in the annual bedding displays.

At HMP Hull, the environment is at the heart of what it does. All plant species have been well thought out for their locations, and the emphasis of biodiversity shows through with the clever use of wildflower pollinators and the inclusion of bird boxes and insect hotels. Recycling is evident through the extensive composting of green waste and production of organic fertilisers from the onsite wormeries. Peat free compost is used extensively in plant production and water is conserved by collecting rainwater from roofs where appropriate.

Engaging with the broader community can be a challenge for the prison however its social media page has gone from strength to strength showing an initiative-taking commitment to engaging with the public beyond the prison walls.

Additionally, links with organisations such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and the RHS Community Outreach has helped raise awareness of the work of the team.

Learning is a key feature in developing the gardens to achieve horticultural standards of excellence. Educational opportunities are offered to team members, such as NVQ Level 1 and 2 in Horticulture and qualifications through the British Beekeeping Association gives participants the chance to secure accredited certificates that will help towards future employment on release. There are also supporting opportunities for team members to get involved in the peer mentoring programme. The judges would like to thank Sophie for explaining how the programme works.

Well-done to all the team for their hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment, and a big thank you from the judges to Dave for being our guide for the visit.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Many large projects have been undertaken over recent years with exceptional results. The recent investment into the Islamic Garden and the accredited training programme is testimony to this. It would be great to see additional training opportunities and investment being expanded in the future to continue this amazing work.
- The judges noted that there are problems with the seasonal planting in the borders along the main walk between (B) wing and the education block. So going forward it might be worth considering planting more sustainable species in that area.
- The two potted Cordylines at the entrance to the polytunnel would benefit from additional feeding and a couple of the topiaries in the Islamic Garden were showing signs of distress and may require replacing, however on the scale of things these are very minor comments!

HMPS New Hall

Silver

Overall Impression

This is a new project with the objective of improving the environment of a very large and diverse site. The initial work to provide a tidy and floral entrance is successful with a number of planters being positioned over what had been a bleak area of tarmac.

The planting of fruit trees, vegetable gardens, turning grass borders into flower beds and a large number of hanging baskets ensures that the results of the project can be seen in many areas of the site.

There is a lot of work to do but the results so far indicate that the very positive results will be achieved for all those involved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Many of the seasonal flowers can only be placed by the use of tubs or baskets, consideration could be given to using perennial plants on some of the borders, as this could give colour and interest year, round and may reduce some of the maintenance work.

Continue with the idea of developing the small wetland and meadow area which along with bird boxes will increase the bio diversity of the site.

Continue with the drive to improve the landscape of what is a very difficult site with narrow grass verges and areas of tarmac amongst a considerable number of buildings.

Keighley Town Hall Square

Platinum

Overall Impression

It was lovely to visit the Town Hall Square and see the colourful bedding looking at its best. It was lovely too to meet the dedicated gardener who is responsible for the impressive display. This is certainly a lovely spot for residents and visitors to enjoy, it lights up the town.

The bedding in the square is most impressive. We were impressed too by the imagination and care which had been taken in planning and planting these designs, which this year featured Union Jacks in celebration of the Coronation earlier on.

We enjoyed seeing the photographs of designs from seasons and years gone by. It is clear that the excellent bedding is consistently impressive. It is pleasing that the square also enjoys beautiful spring bedding and bulbs.

We were impressed by the care taken from the gardener, who visits nurseries during the growing season to ensure the quality of the plants.

The quality of the bedding was high throughout the site, healthy and trouble free. It was good to hear that the bedding is chosen to be bee friendly and supports the fact that Keighley is a bee friendly town. It was also good to see the occupied bat box on site and to hear that the site is hedgehog friendly.

The Town Council is to be commended for its ambition of making Keighley full of flowers.

It was pleasing to hear the way the site honours the heritage of the town. We enjoyed seeing the Workers Memorial and the areas celebration local residents such as Sir Tom Moore.

It was a good idea to install recycled

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The bedding is beautiful but perhaps it might be possible for renewal work on the perennial area. Perhaps a few perennials which are as insect friendly as the bedding might be installed among the evergreen presence. Perhaps lavender would do well in the sunny square.

Since the site is so insect friendly it might be an idea to install an information board telling people about the effort to encourage wildlife in the square.

Knaresborough Castle

Gold

Overall Impression

It was lovely to visit such a beautiful and historic site and to see the wonderful views surrounding it. This is a lovely green heart of the town and it was wonderful to hear of the varied activities taking place there.

The range of activities taking place at the castle is very impressive and it was lovely to hear of the varied free activities which the castle is able to provide.

The yew hedge following the ancient lines of the castle walls was a very appropriate and well maintained feature.

The lime avenue within the castle grounds is a lovely feature.

The castle moat is a valuable haven for wildlife with many wildlife friendly plants such as brambles. Together with the river and the surrounding woodland it is a valuable part of a wildlife corridor.

The war memorial is beautifully maintained and the planting around it has tremendous impact. It is a beautiful feature within the grounds and clearly very much loved and cherished.

Allowing children to design a feature bed is a lovely idea.

It was pleasing to see the information boards in the grounds.

The mosaic pavement feature, showing the history of the castle is beautifully carried out.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Perhaps plant young trees in a position to replace the lime avenue when they finally come to the end of their time.

Increase provision for wildlife further still by introducing bird and bat boxes to the many trees on site.

Perhaps consider using social media such as Facebook even further to inform a wider public of the castle and its events.

Consider tubs of scented planting near the seating overlooking the viaduct view for visitors to enjoy the colour and perfume and to bring in butterflies

Royston Canal Club

Platinum

Overall Impression

A beautiful tranquil space maintained by a small dedicated group of volunteers, each working to their own strengths.

The ongoing work of the members of Royston Canal Club to clear the weed from the canal, cut back the tow path and overhanging vegetation from the canal and around the fishing pegs and to deal with occasional vandalism and anti-social behaviour make the area a pleasant place to be for both anglers and visitors to the canal path.

The pleasant picnic area together with the smartly painted fence and informative notice boards give the area a sense of identity.

Funding from a number of sources has enabled the improvements to the footpaths and the fishing pegs and the purchase of a new boat have made the site safer and more accessible for all.

Importantly the group are supportive of each other and are keen to share their knowledge and find ways to pass on their skills to youngsters by working with the local schools.

The pleasant picnic area together with the smartly painted fence and informative notice boards give the area a sense of identity.

Funding from a number of sources has enabled the improvements to the footpaths and the fishing pegs and the purchase of a new boat have made the site safer and more accessible for all.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Continue the programme of renovation to the fishing pegs.
- Consider monitoring the wildlife attracted to the area and maintaining a record.
- Continue to try and engage with the local schools to raise awareness of both angling and the importance of respecting the environment.

Roberts Park

Gold

Overall Impression

Roberts Park is a beautiful, well-maintained, mature park having been opened in 1871. On the outskirts of Saltaire village it forms part of the UNESCO World Heritage site. All maintenance of the park and its structures are carried out with respect for the original design, even the colour schemes for the planting and the benches and bins reflect Titus Salts dislike of primary colours.

The park is used by both local residents who value the green space and tourists visiting the area. Roberts Park also hosts Saltaire Cricket Club. 1.2 million people are estimated to pass through Roberts Park each year.

The site underwent a complete restoration in 2010 funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Since then works have been continued to improve the site. A programme of works is ongoing to manage the 30 species of holly trees. An avenue of Cherry trees has been newly planted in the location of a row of trees shown on the original plans but never planted.

The band stand is the focal point of fundraising by the Friends Group who host 19 performances during the year including local choirs, open mic events, brass bands and Shakespeare in the Park. All events are free and money is raised by bucket collections.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Continue with the management of the Holly trees to open up the site and improve safety for park users.

- Support the development of the orienteering course for use by local schools and groups.
- The conversion of part of the Lodge to a Breastfeeding Welcome venue will be beneficial to mums using the site.

Sandringham Park

Platinum

Overall Impression

Sandringham Park is far removed from the traditional formal open space expected by the judges. There is an established fixed play area, some seating, picnic tables and static fitness equipment. However around the margins of the park is a large established wildlife area. The trees and undergrowth hide well formed paths made by exploring children. Bird boxes, insect houses and bird feeders packed with alpaca fleece for nesting material are strategically placed in the canopies. Dense fruit bearing thickets hide hedgehog homes, large decaying logs and woodpiles around the margins of the wooded areas provide habitats for invertebrates all promoting a greater biodiversity into the park. With a future wildflower meadow area planned to create yet another feature for the park it is not surprising that the park is well used by neighbouring residents and a number of local groups. The group of volunteers who keep the park exceptionally clean and tidy and promote the park unceasingly through their excellent use of social media should be congratulated on their endeavours.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Reconsider the location of the proposed wildflower meadow to take advantage of the less shaded open space area.
- Possibly use the hard standing of the unused section of the playground as a raised bed or container garden area for floral displays, fruit and vegetable growing and an herb bed. This will allow greater opportunity for those with mobility challenges to get involved with the park activities.
- Keep up the excellent use of social media.

Scholes Lodge Field

Silver Gilt

Overall Impression

Scholes Lodge Field was a large area of farmland that is now a designated Public Open Space for the community. It is of significant archaeological importance due to it forming parts of a medieval manor and moat. The moat and ancient technique of ridge and furrow is still evident when walking the grounds, which is explained on an informative interpretation board near the Leeds Road entrance. Another interpretation board is present at the other entrance off Main Street, along with dog bag dispensers made from recycled bottles which is a fantastic idea for keeping the field clean.

It was lovely to see that a bug hotel has been created with the help of the local school children. It is topped with mesh fairies to give a fantasy feel to the space

and featured in a 'Fairyland Day' event which was held on the field. Another event was 'Apple Day', which was held so that visitors could harvest the apples from the planted apple trees. As well as apples, there are also plum, pear and cherry trees planted, with future plans in place for the avenue to be named by locals, and memorial trees and plaques to be purchased in memory of loved ones to create ownership for the local community.

One significant event held on the field in June, thanks to a grant from the Leeds Festival Fund, was a large circus event that brought locals onto the field and promoted the group and their work.

It was great to see that planting has been given thought, with Golden Willow planted to combat some of the bogginess on the field, and plans in place to plant tall shrubs on the border to shield the site and orchard from strong winds.

Despite archaeological constraints due to the history of the site, other future plans are in place. Plans are in place to move the current position of the owl box, to develop the bridge area near the Leeds Road-side of the field and create a dipping pond due to the wetness of the area, and to install grass matting or something similar to create paths for better accessibility to areas of the field.

The judges would like to thank Janet for showing us around, and for her hard work over the last six years along with the other volunteers who help to keep the field in such a good condition.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was great to see that a natural, native wildflower area has been introduced. Could yellow rattle be introduced to this to add some pops of colour within and to keep some of the tall grasses down, allowing other flowers to grow through.
- Judges look forward to the future plans in place, such as the relocation of the owl box, accessibility improvements, and the development of the pond area.
- It was great to hear that the school got involved with the creation of the bug hotel. It would be lovely to see more involvement from the school on the field, and possibly with the scouts. This would work particularly well once the pond area is developed, and pond-dipping can take place

Spa Gardens Ripon

Platinum

Overall Impression

Spa Gardens is a very well-maintained small park just outside the city centre and is a credit to John who works tirelessly on its upkeep alongside several Horticultural sites in the City.

The entrance of the park invites you in with a very good mixture of herbaceous, seasonal floral displays and standing proud in the foreground is the statue of G.F Robinson (Marquess Of Ripon) behind him a glimpse of the vibrant flower bed designed by Eavie Wood of Ripon Grammar School. There is a very active friends of group which help raise funds for park enhancements, events, carryout work parties and the park also boasts a good café and bowling club.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

It was good to see the Alice in wonderland connection with the sculpture that had been created from damaged multi stemmed conifer stump a couple of years ago. Now showing signs of degrading back into the ground it maybe a plan to replace this on the opposite side of the path and thus leaving space to replant another feature conifer.

Plans to revamp one of the beds with pollinators, perennials has to be commended and it would be good to see the schools involved in this process with a design competition which also includes a sensory garden theme.

The Rose Garden, Mortomley Park, High Green

Platinum

Overall Impression

The Rose Garden, Mortomley Park is maintained by the High Green in Bloom team. It was a pleasure to spend time with them to see and hear how the park has developed over a number of years and to see the hard work and commitment they have given to bring this about.

The park is now a well-used and loved part of the High Green community and used by all ages. There are events held – such as the Kings Coronation and galas which attract large amounts of people.

It was impressive to hear how, when the team had started clearing overgrown planting, they revealed a border and footpath improving it to what we see today.

Over the years this border has evolved and developed into today's thriving herbaceous border. There are defined edges to the borders and the footpaths are clean and litter free. It is clear to see that the team regularly maintain them.

The team have split plants and taken cuttings from their own gardens and planted them in the border to compliment the shrubs that were already in place. This now acts as a sound barrier from the busy main road that runs along the outside of the park and creates a lovely peaceful area where people can come and sit.

The roses in the seating area are varied and well maintained. This is where people can sit quietly, contemplate and admire the beautiful surroundings.

There are a number of memorials around the park – WW1, COVID and to community members no longer with us.

A Queen's Green Canopy has been created with trees being chosen by each member of the team. They are in a wilding area giving it a natural feel. The mini orchard is a delightful area full of various fruit trees. Mulberry, apples, pear, raspberry, red currants and blueberries all with ripened fruit. The twisted willow adds further interest to this area. There is a re wilding area underneath the trees. There are a number of areas where the grass cutting has been reduced. The team have regular litter picks and weeding sessions. The team have achieved a lovely peaceful area where the community can come and sit or bring children to play.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- We discussed the issue of the wilding area having been inadvertently cut by the local authority. Keep at them to ensure they do not continue to ignore your requests to leave certain areas long.
- Continue with your plans to add further plants and mend the composting area that sadly had recently been damaged.
- Try encourage others to join your small team. Perhaps through your Facebook pages or by posters.
- Consider information about the plants and trees and the work undertaken by your team.

Valley Gardens Harrogate

Platinum

Overall Impression

The gardens are appropriate to be a flagship of Harrogate and a key feature of the Harrogate in Bloom and the other flower and horticulture related events within the town and part of the town's national and international tourism strategy.

The fact that some four million visits to the gardens are made each year is testament to how valuable they are and how cost effective the provision is.

The gardens offer a mix of formal garden, entertainment space, play space and the Japanese garden.

Volunteers assist in several areas of the garden, with a friend's group also being in place.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The gardens are clearly one of the flagships of the Harrogate Local Authority.

They are a key feature of the Harrogate in Bloom and the other flower and horticulture related events within the town and part of the town's national and international tourism strategy. They are planned designed and maintained to a high quality, with a wide range of horticultural, heritage and public activities.

As befits the above there is significant investment from the Local Authority in the gardens and the Authority and local people are clearly proud of the gardens. Small areas of detail are a need to refresh some of the perennial planting hopefully on a rolling programme basis.

Consideration will need to be given to some refreshment of the rose beds.

The hydration bags should be monitored even if they were not needed at that point in this year to see how effective they are.

Monitor the Ash die back and take appropriate action along with tree replacement at two for one when necessary.

Wilthorpe Park

Platinum

Overall Impression

Since the establishment of the Friends group the park has been transformed and is a safe place to visit with plenty of features and activities to do.

The Children's play area has been complimented by a Cycle training area with road markings signage and other features in an area that was once an old derelict paddling pool.

Seating throughout the park has all been refurbished and repainted by volunteers. The views down the park with vistas through mature trees and well-maintained shrub beds towards the Railway are great. The Friends have developed many unique habitats for wildlife and established a blue bell dell with over 12000 native bluebells planted over the last two years. Bird boxes and bug hotels to encourage insects and bees. The park has a tree trail which children can explore and identify twelve tree species and facts.

The conservation project with the RSPB has to be commended to develop habitats in the park to save the Marsh Tit.

The park has been used for major events such as the Pictures in the park on the 8th July which attracted great interest and visitors.

The group have also done a lot of work with the local schools who now use the park as part of their curriculum

A great entry and enthusiastic Group well done.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- There is a need to replace the Liquidambar tree which has struggled to survive the dry spring possibly use another nursery and arrange a watering plan for the tree to ensure it established over the next couple of years.
- Monitor the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee roses which have been planted as many of the bushes are struggling to establish and develop. Incorporate compost and mulch to the beds in Autumn to try to invigorate the soil in the beds.
- Continue with your bulb planting program for snowdrops and crocus to add extra spring colour.

- Take the opportunity in Autumn to divide up many of the perennial's plants in Marys boarder and us the material to enhance the front of shrub boarders and beds throughout the park.
- Continue to develop Suitable habitats at the bottom of the park working with the Yorkshire Wildlife Group and RSPB.
- Use your compost to mulch some of the boarders to retain moisture during next spring and summer.

Category E1 – Young Peoples Award

Molescroft Primary School

Gold and Category
Winner

Overall Impression

Our walk to the school was past the newly planted wildflower meadow which had been sponsored by the Parish Council last year. Although most of the plants had gone over it was apparent that this had been an excellent display. British native whips, provided by the Woodland Trust, had been planted as a hedge on the public pathway side.

A well planted and maintained floral display welcomes everyone to the school entrance. The judges were warmly welcomed and watched a short video, together with some of the teachers who lead and inspire the pupils' ecological education. The video, accompanied by music, showed a year in the horticultural and wildlife projects of the whole school and had been very professionally produced by the Head, Michael Loncaster.

The school holds an Eco accredited status and this is evident not only throughout the displays within the building and grounds but in the whole ethos of the school. The enthusiasm and knowledge displayed by both staff and pupils was impressive and clearly deeply embedded within the curriculum. There are excellent links to the community who support the work of the school.

There is an annual floral display theme led by talented staff members and the theme for 2023 was to celebrate 100 years of Disney. This was undertaken by all year groups, each contributor having a half wine barrel with which to work. They individually and independently designed, painted, planted and maintained the barrels and their enthusiasm, dedication and skill was overwhelming. An amazing array and depth of knowledge for those age groups. The judges were asked to choose the top three barrels, but because of the quality of the displays and the accompanying thematic explanations for all twelve, it was felt that four category winners would be more appropriate and these were duly chosen.

A tour of the grounds which followed revealed an abundance of “right plant, right place” with biodiversity showing through everywhere. There were raised beds planted with edibles, bird boxes, insect hotels and a well - managed pond complete with water lilies, with a diverse insect and vertebrate life. All these areas provided additional educational opportunities and quiet spaces for pupils and displayed a clever use of space having a wide range of pollinators and native species. From sowing seeds to potting up, planting out, weeding, watering and finally composting, the whole sequence of an understanding of the horticultural cycle was evident.

Space has been earmarked and the base laid for a new addition next year – a greenhouse, generously funded by parents. There are every signs this will be well used to extend the school’s opportunities and activities.

Finally, to sum up, a most impressive, rare and unusual school environment where not only the health and welfare of the pupils is promoted and nurtured, but that of the world around them. The word “WOW” hardly does it justice.

We look forward to seeing:-

- Further development of the meadow. It would be great to see a plan for the ongoing maintenance of this.
- Completion of the woodland planting. A planting plan or sketch would help to visualise the full seasonal impact of this planting.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Look forward to development of meadow- plan for ongoing maintenance
- Completion of woodland planting
- Erection and use of new greenhouse to encourage and facilitate pupils’ planting plans and ideas.

Birkwood Primary School

Gold

Overall Impression

What a fabulously enthusiastic Group of Children inspired by Miss Greenwood. The range of plants in the playground had been planted by the after school clubs and included a range of annuals and perennials to attract pollinating insects and with a sensory appeal. The children were very knowledgeable in the names of the plants and the insects they attracted.

The Community Garden is lovely. The shady area at the entrance under the canopy of the sycamore tree has been utilised for bug houses to attract insects. The raised vegetable beds are maintained by the whole school and the wide variety of vegetables grown are harvested by each year group. The year beds are identified by posters which are selected by a competition between the pupils.

The Wildflower Meadow at the edge of the playground has a lovely range of flowers which were being enjoyed by both the children and pollinating insects.

A huge thank you to Eliot, Mia, Toby, Harper, Jacob, Layton and Millie for their representation of the Birkwood values of Effort, Kindness and Respect while showing me round their lovely grounds.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- The planters in the tarmac playground looked as if the soil could do with a boost, consider looking at using a nettle or borage feed both of which could be made in the community garden.
- Building works are ongoing and have caused many of the planters to be moved to temporary locations. It will be good to see the displays once the site has been reinstated.
- For the area under the Sycamore in the Community Garden consider planting shade tolerant ground cover such as Ivy and Vinca which provide a food source for insects and birds

Church House Pre-School

Gold

Overall Impression

A quite impressive school which is fully on board with a wide range of environmental initiatives. An impressive portfolio showcased all the work done over the past year from preparations for Armistice Day to the innovative creation of recycled watering cans from milk containers !

The Children obviously get great joy & enjoyment of the many tasks & projects that the school offers & it is evidently clear the enrichment & wellbeing it brings to the children.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Explore the possibility of installing more planters/raised beds to the rear of the school to enable easy to grow vegetables/soft fruit, furthermore an application for fruit trees can be made.

Simple old tyre stacks could be used to grow vegetables (potatoes) which could give the children insight into food growing.

Crossley Fields Junior & Infant School

Silver

Overall Impression

Good steps are being taken to plan & prioritise 2/3 on going projects rather than look at improving the whole site, this sensible approach will certainly reflect in what is achievable short term.

The after school gardening club continues to thrive & the work done to date on the environmental / pond garden to the previous year shows what can be achieved with a limited budget.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Continue to improve the Environmental/Pond area, simple wooden bench seating could be erected to form a small outdoor classroom.

Explore funding opportunities for more tree's /fruit tree's to supplement existing stock around the school.

The repair/renewal of some containers/raised beds would enable a greater variety of plants/vegetables to be grown, succession planting of easy to grow vegetables could be introduced in the spring/summer months.

Using a perennial wildflower mix would negate the need for successive year on year sowings on the wildflower bed.

Hutton Cranswick CP School

Gold

Overall Impression

It was an absolute joy to start our tour at Hutton Cranswick Primary School. The pupils were so enthusiastic and keen to show us round that we couldn't help but be wowed by what we saw.

From the veg patch to the Secret Garden and from the pond area to the planters it is clear that a lot of time and love is going into this garden.

Lessons that link into the curriculum are taken outdoors utilising all areas and we could see that the children are super proud of their work and love getting their hands dirty. This wouldn't happen without the direction and support of Mrs Burkinshaw and her dedicated team who seemed to be just as keen and enthusiastic as the children! A great team achievement!

Horticulture

- There were some excellent examples of nicely planted raised beds using annual and perennial planting. The bedding plants are donated by a local garden centre.
- Henry the Hoover, planted up by one of the children, was a lovely feature.
- The veg growing area was very productive and the children will use the produce at their end of term picnic.
- The whole garden is used as an outdoor classroom for lessons linked to the curriculum.
- The hardy geraniums at the front of the school were looking lovely and are a very practical choice requiring very little maintenance.

Environment

- Bird feeders that the children had made were very much in evidence. There was also evidence of water collection around the garden.
- Pupils participate in Eco Club and Garden Club meeting regularly for gardening and nature work.
- The pond area is work in progress and was a little short on water but this is due to the dry summer we have had so far.
- Good recycling of old tractor tyres to make raised planters.

Community

- Parental involvement in the building of the planters.
- It was lovely to note that the teaching staff were committed to the garden both in and out of term time.
- The wildlife picture gallery on the garden wall was lovely and a great educational resource.
- The pupils obviously love being outdoors in the school garden and this was clear by their undoubted enthusiasm and keenness to tell and show us everything!

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Painting railings at the front of the school is a future project to explore when time and budget allows.
- Continue your work on the pond project. This is something the children (and staff) seemed passionate about so it would be good to complete this project.
- As the picture gallery was so popular, perhaps the children could take their own photos as part of an art or environmental class and display them next summer?

Malton School

Silver

Overall Impression

For a first time entry the standards seen were high, the school grounds were spotless and generally well maintained. It was a pleasure to meet many of the pupils and get the chance to talk about their involvement and their experiences with the schools established Gardening Club.

Having the various horticultural growing areas sited at various locations in the grounds, ensures the pupils see and experience them each school day, a real bonus for learning.

Of special note were the several raised beds and seating constructed, installed and planted by the pupils, a number using plants propagated by the students themselves. All supporting their learning experience and skills development.

Good use has been made of discarded filing cabinets as plant containers, recycled timber has been transformed by pupils into bug houses and a bug hotel, water capture has been put in place for watering, herbs planted for culinary use and pollinating insects and composting of plant material for mulching the planted areas is in place. All excellent examples for pupils to learn about sustainability and helping to support the environment.

Overall the judging visit was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and it was good to see the enjoyment and enthusiasm the pupils get from their hands on gardening experience. A special note of thanks goes to Mrs Helen Wilson and her colleagues for the comprehensive guided visit, for what is surely an entry that will continue to develop.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Early consideration needs to be given to providing appropriate signage and some interpretation/information boards at the various planting sites. This will enhance learning and could provide stimulus for more knowledge.

Although the school already has support from organisations in the community, it would benefit the school greatly if parents were encouraged more to get involved with developing projects. Not only for the experiences they have but also as a source of material, both old and new together with their physical support.

Opportunity for developing wildlife habitats and suitable environments could be greatly enhanced with the use of the small woodland area in the school grounds. An ideal environment for bird boxes, hedgehog homes, owl nest boxes etc.

The school is encouraged to include an area for fruit bushes as well as fruit trees in the future Orchard refurbishment project, showing a wide variety of potential fruit crops as possible.

It was discussed during the visit, but painting of the filing cabinet containers would add colour to a dull area and also help preserve them.

Wilsden Primary School

Silver

Overall Impression

It is very commendable how well Wilsden Primary School have progressed this year with their pre COVID ambitions to create a garden/forest school area for pupils to enjoy, explore and learn. They have been ably encouraged and supported by the village Bloom Group.

Much progress has been made since April when work started in earnest and it was promising to hear that all classes are starting to get involved in the new curriculum opportunities and experiences the garden has to offer as demonstrated by the enthusiasm of the pupils in the science lesson we were kindly invited to join.

Opportunities for pupil involvement, learning and enjoyment have been maximised through initiatives such as planting, litter picking around school and in the village and the environmental project through the school parliament.

The school has enjoyed much support from the local community including parents, grandparents, community groups and local businesses both in terms of providing donations and also offering practical help such as dry-stone walling with the children and helping create the fire pit area and wildlife habitats.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Having made such a successful start to creating a garden/forest school maintaining momentum and nurturing the parental and community links established this year is a priority.

The school's stated plans to start an after school gardening club in September, develop learning resources to enable pupils to maximise the new opportunities the outdoors offers and getting a wildlife night camera give every confidence that the school will continue on a successful journey.

Category E2 – Universities, College & Further Education

University of Leeds

Gold and Category Winner

Overall Impression

Overall the university was well maintained and there were many varied areas of planting across the campus. The judges were very impressed by the volume of green space and the range of formal and informal planting areas on site. The landscaping was also carefully considered against the diverse backdrop of architectural styles found on campus. It was clear that a lot of thought had been done to balance the need for tidy, well maintained areas and more relaxed areas of natural planting in line with the sustainability goals for the university.

The judges were pleased to hear that there are established links between the estates teams, the academic body of the university and external partners to provide opportunities for staff and students to engage with the landscapes on campus. The Living Lab sustainability garden was particularly interesting in the way it is used by different student groups over the year.

The use of street furniture on campus was sympathetic to the landscaping and provided students, staff and visitors with a wide range of social and reflective places to sit and enjoy the outdoor spaces.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Leaving a number of areas undisturbed and encouraging wildflowers to establish has had a very positive impact on the biodiversity found on site. However in some areas the boundary between wild plants and naturalistic planting was slightly blurred which left some areas feeling undefined. Rethinking the transitions in these areas would make both styles of planting more impactful.
- Your plan to develop the seating area near the stage building is an excellent opportunity to provide an additional area of planting to create an effective green screen to the adjacent service route, improving the area and making it a pleasant place to sit.
- The large student population could be further engaged with green initiatives on site with the development of community growing areas such as vegetable beds and orchards which fits in with the global goals for sustainable development of zero hunger.
- There were several vertical spaces identified during our tour as having the potential for green walls to be installed in the future. This is an excellent idea and there is the opportunity to look at rainwater collection as an option for irrigation when installing the green walls.

Overall Impression

The University of Bradford has a surprising amount of green space for such an inner city campus and the effect is extremely pleasing giving a strong sense of connection between the different buildings on site.

There is a significant amount of new planting on the campus which has revitalised areas that were previously given over to shrub planting and is already enhancing the appearance of the site as well as improving the range of species available to wildlife.

The judges were especially impressed by the quality of the wildflower areas on site which were rich in species and varied according to the area they were located in. The estates team have obviously begun to think about a long term strategy for the refurbishment of many of the green spaces at the University and are proactively looking to make the site visually and ecologically more interesting in the future.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The refurbishment of the planting on campus is proving to be very effective and there has been a very strong impact where these areas have been completed. We would recommend however that a longer term strategy might be to focus on creating one section of the campus per year so as to avoid summer planting which causes additional work for the small team.

Many of the newly planted specimens still had their labels attached. While this may help with identification, large promotional tags somewhat spoiled the effect of the areas. Removing most of the labels will result in a more polished appearance to the estate.

There is very little in the way of signage around the estate. It would be good to see interpretation boards used to highlight areas of planting especially in areas where the heritage of the site and Bradford has impacted on the planting choices or where plants have been selected for a purpose such as culinary use or being wildlife friendly. Technology such as digital mapping could also be utilised to promote the work of the grounds team on site and offer further information to visitors.

There are plans to redevelop the area in front of the Horton Building to create a quiet space to use as a memorial garden on site. This is an excellent opportunity to create a design which reflects Bradfords industrial heritage and rich cultural diversity as well as providing a contemplative space in the heart of the campus for students and families to spend time in.

Category C7 – RHS It's Your Neighbourhood

CATCH LEEDS

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

CATCH stands for Community Action To Create Hope, and from what the judges saw, hope is exactly what is being achieved at this facility. Hope is first created through the nature in which CATCH's main building was brought from Wakefield to Leeds, initially as a police training building and re-built into a community space for youth activities, meetings, and as a community café. When venturing out of the building and seeing a barn with goats, endless polytunnels, a sports field, a double-decker bus currently being fitted out as a cinema, beehives, and multiple other ventures that are in development, even more hope is created when told that all of these achievements were done by the young people who attend CATCH and adult volunteers. This gives a real sense of belonging and ownership to the site with so much involvement from the young people.

The barn was a fun and pleasant viewing, especially when the goats came to greet the judges and we learned that they are properly looked after by adults and young people thanks to sponsorship and training from a veterinary company. Further on, judges were shown the polytunnels which were filled with raised planters of every vegetable imaginable which is then used in the cafe, and the companion planting was lovely to see. The sprinkler system was fitted by George, a young adult who attends CATCH, and was amazing to see in action when switched on. George should be incredibly proud of this achievement.

The beehives were good to see, especially when judges were told that 60 jars of honey have already been produced from them. The rabbit hutch, chicken coops, and extension of the goat run were still in progress, but it was clear to see the vision in mind by Ash and the young people who attend CATCH.

What really inspired hope was when the judges had the chance to speak with Alex and Alonso, two prime examples of how this charity works with young people and turns their lives around. It was heart-warming and moving to learn of how far these two have come, and how independent and hard-working they are. It is not surprising that this charity received a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2021 and had a visit from Prince William. Ash, the volunteers, and all of the young people's achievements so far are an inspiration, and certainly create hope for the future of our young people.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It was great to hear that funding has been achieved for the footpath. This will make the walk to the tunnels and animals smoother and clearer.
- Continue to work on the extension of the goat run and continue to develop the chicken coops and rabbit hutch, and possible alpaca site. These will be amazing additions and judges look forward to visiting them in the future!
- Judges look forward to seeing the Mediterranean room once completed.

CLECKHEATON IN BLOOM - CLECKHEATON LIBRARY

LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

What a welcoming entrance Cleckheaton Library has for users and residents - a lovely new entrance arch complete with a new emblem, a tribute to Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Anniversary helped by the Rotary Club and decorated by lovely colourful pennants and crochet roses donated by the "Knit and Natter" group.

This opens to a large lawn running up to the library with floral borders and beds and floral and herb planters done by the Cleckheaton in Bloom group which consists of 8 members only 2 of whom are retired - they also look after the large planters in the town.

The Library Manager and also a friend of the library became aware of this and asked them if they would take over the Library grounds, with the Council cutting the grass.

Plants have been donated by Tesco, local residents, including the residents of the care home opposite the library, and financial donations from Cleckheaton Town and local shops.

Spensorough Chamber of Commerce and Friends of the Library donated roses to make a new bed dedicated to King Charles 3rd, and the group are currently clearing all the woodland border around the perimeter of the grounds - a massive job - they are using bee and insect friendly plants, and hope to have all year round plants from independent growers. The grassed area now has curved edges and the border is planted with spring and autumn bulbs and daffodils using a free mulch given by the growers, who have also donated a poly tunnel.

They have compost bins but are not able to have water butts so any watering is done by hand from an indoor tap.

There is a wonderful cleared children's trail along the border with stick men, tree dragons and a reindeer house, plus cones and twigs left for them to fill the delightful birdhouses. 50 wooden rabbits for the children to decorate were provided by the library as part of the Easter Egg hunt - children also planted pots of sunflower seeds and help a local lady resident with litter picks.

The lawned area now hosts events including for children with special needs, and the reading group and also had a local Gala with all local groups having a stand.

Well done to the Cleckheaton in Bloom group, the Library and all who have helped to make the Library grounds such a well used, welcoming and still developing facility,

A wonderful achievement.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Continue your aim to clear the wooded borders and plant all year round plants there, perhaps add to the King Charles rose bed for more impact.
Very Well Done - keep up the good work.

FRIENDS OF CROW WOOD PARK

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

This pleasant, clean and well maintained park of 13 acres is well used by local people of all ages whether for walking, dog walking, sports or play. The Friends work alongside the council and other local groups to ensure that the Park is safe for all. The active group of Friends are currently receiving funding for renovation of the bandstand and a feature for the top of the pavilion. Individuals and businesses have sponsored and repainted benches and Payback teams have helped.

Bird boxes made by the local Men in Sheds group have been erected, there is a children's trail and a woodland area which supports a range of wildlife. The pathways have been improved to allow access for all. Local schools are encouraged to use the park. There are some old trees and newly planted ones in memory of park users. There is an annual Remembrance Day service at the memorial arch.

The active group of Friends ensure the park is clean and litter free. The council employ one gardener to maintain flower beds of annuals at the entrance to the park and there are sustainable borders, shrubs, trees and pots in front of the pavilion. There are loads of bulbs in Spring. Any anti-social behaviour is quickly dealt with and they have good relations with the local police.

The Friends have created and maintain a great, clean, safe green space enjoyed by all. Bob and the friends run many successful activities such as Coffee Mornings, The Great Get Together which are sponsored by local businesses,

Activities are publicised on notice boards in the park and on their Facebook site.

Information boards show the history of the site and the pavilion displays photos of activities of the park in all seasons and currently there is an impressive exhibition to commemorate 100 years.

The defibrillator is a new addition and the Friends have been given training in its use.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Keep up the good work!

Consider more information boards of butterflies, birds and other wildlife for the woodland area.

A mention of Yorkshire in Bloom/It's Your Neighbourhood on your Facebook page or posters would be appreciated. Maybe advise park users when you are being judged so they can give their input.

FRIENDS OF FIRTH PARK

LEVEL 3 - ADVANCING

Overall Impression

This project is very much a re-start to what had been a very successful community growing project. Covid and other issues mean that the project closed and the site became overgrown. The small group are now re establishing the plot, fortunately a reasonable infra structure of huts water system and a poly tunnel are all in place.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

In terms of the plot's gain access to all parts and then develop other parts as labour and time becomes available.

Try to keep developments within the bounds of what can reasonably be maintained.

Continue to develop relationships with organisations that you will be able to work with.

When possible hold events to raise awarnes of the project with the community.

FRIENDS OF SANDRINGHAM PARK

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

From a park that suffered high levels of anti-social behavior, a small team of volunteers led by Kazia Knight has transformed this local space into a welcoming area. The informal appearance of the park belies hidden areas for wildlife, habitats have been created, bird boxes, bug hotels, hedgehog homes and alpaca fleece in a birdfeeder for nesting material installed to further encourage wildlife. The volunteers ensure the park is kept litter and graffiti free, an endeavour well supported by the local community when visiting the site. The volunteers make full use of the park notice board to keep park visitors informed of forthcoming events like the annual Big Lunch. Also included are the many activities and awards the park has gained, in particular their coveted Green Flag Award. Social media is also used to good effect where up to date news is heralded and help for projects sought. The sole source of floral displays is containers and plants donated by keen local residents. It is clear that these same local residents and local groups now value and enjoy using the park, a tribute to the hard work, effort and tenacity of the volunteers in The Friends of Sandringham Park group. A very well done to all involved.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Consider installing additional benches and picnic tables in the park.
- Possibly rethink the proposed location of the future wildflower area from the unused play area. This will allow the site to be repurposed for activities using hardstanding.
- Consideration could be given to extending the small herb bed and memory bed into a bee and pollinator border.

FRIENDS OF WOMBWELL PARK

LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

- It was great to see the large number of local events which has been organised by the group throughout the year to make a difference to the local community.
- The park is well signed with the playground and fitness equipment well used by the community.
- It was good to have a tour of the park with the local volunteers who showed the work which they had done around the Wrights Crescent entrance and containers made by "The Men in Sheds"
- We visited the wishing tree and the group outlined the history surrounding it.
- Special mention must be made about the Picnic in the Park event which has been organised by the Friends Group for Wednesday 26th July for the local community as this is the first week of the school holidays.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- It is important for the Group to have a long-term maintenance plan for the areas around the pavilion in order to complement the grounds maintenance work carried out by the council.
- Removal of self-sets from shrub beds will open up vistas from the pavilion across the park towards the Playground and Multi Games area improving safety in the park
- Continue to plant perennial plants to add colour and seasonal interest.
- Consider the development of a tree sculpture using an old cherry tree which has lost the majority of its canopy. This will provide added interest and add another feature for the Park.
- Consider using local company volunteer days to aid the friend's group with Shrub bed maintenance.
- Look at replacing the trees which have recently been felled in the park.

GINNY GREENHOLES SPOFFORTH

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

The visit was eye opening with fixed play equipment located in a nature reserve. Features such as bug houses, bird boxes and bat boxes are found amongst the trees. Natural areas provide wild flowers for bees and pollinators, log piles and fallen timber habitats for invertebrates. A number of illustrated interpretation signs give both young and old valuable information about the natural environment and what can be seen at the site. A picnic area of tables and benches adds another dimension to this community-developed area where the natural environment meets formal play. The establishment of the site has taken many years but the results have been worth it. Congratulations to all involved in supporting and helping to maintain this valuable community asset.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

As the threatened expansion of the adjacent development has now subsided, early reprogramming of some of the signage refurbishment should be made a priority. Possible replacement of some of the deteriorating wooden animals with alternatives made from alternative recycled materials should be considered. Identifying and labelling some of the fruit trees at the reserve and including them in an adjusted path route, would be an ideal method of educating young visitors about the seasonal changes the trees experience.

GLEADLESS VALLEY METHODIST CHURCH COMMUNITY GARDEN

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

You'll find this wonderful garden situated at a busy road junction within the heart of the Gleadless community. This is a Green Flag Community Awarded site, with numerous raised beds, with fruit, vegetables and perennial planting, and the Community Christmas Tree. It's maintained by a dedicated group, and Iren and the team are doing a fabulous job here. Composting on site, water collection, peat and pesticide free, the fruit and veg are used within the church complex and shared with the group and the wider community. Great things are happening here. Local residents help to keep an eye on the gardens when the team are not around and benefit from space to grow a few tomato's.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The inclusion of the new wildflower area will enhance the entry and add to the increasing biodiversity of the site.

**GOLDTHORPE RAILWAY
EMBANKMENT**

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

- The group has a clear long-term plan for the maintenance and development of the site
- The group have set up good working partnerships with Network Rail and are looking to extend the site further along the disused line.
- The project is engaging with all of the community and local funding agencies.
- The quality of the paths and routes through the site have been planned for disabled users to access all of the features in many cases over coming many site difficulties.
- The project have made a major environmental impact for the local area and are attracting many visitors both within the community and many other external councils who have had similar problem areas.
- The groups efforts are a case study of good practice and environmental conservation

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Erect more bird boxes and Owl and bat boxes in the trees on the embankment sides working with the local RSPB at Wombwell.

- Consider steel seating art work to add additional interest and themes for the site
- Continue the good work with local schools.
- Do not forget to celebrate what you have achieved each year with a thankyou event for all supporters and local companies.

This is a fantastic project for Goldthorpe and everybody involved have produced an environmental gem.

**HERDINGS COMMUNITY & HERITAGE
CENTRE GARDEN**

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

Greeted at the entrance and led through the grade 2 listed building to the gardens at the rear. The building and the gardens at the back are a total distraction to the surrounding urban housing area. A nice sized poly tunnel in full use and several raised beds all with veg and various plants and fruit trees close by. The produce from the gardens when ready was left in the centre for those that attend to help themselves. All maintained and planted

by the volunteers and excluded pupils, and Ben who comes to keep the birdlife well fed. A good use of recycling from what they can for various purposes and making things from old pallets such as benches and bird boxes.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Maybe consider an Interpretation board on the newly cleared area on path at side the building, to give the history of the fabulous grade 2 building.

It would be lovely to see a bird feeding area in front of social café windows, for those that cant get out into the gardens.

Consider a little planting to brighten the frontage to make a welcoming gateway

HIGH GREEN IN BLOOM

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

High Green Village is spread out over a wide area. The work undertaken by this small and friendly team is impressive.

The team have received sponsorship for 22 planters. They ask, where possible, local businesses and residents to help look after them with respect to watering.

I was impressed with John's planter which contained a topiary box as well as the ones around the village which are a mix of sustainable and annual plants. An area, once referred to as a 'grot spot' has now been planted with sustainable plants making it a bright focal point. The plants in the containers and in the park are sustainable, reducing waste and bringing costs down. Also bringing in more visitors from the 'pollinator brigade'!

The completed Christmas tree project is fabulous. Pictures from the 'Christmas Lights Switch on show how many of the community appreciate and attend this annual event.

The team also work in the park. Their work has encouraged residents to use the park more frequently than in the past. It has become a family space. Litter is minimal with regular litter picks taking place. The work the team undertake has led to a great improvement in the village.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Try to encourage more to join you on your Saturday morning meet up
- Continue to encourage local partnerships
- Continue to look for further funding streams or sponsorships

HUNTON IN BLOOM

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

Hunton is a small village in a rural area. There is a very active In Bloom team that works alongside many other community groups in the village.

We met the team in the excellent multipurpose village hall. There is a steering group of 6 who have responsibility for certain areas in the village. They have at least a further 30 supporters who join them.

The whole village was spotlessly clean. The areas this team are working on have been completed with a lot of consideration for wildlife and bio diversity. Planting schemes have been designed to make the best use of the natural environment.

Around the well maintained bus shelter two beds have been put in place containing wildflowers. A further two areas by the wall of the village hall have been created using oak and planted with perennials. The team sought advice from a well-known lavender garden for the lavenders planted either side of the footpath.

The War Memorial is a work in progress, planting has commenced around the outside of this space in keeping with its location.

The Pinfold is a lovely area, appropriately planted and tended. There are a number of sedum green roofs on entry signs and in the Pinfold.

The playing fields, playground facilities and orchard area have been improved to a high standard.

The work of Hunton in Bloom is actively supported by the town council. This team can only go from strength to strength.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

In the bus shelter consider having seasonal information such as swapping the butterfly identification information sheet for one about birds. Also consider a poster on who you are and what you do.

Continue with the work around the war memorial.

INCREDIBLE EDIBLE NORTHALLERTON

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

This initiative commenced at the beginning of 2022 by a small group of volunteers, mainly from the Secret Garden. They approached the council to find land they could utilise and contacted Incredible Edible, Todmorden for advice.

It is good to hear of the improvements and additions they have made in the last year including the composting area and water harvesting. The area is set at the side of the local park and many visitors of all ages use the space and pass through.

The Keyhole Garden was fascinating to hear about. Good to see the 'red' and 'green' labels identifying when produce was ready to pick. The Auction Mart wall is used to attach fruit cordons. The reuse of materials such as tyres to grow strawberries in and the raised beds made from recycled scaffolding boards is great.

There is a new community area at Cherry Croft under development. It is impressive to see how much heavy duty hard work has already gone into creating this plot, with raised beds already being planted up.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Consider letting more people know about your team and the work you do – more volunteers will help lessen the work load on the current small number of volunteers. Good to hear you are considering some art work for the wall. Your local college's art department may be able to help you with this.

JO COX COMMUNITY WOOD

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

The Jo Cox Memorial Wood is a wonderful example of caring , dedicated people joining together to make something good out of the tragic loss of Jo Cox.

With the agreement of Jo's family the group led by the Civic Society, signed a 25 year lease with the Council and dug out 120 tons of crushed stones from a disused council tip - many of the Society still help the group on a regular basis.

Biffa sponsored them with money to put up a fence the separating the new wood from the footpath, then children from High Town school helped with planting and children from High Bank school planted a commemorative tree.

By 2019 a swing gate, fencing and recycled seats and benches , bird and bat boxes were in place and over 1000 trees were planted, including Alders, Rowans, Oak, Ash and Hornbeam with funding from Defra, The Great Yorkshire forest and Appleyard's Orchard (in memory of John Appleyard, a member of the Civic society.)

The winding pathway through the wood is now a delightful tranquil walk, flanked by trees which have grown at an amazing speed, plus bluebells and other woodland flowers and a memorial stone to Jo Cox, donated and carved by an anonymous donor.

Not content with this beautiful woodland walk, with the help of crowd funding and the council, a field was bought and the pond dug out with the help of neighbours and a farmers tractor, then 51 tons of river sand barrowed in by volunteers, boys from The Duke of Edinburgh Award and neighbours. Water from a culvert in an old railway line tops up the pond which is now planted with some trees from Thorpe's Trees and wild flowers, and attracts wildlife including Damsel Flies and newts and is accessed by a swing gate for safety.

Many congratulations to the group and all who have helped to make this such a wonderful amenity for the area and such a lasting memorial to a much loved lady - Jo Cox.
Very Well Done.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration
Just keep up your amazing work.

MATES OF MILTON

LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Mates of Milton are an impressive volunteer group who are involved with the whole community. The team enhance what is an attractive green environment. The whole area was clean, tidy and litter free.

They have year round events and fundraising. It was great to hear how the defibrillator they had raised funds for had already saved a number of lives.

The team have worked hard around a popular fishing lake. Opening the overgrown area up again and ensuring there is still a wilding area at the back for the wildlife and nesting birds. The wildflower bed, created for the Queen's Jubilee is impressive and now established.

There are bird and bat boxes in the park as well as homes for the hedgehogs. 4 benches and 2 dog bins have been purchased. The group have created an impressive water harvesting system.

They have some lovely wooden planters on the road side, all have been repainted which makes a welcoming impression.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This group goes from strength to strength.

Consider creating a composting area where you harvest water.

It was good to hear you are able to overwinter some of the summer's bedding it is worth considering adding some permanent plants to your displays.

MILLENNIUM GARDEN SPOFFORTH

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

The establishment of this garden was a true collaboration with the community, parish Council and Spofforth in Bloom involved in getting the designs, seeking funding and final construction. The garden was developed on a disused site into a tranquil haven for local residents and visitors, with plants chosen for both their aesthetic appeal and as contributors to improving biodiversity at the site. Features including an unusual sundial of engraved stone, ornate gates, seating and planting to give all year round interest, all adding to the quiet ambiance the garden evokes. Enthusiastic volunteers who should be rightly proud of what they have achieved maintain the garden to a very high standard. It's congratulations all round for a job well done

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The replacement of the lavender border should be scheduled early in the plant replacement programme.

Consider adding a hard standing next to each bench to accommodate a place for wheel chair users

MIRFIELD HERITAGE SITE

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

A reliable pool of volunteers, who all have a strong bond and commitment to the site and have achieved a great deal in maintaining and improving the area for both visitors, mourners and wildlife.

Good teamwork and a willingness to tackle any job needed came across very strongly and there is an impressive depth of skill sets.

The heritage signage is welcome, as are the floral plantings around the church and there is inventive use of materials to improve and stabilise path quality

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The motte requires work to remove the bracken that has become established. It is understood that the group intend to tackle this issue in the winter months thus improving the location for the following year.

Further pollinator planting

Additional wildflower/wildlife trail for the spring/pond area or an interpretation board?

MYTHOLMROYD STATION PARTNERSHIP

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

We received a warm welcome from the Mytholmroyd Station Partnership - a group of about 25 people who meet monthly for a planning meeting and fortnightly for gardening, embodying what Yorkshire in Bloom stands for, they have made a great difference to the neighbourhood and station.

A small garden at the entrance from the carpark has a bug hut and a memorial dedicated to the Station historian.

The path up to the station from the carpark is delightful, with shrubs, a wild area, bulbs and all year round planting.

Just beyond this path leading onto The Calder Greenway - a woodland walk - is the friendship Garden with lovely raised beds, a bug hut and compost heap. Colourful seasonal planters, wonderful information boards and posters make the station a very attractive place for travellers.

Nearby is the Church of The Good Shepherd which has a beautiful rainbow window with a crescent shaped raised bed of roses and bedding plants around the base. This is complimented by a lovely circular bed and around the corner is a small orchard with seating, a memorial garden and a War Memorial with planting at it's base.

The group are actively involved with the cubs and scouts and are helped by grants from Network Rail, Northern Rail and The Community Rail Network, and with the railways are already planning celebrations for the Stations 150th anniversary next year.

Congratulations to the group for making the station and it's surroundings so welcoming and attractive for residents and commuters alike - very well done.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Just keep up the good work, especially the exciting development of the adjoining building into an information centre and museum .

NEW LODGE COMMUNITY GARDENING GROUP

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

The small enthusiastic group of residents in this Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust gave me a very warm welcome. This is their second year and they have developed significantly and achieved a great deal in attaining the objectives of "In Bloom."

The area in which they live has certainly been improved with permanent planting, trees shrubs and herbaceous, which is sustainable. There are also flower beds, troughs, planters, balcony planters etc to add colour. This year with the theme of Indian Summer.

Each of the 120 residences is provided with some form of planter to brighten up the whole area and many also have their own attractive garden space.

The group meet every two weeks winter and summer as they feel there is so much to do and plans to be made. Of course, this friendship and communication is essential.

There are very good relationships with the local community and local groups to the benefit of all. They actively support local businesses and work with like minded groups to share information and knowledge.

There is good communication with all residents who are generous in their support and providing some of the funding required. Other funds are provided through grant applications to relevant sources which enables the group to implement many of their ambitious plans.

The environment is key to many of their activities. The living wall and wildlife area is a good example. There are facilities for insects, butterflies, hedgehogs with a naturally wet spot being developed as a bog area.

The group maximise the use of recycled materials for the provision of planters, and work benches etc.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This group is so full of ideas and enthusiasm and it is hoped that this will continue taking into account climate change and community needs and all other considerations.

Water will continue to be a problem so do press for more water saving measures around the site.

NORTHALLERTON SECRET GARDEN

**LEVEL 5 -
OUTSTANDING**

Overall Impression

It is hard to believe that this garden is so close to the busy main street of Northallerton. The minute you arrive there a sense of peace comes over you.

This is a well-established garden that has evolved over a number of years. Plants are donated and split. Some are sold on a plant table. Produce grown in the garden is donated to local charities and the foodbank. The two very well stocked plots are divided into rooms. There are quiet seating areas, growing areas and the young people/children's areas. There are also potting, planting, composting and water harvesting areas all thoughtfully resourced, organised and tidy.

The garden is open on Wednesday and Saturdays so that members of the public can come in and share the space. During the week a variety of different community, school and charity groups meet in the garden.

The notice board identifying the different forms of wildlife along with the identification of trees, flowers and birds is great. A number of the volunteers were present during my visit, all had varying specialities and were really enthusiastic.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Continue with plant labelling.

Continue with the wildflower area – these are the hardest areas to cultivate as you are working with nature but persevere.

As this area can be shady it may be looking for wildflowers that thrive in these conditions.

RIPON MUSEUM TRUST GARDEN

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

Catherine and the 25 volunteers continue to develop the Victorian workhouse garden in a sustainable and wildlife friendly way suitable for 21st century. As a workhouse garden every harvested crop was recorded as a production record, this has now been reintroduced with a new ledger. As many heritage plants are used. Yield comparisons will be interesting. The steep slope of the site offers a number of challenges physically and for crop production. There are too many good points to list but the education program, heritage seed, wildlife, partnering the Skell project and many other things make this a wonderful project.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

When possible continue the workshops and education projects.

Should funding be available landscaping the front garden should both improve the setting of the museum but also encourage more visitors.

The veg box and apple juice schemes bring in funding and clearly illustrate produce from the garden so should be promoted as such.

However it is really a case of continue to make use of opportunities as they occur, to further the development of standing of the project.

ROBERTS STREET COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Thank you to Peter and Tony for showing me round Robert Street Allotments which is a lovely tranquil space in the centre of Cudworth. The site is very accessible, being just off the high street and provides an ideal area to support community groups or individuals in becoming involved in growing and provides opportunities for volunteering, business volunteers from GXO have recently helped to construct new beds.

The site reflects the local identity with the use of reclaimed materials for the construction of the raised bed and the barrow and brick salvaged from the brickworks.

The Allotment also supports the local Community Food hub with the donation of produce.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

An automatic irrigation system for the polytunnel.

Collection and storage of rainwater from the roof of the container and polytunnel. Improving awareness within the local community. Possibly through the local library and the nearby allotments.

Developing relationships with wellbeing and disability groups.

ROXBY COMMUNITY GARDEN AND VEGETABLE PATCH

LEVEL 2 - IMPROVING

Overall Impression

It is a fantastic achievement for the community and MAFWA theatre that Roxby Community Garden has pulled together this beautiful haven from what was a run down and neglected playground. Since opening in the Spring the garden has become a focal point for community events and a much valued space and was recently awarded a garden of sanctuary award.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

As a new garden there is potential to generate more planted areas of benefit to the community. Matilya has begun to add wooden planters along the back wall of the site which is an excellent use of the space.

It is unfortunate that three of the original trees planted in the garden have fallen victim to local children using them to swing on. There is the opportunity to get community involvement in replacing the trees by having a tree planting day for the site. If the trees can't be replaced the planting areas could be converted to raised beds for community growing projects.

There are plans to further develop the laundry storage area to create amongst other things a nursery for young plants to help boost production in the Lincoln Greeners bed. This is an excellent way to foster resilience and engagement in the group.

There could be residents in the area that would not normally engage with gardening for fear that they do not have 'green fingers' there is the opportunity to eventually expand the gardening group to include different sections of the local community if funding allows.

ROYSTON GREENSPACES GROUP

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

The Royston volunteers have worked hard to enhance the appearance of Royston. The Greenspaces group have coordinated a phenomenal number of volunteer hours from all areas of the community and the impact of this can be seen all around the village. The scheme for adoption of the planters, allowing individuals looking after the planters to choose their own plants has resulted in some lovely planting schemes and these little pools of colour brighten up many outlying areas.

Royston has a real sense of local identity enhanced by the specially made fencing along the roadside and the area around Royston springs which reflects the local industry and the history of the Wells.

Thank you to the children from Parkside Primary School for coming out to meet me in the rain and show me the lovely poster of their activities. It is great to see that all the local schools have been involved in activities around the village.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

- Implement the plans for the raised bank behind the Royston wells.
- Consider plant species used in this area to select those able to deal with the dry shade created by the tree canopy and reduce the need for watering.
- Rethink the Old youth Club site now that the opportunity for rebuilding has been presented following car damage.
- In both the pocket park and the Old Youth Club site consider using a mix of perennial planting and annuals to increase the sustainability of the sites and the amount of work that is needed by the volunteers replanting these areas annually.

SHADWELL IN BLOOM

LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Firstly, a big thank you to Martin and Shadwell in Bloom for a well presented, informative tour of your lovely village. Shadwell in Bloom was formed in October 2002 by three Parish Councillors.

It has since created sponsored flower beds throughout the Village, giving a vibrant display of colour and variety along with sustainable planting, a particular favourite of the judges

was the bee bed which was well presented planted to a high standard with a varied selection of perennials planted to maximise the attraction of pollinating insects. The group has managed, with great credit to attract huge sponsorship of hanging baskets, containers and beds and a pleasing aspect was the sponsorship from businesses who are vital to villages like Shadwell as well as forging community links. It was pleasing to hear that volunteers adopt a flower bed and help maintain the general maintenance, using their own hosepipes to help water beds near their properties, again showing good community relationships and the judges feel this could be expanded on by encouraging wider volunteering within the village from these individuals. All the beds and baskets were well maintained and weed free with a good selection of annual bedding and sustainable planting. A particular project worthy of recognition is the Garden of Remembrance at St Paul's Church, this was not the most pleasing area for the interment of ashes with piles of debris, mainly from digging new graves. With the agreement from the church the residents decided to re landscape this area resulting in creating a special place in keeping with the surroundings. It is a peaceful place to sit and reflect, well done. The group regular hold meetings Tuesday morning to discuss current and future projects. The Community Herb Beds planted on Colliers Lane is an inviting project planted with chive, Fennel, Wild Strawberry, Parsley, and Rosemary to name a few and provides variety to the more formal bedding schemes throughout the village. Good use of newsletters and social media was in evidence and used to publicise the groups work as well as trying to recruit more volunteers. The group has done a tremendous amount of work in Shadwell for the benefits of the village and contributing to a good community spirit so the judges would like to thank the group and all who participate for the hard work and with their continued efforts and small changes would make this an outstanding entry, well done.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The group has shown links with the school and scouts but consider more projects and development with these groups, could you work with the school on the herb bed and let them have a bed allocated to the school so they can plant and grow their own produce? it would have been nice to have met the school to explain the links and work they do with Shadwell in Bloom. The judges feel the links with these groups needs to be expanded on to maximise community participation within the village and contribute to the overall Yorkshire in Bloom entry.

- From previous judges' comments it would have been good to stop and walk around some of the areas of the village and meet various volunteers involved with the group's projects in particular the herb garden explaining its origins and development.
- Is there a potential with the Parish Council and Shadwell in Bloom to develop the allotments, there are six plots which are taken by residents, but we feel Shadwell in Bloom could involve the local community and again with the school and scouts with sharing skills and knowledge of produce growing and linking the herb beds within a project.

SPARROW PARK

LEVEL 3 - ADVANCING

Overall Impression

This small active, enthusiastic group “Keep Hecky Tidy” has started to make a real difference to Heckmondwike, They perform many activities within the town to improve the area with litter picks, tidying footpaths by strimming and weed clearing etc One of their first tasks was to plant up some concrete planters in the town and they then started on Sparrow Park which was very neglected. Weeds had been controlled with weed killer and the grass area was rarely cut.

The group was supported by their local MP Kim Leadbetter and their local councillors. They are now working with other local groups for mutual benefit.

In Sparrow Park, a local company funded the refurbishment and painting of the very old iron fence. The group also set to work on the garden by pruning the overgrown shrubs, various items were donated including planters, plants, fruit trees with a lot of recycling. They also introduced a herb garden, compost boxes and a deluxe bug hotel.

The area looked bright and colourful, and it was interesting to see the before and after in the very good portfolio.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

This team are enthusiastic and relatively inexperienced and know that they will benefit by gaining more knowledge and experience from elsewhere. Suggest you contact other local groups, gardening clubs etc.

The soil looked very poor quality so suggest you obtain some compost or mulch to improve it. Continue with sustainable planting.

Communication was good, largely through social media and was well received. This must continue. Excellent progress has been made and there is the potential to gain more support from the community so that the many plans for the future can be implemented. Well done and we wish you well for the future.

ST MARY'S NEIGHBOURHOOD MIRFIELD

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

With those looking after the grounds of St Mary's Church now having formed a separate IYN group, the community group now encompass the area in front of the Church, in and around the Community Centre and Church Offices and along adjacent roads.

The pull-in area to the front of the church was enhanced by an island bed with perennial planting and an eye-catching small boat with brightly coloured annuals looked after by the nearby pre-school. Adjacent to this was a seating/picnic area with plentiful tubs of hydrangeas and a small 'library box' of children's books.

A visit to the pre-school revealed a playground full of plants both ornamental and productive. The 'Little Bloomers' as they are referred to, were very keen to tell us all about their gardening activities. Picking up on the families theme a 'fairy garden' in front of the Church Offices was bright and colourful, merging into a more conventional mixed border around the rest of the building. Colourful troughs enhance the otherwise drab community building.

To the rear of the building was the 'working area' for Mirfield in Bloom and it was good to see a polytunnel for growing plants, numerous compost bins, water butts, recycled pots, demonstrating the commitment of both the groups and the wider in Bloom initiative to sustainable gardening practices. It was very interesting to hear of the compost experiment carried out by the local Beavers.

Closely following the Hedgehog Highway on a path adjacent to the road, we visited Pinfold Close Island situated at the junction of two roads. It has been improved over the years with the planting of trees and perennial flower beds for the benefit of residents and passers by. The St Mary's Community group should be very proud of their work in enhancing the local environment through decorative and appropriate planting, encouraging wildlife and implementing sustainable practices and last, but certainly not least, linking with and supporting local community groups and running a friendship café.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

There was mention of creating a wildflower meadow in the area behind the community centre which would not only be beneficial to wildlife but with mown paths could be a feature used by both adults and children to access the area. How about holding an 'open garden' event for the community?

ST PAULS LOCK NEIGHBOURHOOD - MIRFIELD

LEVEL 5 - OUTSTANDING

Overall Impression

St Paul's Lock is situated on the Calder and Hebble Navigation Canal in the heart of Mirfield. A small group of residents, supported by Mirfield in Bloom work to enhance the area for the benefit of those who live or moor there or who are enjoying a canalside walk. The road bridge over the canal, whose railings had been valiantly painted by volunteers 2 years ago were festooned with planters containing colourful petunias and along the canalside path, small raised beds adjacent to the benches provided a bright splash of colour. The grass verges were kept mown allowing for ease of walking. A small plaque on the wall referenced the original malthouse now replaced with a well kept development of flats many with colourful balconies.

On the opposite side of the canal we passed the recently renovated Navigation Pub with attractive planters.

Further along a small triangular section adjacent to the road just before it passed under the railway bridge had been transformed from a derelict area with the additional help of a Community Payback team and planted with perennials donated by group members and

others. This little garden was already looking very attractive and well established after only one year. A nice touch was the brick edging along the pavement planted with sedums. Work has recently started on a new canalside area adjacent to the canal bridge which will further enhance the environment.

The group are to be congratulated on their commitment to the enhancement of this area for residents and visitors alike.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Perhaps consideration could be given to the introduction of perennials into the beds adjacent to the canalside benches. With appropriate choice of plants this could reduce watering and the introduction of some evergreens (perhaps variegated?) could provide year round interest. Spring bulbs might be another consideration if these have not already been included.

It would be nice to see some initiatives to attract wildlife along the canal banks and the area being newly developed might provide some opportunity to do this, especially given the challenges of a sloping site?

STONEFALL AND PANHANDLE PARKS LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

Being inclusive of local people:

The apparently fairly informal local group consists of local people supported by a Local Authority member of staff. The group regularly carries out litter picks, wild flower seed and plant planting, commissioning interpretation signs and other specific activities

Local ownership and direction:

The land is owned by the Local Authority, with some adjoining land privately owned. There is open access to the Local Authority land and their worker is very supportive to the group.

Making a difference to local people

The park is obviously very valued by local people and well used by walkers, parents with young children, dog walkers etc.

Involving local people with planning, decision-making, communication & implementation

The Local Authority worker is clearly very receptive to ideas from the group and happy to support approval and implementation for such ideas

Representative of the local community:

From the visit and conversations it was not clear how representative the group was of the local community

Getting support (e.g. from local council, grant aid, sponsorship, in-kind aid etc.)

This process clearly happens, see above. The group raises funds from grants and support from local businesses

Planning for the future

The group works with the Local Authority worker to plan regular maintenance and future activities

Working in partnership with other organisations (i.e. police, community support officers, environmental groups etc.):

From the visit and conversations it was not clear how other statutory and non-statutory groups were engaged.

The group is engaged in environmental activities including:

- Conservation (e.g. resources, heritage, wildlife, built environment)
- Creating, maintaining or improving green space
- Sharing knowledge and skills

The group is engaged in addressing environmental issues including:

- Litter

The group is employing good gardening practices appropriate to the area, including:

- Good plant choice
- Good maintenance, presentation and management
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Overcoming site difficulties
- Enhancing the area through gardening

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

The group are working to maintain and improve a challenging site. They are obviously dependent on the Local Authority for some group support and ongoing maintenance. The relationship with the local authority is good. The site is well used and appreciated by local people.

It is always easy for an outside observer to say, but the group can become more representative of the local community and engage a more diverse section of the community and local young people.

THE TRIBE

LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

The judges would like to thank Jean for showing us around the site. Tribe Youth Group is a fantastic group for young people aged 4 – 16 years. With a number of clubs for the young people to join in with, such as the eco club or cooking club, there is plenty to keep attendees entertained, educated, and active. The space the judges visited was clearly one for the young people, giving them ownership by letting them decide what goes into the space. There are an abundance of fun signs, colourful ornaments, and mythical fairy doors to inspire imagination on the site.

It was lovely to see that a once bramble-filled area has been transformed into a garden of wildflowers and all-year plants, including fruit bushes and planters that have been added to ensure growth in areas that struggle, particularly under the trees in full shade. The pizza garden particularly impressed the judges as all plants selected in this section are ingredients which go into making pizza, such as tomatoes and oregano. This is a great

planted area as it educates the young people on how to grow these plants, and what ingredients go into making a pizza.

Wildlife and the environment are also taken into account, with bird feeders and boxes and bug hotels present, knowledge of a pigeon and robin nest on site and consideration taken to not disturb these, a hedgehog house on site, and a water butt and compost bin to harvest water and create compost for planters going forward.

Local businesses get involved through sponsorship. It was great to hear that there are a number of key local business sponsors for this group, and that councillors, young people, and the local community all get involved to raise money. A number of events are held at the facility to raise money for the group.

It was clear to see the enthusiasm and excitement from the young people present on the day, and especially from Jean. Despite challenges faced, Jean and the volunteers show strength and determination to continue their work and improve the lives of the young people who attend.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Areas for Development:

- It would be good to see a management plan to ensure the sustainability of this fantastic group.
- Maximise publicity on social media, promoting work and explaining what the group does. Is there the opportunity to have a Facebook page to promote events etc.
- Continue to work with local businesses and strengthen links with local police or support officers.

THORNES MILLENNIUM GREEN TRUST LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

The group deserves credit for continuing to maintain, and raise funds for this important area of green space, in a fairly dense area of housing.

A blessing and challenge is the presence of a number of mature trees, which provide many, but also limit some, growing opportunities and create so much leaf compost that it is more than can be composted in the in site composters.

The use of wood chip as a top dressing seems to be easing some maintenance work. Community involvement is undertaken in a number of ways, including leaflets, social media Coffee mornings and the site notice board.

Whilst the site is very much an urban green space the provision of bird boxes, a bug house, and planting to encourage wildlife all increases bio diversity.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

Continue the work to replace the litter bin to hopefully solve some of the litter issues.

Review the shrubs in the front border and if possible introduce some new planting to give a range of age across the border.

Do try again with the seasonal wildflower area it may not be so dry next year although competition from the trees will always be an issue.

WOODLANDS COMMUNITY GARDEN LEVEL 4 - THRIVING

Overall Impression

Areas of achievement:

We were lucky to visit the garden on a lovely summer afternoon when it was absolutely looking its best. It was lovely to meet the dedicated people who have put so much effort and enthusiasm into creating a peaceful and calm space for others to enjoy.

The water feature made a very eye-catching entrance to the garden, and it was good to see a variety of hard landscape materials used in its construction.

The pond is a nice feature which will both benefit wildlife and be a source of interest especially perhaps to younger visitors. It was a good and sensible idea to have the safety grid to the surface of the pond, using it to make pond dipping safer is also very good idea. Creating insect hotels was a nice additional consideration.

The sensory garden is very impressive with a wide variety of planting to stimulate all the senses and there was good, creative use of hard materials. The inclusion of rosebay willowherb in the sensory garden was an imaginative and good idea and very appropriate to the setting.

We were pleased with the wild areas at the edges of the site benefiting wildlife.

The commitment to recycling where possible was very pleasing. We especially like the recycled plastic used in the edges of the raised beds.

The range of fruit and vegetables available for the community to pick and enjoy was wide, and we were impressed with the quality of planting.

Judges feedback on areas for consideration

We were pleased to hear about the wide range of events taking place in the garden. Perhaps another idea for an event might be a celebration of harvest home incorporating a competition for the best scarecrow brought for display in the garden.

Obviously, the garden with its flowers and fruit is very attractive to insects. And we saw butterflies enjoying it while we were there. Perhaps something could be done to help introduce children to the joys of nature and make them aware of the range of insects that

they are able to see in the garden, a Butterfly Safari for example. At the time when nature is struggling, it's important that young people are encouraged to appreciate and protect nature and the community garden is a good place to begin that.

Perhaps the young people would enjoy an art competition based on nature. In the garden. Perhaps a drawing, painting or collage of a butterfly, which they might see there would be enjoyable.

Consider further activities to encourage the young people to enjoy gardening activities. Perhaps simple competitions, like growing the biggest radish would be a nice idea, or growing potatoes in a bucket on-site and allowing children to set that up. It might even be nice to give the children some sunflower seeds at the beginning of the season and try to find who grows the biggest sunflower.

Consider exploring grant opportunities that could fund things like tools and/or new garden furniture. Perhaps there is a local Council initiative that could help?